

We Value Your Input

Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2045
Jefferson-Orange-Hardin Transportation Study (JOHRTS) Area

Please join us
for a meeting on the
metropolitan transportation
plan, the transportation improvement
program and transportation
conformity for Southeast Texas!

Learn about the *planning process*, identify
transportation issues in the region, and provide your input
on *what you want to see in the future*.

The public review and comment period will be held

December 21, 2020 - January 19, 2021

The South East Texas Regional Planning Commission - Metropolitan
Planning Organization is responsible for planning transportation
improvements in Hardin, Jefferson, and Orange Counties, and we hope to
hear from you.

*Please attend the virtual public meeting to provide your input
or submit written comments by 5:00 PM on January 19, 2021 to:*

Bob Dickinson
bdickinson@setrpc.org
2210 Eastex Freeway, Beaumont, Texas 77703

All comments received will be addressed and provided
to the Transportation Planning Committee for consideration.

*For special requests, please contact Bob Dickinson at least 48 hours in advance
at 409-899-8444 x7520 or bdickinson@setrpc.org.*

Virtual Public Meeting
Wednesday, January 13, 2021
3:00-4:00 PM

The meeting can be accessed at:
[https://www.gotomeeting.me/
SETRPC/ter](https://www.gotomeeting.me/SETRPC/ter)

You can also dial in using your phone
United States (Toll Free):
1-877-309-2073
Access Code: 499-824-429

JOHRTS FY 2021 - 2024 Transportation Improvement Program

JOHRTS Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2045,
Amendment #3



TRANSPORTATION &
ENVIRONMENTAL
RESOURCES



Public Comment Period:

December 21, 2020 to January 19, 2021

MEETING PURPOSE

The purpose of this meeting is to provide an opportunity for the public to express comments and learn about Southeast Texas' Transportation Improvement Program. These proposed projects and programs are eligible to move forward in the process that leads to construction and implementation.

AGENDA

January 13, 2021
3:00 PM to 4:00 PM

Welcome and Greetings from the SETRPC-MPO Staff

Opening Remarks and Explanation of Planning Document

Comments and Questions

Adjournment

Welcome

Welcome to the January 2021 Public Meeting for the JOHRTS Metropolitan Transportation Plan – 2045, Amendment 3 and the JOHRTS FY 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program. We appreciate your attendance and participation in the transportation planning process of the southeast Texas region.

In case you don't know who we are, let us take this opportunity to introduce ourselves and what we do for the southeast Texas region. We are a part of the South East Texas Regional Planning Commission (SETRPC). The Commission is a voluntary association of local governments that works to promote intergovernmental cooperation and coordination concerning local issues. Local governments are able to combine resources to meet challenges beyond their individual capabilities.

The SETRPC-MPO is a function under the Transportation and Environmental Resources Division. MPO stands for Metropolitan Planning Organization. SETRPC-MPO is responsible for coordinating regional transportation planning efforts for the Jefferson Orange Hardin Regional Transportation Study Area (JOHRTS). The principle purpose of the JOHRTS planning process is to provide an overall Transportation Plan that will permit the most desirable and efficient means of meeting transportation needs for the next twenty years. We interact with each city and county government to coordinate efforts to improve our transportation system. We also ensure that our area complies with the rules and guidelines that the federal government requires. Compliance is necessary for us to be eligible to spend federal money on transportation improvements. The SETRPC-MPO is governed by a body of elected officials from throughout the three-county region.

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South East Texas Regional Planning Commission

is hereby notifying the public about the opportunity to offer comments on transportation improvements proposed for southeast Texas. The projects and programs included in the JOHRTS FY 2021-2024 TIP are eligible to move forward in the process that leads to construction and implementation.

Comments

If more space is needed, please use back of sheet.

Comments are being accepted during the 30-day comment period
from **December 21, 2020 through January 19, 2021.**

Comments may be:

- Turned in at a public meeting
- Delivered or mailed to the SETRPC office, 2210 Eastex Freeway, Beaumont, Texas 77703
 - Faxed to (409) 729-6511.
 - Emailed to bdickinson@setrpc.org

Thank you!

Jefferson-Orange-Hardin Regional Transportation Study (JOHRTS)

The United States Congress, in seeking a solution to increasing transportation related problems, included in the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962 provisions for studying all transportation systems in urban areas with populations of fifty thousand or greater. The Act required that these planning endeavors be comprehensive, cooperative and continuing in nature, thus the term “3C” planning process emerged. This process is mandated through Section 134 of Title 23, U.S.C. In an effort to achieve those objectives as outlined in the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962, the Jefferson-Orange-Hardin Regional Transportation Study (JOHRTS) area was initiated in 1964.

Planning of separate modes by separate agencies without common goals or coordination of efforts results in an ineffective and inadequate transportation system. All forms of transportation are interrelated and, although each serves a specific need, all must interface properly to provide a coordinated transportation system. Planning for coordinated transportation systems is a major part of the comprehensive planning process in the southeast Texas Region.

In the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1973, the Federal Government stressed the formation of Metropolitan Planning Organization’s (MPO) in the Study areas. The federal government’s intention was to establish a method for local governments to have some say in where federal transportation dollars are spent in their areas.

In May 1974, the Governor of Texas designated the South East Texas Regional Planning Commission (SETRPC) as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the JOHRTS area. According to federal regulations the MPO is “...the forum for cooperative decision making by principal elected officials of general purpose local government.” The MPO is “...that organization designated responsible, together with the State, for carrying out the provisions of...the federal transportation planning requirements.”

The principle purpose of the JOHRTS planning process is to provide an overall Metropolitan Transportation Plan that permits the most desirable and efficient means of meeting the transportation needs (highway and transit) of the Study Area over the next twenty years. This planning process is achieved on a cooperative basis between the State, the SETRPC-MPO, local governing bodies, and the Federal Highway Administration.

The standard structure of the MPO consists of the planning staff, a technical advisory committee, and a policy committee. The SETRPC-MPO serves as the planning staff. The JOHRTS Transportation Planning Committee, serving as the policy committee, is comprised of elected officials from local government bodies in the region and is the MPO governing body (Appendix A).

The JOHRTS Technical Committee, serving as the technical advisory committee, is comprised of local professionals involved in some aspect of the transportation infrastructure, such as public works directors, traffic engineers, representatives of public transportation operations, and related private sector interests (Appendix B). This Committee is responsible for interacting with the planning staff to review transportation plans and projects for recommendation to the policy committee.

In order to achieve a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning process, the Texas Department of Transportation, the SETRPC-MPO, and the various cities and counties, are involved in planning activities which center around the surveillance of transportation factors. These factors include population, land usage, economic considerations, environmental considerations, and travel pattern characteristics of the region. The Study also brings into the mechanics of transportation planning, an active role for public involvement and a proper assessment of the plan's social, economic and environmental implications for consistency with federal, State and community goals and objectives (Appendix C).

Jefferson-Orange-Hardin Regional Transportation Study

Transportation Planning Committee

Voting Membership

City of Beaumont
 City of Bridge City
 City of Groves
 City of Nederland
 City of Orange
 City of Port Arthur
 City of Port Neches
 City of Lumberton

City of Vidor
 City of West Orange
 City of Silsbee
 County of Hardin
 County of Jefferson
 County of Orange
 Texas Department of Transportation

Nonvoting Ex Officio Membership

City of Bevil Oaks
 City of Pinehurst
 City of Rose Hill Acres
 City of Nome
 City of Sour Lake
 U.S. Representative Dist. 2
 State Senator, Dist. 3
 State Representative, Dist. 19
 State Representative, Dist. 21
 Federal Highway Administration
 TxDOT – East Region
 South East Texas Regional Planning Commission

City of China
 City of Pine Forest
 City of Rose City
 City of Kountze
 US Representative, Dist. 9
 State Senator, Dist. 4
 State Representative, Dist. 20
 State Representative, Dist. 22
 State Representative, Dist. 23
 Governor's Office
 U.S. Coast Guard
 Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

Purpose

The JOHRTS Transportation Planning Committee has been designated the responsibility for directing the “Continuous Phase” of the Jefferson-Orange-Hardin Regional Transportation Study and all other transportation planning activities in the region. This Committee assures that transportation plans and programs are consistent with the objectives and goals of regional comprehensive planning.

Jefferson-Orange-Hardin Regional Transportation Study

Technical Committee

Voting Membership

City of Beaumont
 City of Bridge City
 City of Groves
 City of Nederland
 City of Orange
 City of Port Arthur
 City of Port Neches
 City of Lumberton

City of Vidor
 City of West Orange
 City of Silsbee
 County of Hardin
 County of Jefferson
 County of Orange
 Texas Department of Transportation – *Beaumont District*

Nonvoting Advisory Status Membership

Federal Highway Administration – Austin
 Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
Beaumont Office
 Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
Austin Mobile Source Division
 Texas Department of Transportation
Austin – Transportation Planning & Programming

Purpose

The JOHRTS Technical Committee provides routine guidance for multi-modal transportation planning, ensures coordination among various modes of transportation, examines the adequacy of current transportation studies, reviews recommended transportation plans and appoints sub-committees to review matters of special consideration.

Goals and Objectives

Transportation plans require developing goals and objectives that reflect regional values and satisfy long-term regional transportation needs.

The Goals are used as a general guide to achieve the result stated in the Vision Statement. Objectives are more specific than goals as they define results that must be attained or actions that must be followed for reaching the respective goal. The Vision Statement and the goals and objectives – together form a coherent plan to provide pragmatic solutions to identified transportation needs. While the Vision Statement stands alone, goals and objectives are not mutually exclusive of each other and often conflict with each other. For example, some projects that may encourage economic development may be excluded from the MTP because they have the potential to endanger wetlands or have an adverse effect on local communities. The cumulative effect that each project has on the MTP's goals and objectives must produce a significant net benefit before it can be incorporated into the MTP.

The transportation goals and objectives established by the SETRPC-MPO fulfill the MTP's Vision Statement and are as follows. Please note: Not listed in any particular order.

Goal #1: Preserve and Maintain the Existing Transportation System.

This goal focuses on optimizing the existing system while accommodating present and future transportation needs without constructing expensive new transportation facilities. This will help improve system reliability, enhance safety, and reduce operating costs.

Objectives:

- Give priority to projects that improve the condition of the existing transportation system or upgrade existing transportation facilities.
- Improve junctions between transportation modes.
- Discourage improvements that create unnecessary increases in travel demand.

Goal #2: Improve the Operational Efficiency of the Transportation Network.

This goal centers on improving person and goods movement within the existing transportation system.

Objectives:

- Encourage initiatives that promote transit and other transportation modes as alternatives to the single occupancy vehicle.
- Promote operational efficiency through the use of technological improvements.
- Support measures that reduce traffic congestion and peak hour travel demand.

Goal #3: Enhance the Safety of the Transportation Community.

Public safety is a major concern for all residents in the JOHRTS area. Every effort is made to ensure that the safety of the public is improved whenever possible. Projects promoted under this initiative include those that continue to develop and maintain hurricane evacuation routes or prevent rail/vehicle accidents at railway crossings.

Objectives:

- Promote programs and projects that reduce the number and severity of traffic accidents, especially at railroad crossings.
- Give priority to construction projects that eliminate roadway hazards.
- Support the development and implementation of roadway design standards that improve highway safety.
- Maintain and enhance the existing hurricane evacuation system.

Goal #4: Enhance the Security of the Transportation Community.

With the JOHRTS area being a hub of intermodal traffic (land and seaborne) and with the everchanging weather in the Gulf of Mexico, the SETRPC-MPO has many facets to consider in transportation planning. Although the SETRPC-MPO may not be directly involved in Homeland Security planning, the SETRPC-MPO ensures that the Transportation Planning Committee (TPC) members review and consider the following issues:

Objectives:

- Ensure that priority access routes for emergency vehicles and other responders are identified and marked.
- Ensure that the TxDOT, city and county agencies work to coordinate the use of reversible lanes in the event of an emergency (either natural or manmade).
- Ensure that transit authorities and stakeholders are included in the planning process.
- Work with state and federal agencies to optimize the use of new and existing electronic message boards.
- Work with members to identify “bottlenecks” or “points of congestion” and work to improve those areas with applicable transportation related projects.

Goal #5: Protect and Improve the Environment.

The JOHRTS area contains extensive wetlands, parks, and wildlife preserves. The SETRPC-MPO recognizes its responsibility in maintaining and protecting the integrity of these precious ecosystems as a legacy for future generations.

Air quality is also a major environmental issue in the JOHRTS area. The presence of petrochemical industries, dependency on the automobile as the main source of transport, and the proximity to other areas with similar characteristics make efforts to improve air quality a priority.

Objectives:

- Continue to develop plans and programs that will help the JOHRTS area achieve the federal clean air standard for ozone in accordance with the 1990 CAAA.
- Promote the development of a transportation system that minimizes the degradation of wetlands, wildlife reserves, recreational areas, and other valuable natural resources in the JOHRTS area.

- Promote consistency of transportation plan and transportation improvement programs with State and local planned growth and economic development patterns.
- Support the design and construction of transportation projects that adhere to high environmental standards. Such projects should reduce soil erosion, control sediment runoff, assist in floodplain management, protect watersheds, and enhance wetlands.

Goal #6: Maximize the Social Benefits of the Transportation System.

Every effort will be made to improve social conditions in the area by promoting transportation projects and programs that provide a net benefit to society. These projects and programs that have a potential to adversely impact society will be modified.

Objectives:

- Promote programs that provide transportation services to the economically disadvantaged, the disabled, and persons lacking automobile access.
- Support initiatives that improve access to natural, historic, cultural, and recreational resources within the region.
- Minimize any detrimental impacts of proposed transportation improvements upon neighborhoods.
- Encourage transportation projects and programs that support community development and revitalization.
- Ensure that all segments of the public have an opportunity to participate in the transportation planning process and all interested public and private organizations are kept up-to-date on all current transportation issues.
- Improve the aesthetics of existing transportation facilities through landscaping, beautification, roadway design, and architecture whenever possible.

Goal #7: Foster Economic Development.

All transportation projects and programs should support efforts to improve the economy in southeast Texas.

Objectives:

- Support regional cooperation and collaboration in the promotion and operation of economic assets in the JOHRTS area.

- Encourage all economic development organizations to continuously promote the economic attributes of the region.
- Continue to promote transportation programs and projects that support economic development initiatives, with particular emphasis on intermodal facilities.
- Subscribe to efforts that encourage the development of tourism in the region.
- Give priority to transportation programs that retain existing businesses and attract new businesses to the area.

Goal #8: Maintain Financial Responsibility in the Development and Preservation of the Transportation System.

As stated under SAFETEA planning guidelines, all MTPs must adhere to the principles of financial responsibility. The SETRPC-MPO seeks to expand on this initiative by including it as a goal of the MTP for the JOHRTS area.

Objectives:

- Uphold cost-effective operating strategies for all transportation services.
- Ensure that all transportation projects and programs utilize available funds in the most cost-effective and financially responsible manner possible.
- Give priority to those transportation projects and programs that provide the greatest net benefit at the least cost.
- Seek out additional federal and state transportation funds whenever possible.