

V Letter

*A Publication of the Valdosta-Lowndes Metropolitan Planning Organization and the Southern Georgia Regional Commission
Volume III Issue 1 - July 2010*

New Traffic Laws In GA

Effective June 9, 2010 seatbelts must be worn by drivers of pickup trucks in Georgia.

But when worn correctly, seatbelts are PROVEN to reduce the risk of fatal injury to front-seat light truck occupants by 60-percent and as much as 80-percent in the event of a rollover crash. Simply buckling your seatbelt can reduce medical and legal expenses, lost wages, lost productivity, high insurance rates and other burdensome crash costs that every other citizen is unfairly forced to share. While we know these monetary costs alone are staggering, the biggest beneficiaries of seatbelt use are the families and loved ones of pickup truck occupants who will not be killed or severely injured in a crash.

Beginning July 1, 2010 all texting while driving, and cell phone use for teen drivers is prohibited in Georgia.

According to a 2006 study of real-world driver behavior, distraction, and crash factors about 80-percent of crashes were caused by some form of distraction-- such as cell phone use or being tired—occurring within three seconds of the incident. The study found that drivers who frequently engage in the most distracting activities are more likely to be in an inattention-related crash.

Source: Governor's Office of Highway Safety

2035 Transportation Plan Available for Public Review

Over the past 18 months the Valdosta-Lowndes MPO has been working on developing the 2035 Transportation Plan (TP) for the Valdosta Urbanized Area, including all of Lowndes County.

Beginning July 19, 2010 the draft of this document will be available for public review and comment through September 1, 2010. The MPO will host a Public Open House on Tuesday, July 20, 2010 from 3:00 PM to 8:00 PM at the Valdosta City Hall Annex, where residents can come to view the plan and ask questions of the staff.



The 2035 Transportation Plan outlines policies and infrastructure improvement projects to be implemented over the next twenty-five years. The plan includes more than \$440 million dollars worth of infrastructure projects ranging from intersection improvements to expansion of the public transit systems. Several road widening projects are also included that will help promote economic development and job creation in the region. The priorities of the 2035 Transportation Plan are:

1. Develop a sustainable and safe regional transportation system that includes all modes for the transport of people and goods that promotes economic development.
2. Encourage the MPO, SGRC and their member communities to cooperatively consider land use decisions by encouraging public participation and involvement in the transportation planning process.
3. Promote an aesthetically pleasing, sustainable transportation system that respects the needs of, and mitigates and/or enhances the impacts on disadvantaged populations and the context of the nearby built and natural environments.

As required by the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users, the TP must be fiscally responsible and balanced, it must include all modes of transportation and be a collaborative effort of the local jurisdictions and the Georgia Department of Transportation.

Update on Census 2010: It's in Our Hands



The 2010 US Census is well underway, in Lowndes County 71% (67% in Valdosta, 74% in Dasher, 75% in Hahira, 68% in Lake Park, 51% in Lanier County, 55% in Berrien County, average in SGRC region: 61%) of the residents mailed back their Census forms.

Now through September 3rd, a Census worker may visit your home to complete the Census form or call you to verify your answers. By December 31, 2010 a new national population count will be released.

Cook County Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure Assessment

This Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility Assessment by the SGRC looks at a portion of Cook County (including Adel and Sparks) with several schools, a high residential density and the potential for high numbers of pedestrians and bicyclists to determine what facilities are currently provided, whether the facilities are safe and sufficient, and whether new facilities or improvements to existing facilities are necessary.

Some findings from the assessment have been that in a majority of areas there are no bicycle or pedestrian facilities provided, and in areas where they are provided, such as the sidewalk along Masee Post Rd., they are insufficient or in need of repair. Sidewalks along Goodman St. and Elm St. in the City of Sparks are adequate and well-maintained, and provide ample space for pedestrians to move safely and securely.

Some recommendations made will be to improve the walkability and bikeability of the roadways in the study area by adding new sidewalks and bike lanes where appropriate, adding or improving lighting throughout the area, and improving and maintaining current facilities in need of repair.

Other recommendations will include adopting local ordinances designed to include bicycle and pedestrian facilities in new road or development projects designed to enhance the safety, walkability, and bikeability of the community. By anticipating and planning for increased numbers of non-motorized transportation users, Cook County will be able to become as bicycle and pedestrian friendly as possible.

Welcome

Welcome to the Valdosta-Lowndes Metropolitan Planning Organization newsletter. This newsletter is a tool to provide information to transportation stakeholders and the public about upcoming transportation improvements throughout Southern Georgia. The Southern Georgia Regional Commission is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Valdosta Urbanized Area.

MPO Policy Committee

Wayne Bullard, City of Hahira
John Fretti, City of Valdosta
Larry Hanson, City of Valdosta
John Leonard, SGRC
Ashley Paulk, Lowndes County
Joe Pritchard, Lowndes County
Vance Smith, GDOT

MPO Staff

Corey Hull, MPO Coordinator

Visit
Valdosta-
Lowndes
MPO on:

facebook

Upcoming Meeting Dates

Citizen's Advisory Committee
9/2/10 3:00 PM

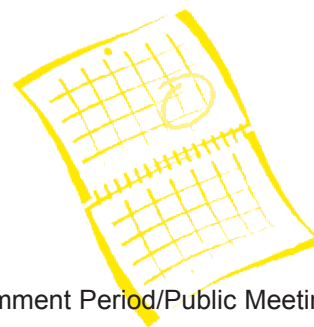
Technical Committee
9/14/10 10:30 AM

Policy Committee
9/14/10 1:30 PM

2035 Transportation Plan Comment Period/Public Meeting
7/19/10 thru 9/1/10
7/20/10; 3:00 PM - 8:00 PM Valdosta City Hall Annex

Meetings are typically held quarterly in March, June, September and December. All meetings are open to the public and held at the SGRC office unless otherwise indicated.

Visit our website at: www.sgrc.us/transportation and click on Public Participation for more Information.



327 W. Savannah Ave.
Valdosta, GA 31601
229-333-5277
229-333-5312 (f)

1725 South Georgia Pkwy. West
Waycross, Georgia 31503
912-285-6097
912-285-6126(f)

www.sgrc.us/transportation

Would you like to receive this newsletter via e-mail?
If so, please send a request to chull@sgrc.us