

# The Public Participation Plan in Transportation Decision Making

West Michigan Metropolitan Transportation Planning  
Program (WestPlan)

Adopted November 19, 2014  
Revision: June 2016

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# The Public Participation Plan in Transportation Decision Making for the West Michigan Metropolitan Planning Program

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# PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

## Public Participation Process for Transportation Decision Making at the WestPlan

### 1. INTRODUCTION

in 1973, the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC) organized the Muskegon Area Transportation Planning Program as the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization (MPO). This was a result of the U.S. Census Bureau designating the Muskegon-Muskegon Heights Urbanized Area after the 1970 decennial census. The MPO designation is for urban areas with a population greater than 50,000. In 2003 a significant change took place and the U.S. Census Bureau expanded the Muskegon Urbanized Area to include northern Ottawa County. As a result of this, WMSRDC, working with the Michigan Department of Transportation, realigned the boundary of the MPO to include the urbanized part of northern Ottawa County and organized the West Michigan Metropolitan Transportation Planning Program (WestPlan).

The current WestPlan MPO consists of the entire county of Muskegon and the City of Grand Haven, City of Ferrysburg, Village of Spring Lake, and the townships of Crockery, Grand Haven, Spring Lake, and Robinson and a small portion of

Port Sheldon Township in Ottawa County. WestPlan addresses transportation and transportation related issues in this geographical area. See map on following page. The urbanized area population of the WestPlan MPO as of the 2010 U.S. Census is 161,280. WMSRDC has and continues to staff the MPO since it was first formed in 1973.

### 2. REQUIREMENTS

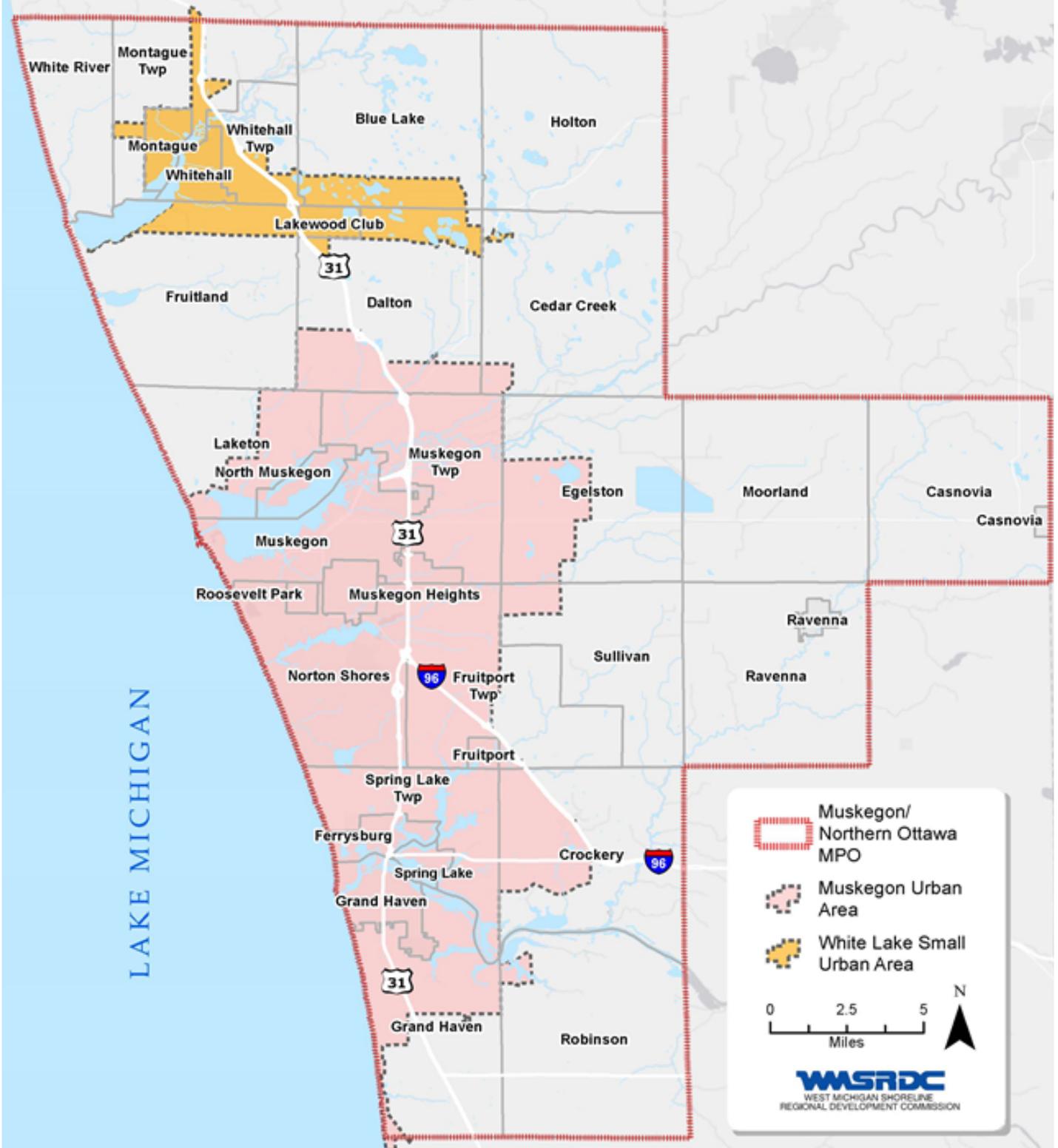
MAP-21 places emphasis on extensive stakeholder participation. Highlights of the MAP-21 requirements for public participation include:

- Providing adequate public notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points;
- Employing visualization techniques;
- Making information accessible in various formats and means, such as the World Wide Web;
- Holding public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;
- Seeking out and considering needs of traditionally underserved populations;
- Coordinating with statewide transportation planning public participation and consultation processes; and
- Periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies in the Participation Plan.

The full text relating to the public participation process within MAP-21 can be found under Appendix B.



# Muskegon & Northern Ottawa Metropolitan Planning Organization Boundaries



Source: Michigan Geographic Data Library v12b Esri, HERE, DeLorme, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS user community  
Created: September 2014



### 3. THE PUBLIC

MAP-21 requires that “The MPO shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process. (23 CFR 450.316)” WMSRDC is open to and encourages input from any individual, group, organization, agency, business, municipality, or service provider.

Activities encouraging the open dialogue between these groups and WMSRDC include maintaining and updating a contact list of interested parties as well as WMSRDC receiving comments by mail, telephone, or e-mail and during committee meetings.

WMSRDC will work to encourage the participation of persons who have been traditionally underserved, as well as meeting the requirements of Executive Order 12898 related to Environmental Justice and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. WMSRDC, through written communication, e-mail, newsletters, or phone, will endeavor

to notify some or all of the groups listed below when a particular agenda item directly impacts an organization or the clientele they represent, a significant planning initiative begins, or at the request of any WMSRDC Policy Committee member.

Stakeholder organizations that represent the interests of:

- The elderly
- The disabled
- Non-motorized transportation users
- Minority populations
- Low income populations

Types of organizations located in the WMSRDC area:

- Conventional and unconventional transit providers
- Representatives of public transportation employees
- Affected public agencies
- Private providers of transportation
- Law enforcement agencies and fire departments
- Freight shippers and providers of freight transportation services
- Railroad companies
- Airport operators
- Port Advisors
- Environmental organizations
- Major employers
- Chambers of commerce
- Economic development
- Human service agencies
- Local Tribes
- Intermediate school districts

Some of these organizations are on the Technical Committee notification list. They receive meeting agendas and minutes and are encouraged to participate and provide input.

## 4. MEETINGS

All regularly scheduled meetings of the Policy and Technical Committees are open to the public and are held at sites which comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations. Time is allotted at Technical and Policy Committee meetings for any person wishing to address committee members.

The annual schedule of regular Policy Committee and Technical Committee meetings showing dates, times, and locations are included on the WMSRDC Web site. The scheduled meetings will also be posted in the WMSRDC office and distributed to each member unit of government for posting.

Monthly meeting notifications, including agendas and location, are sent to the cities, townships, villages, road commissions, and transit agencies within the WMSRDC Metropolitan Planning Area for public posting. The WMSRDC website (<http://wmsrdc.org/meetingschedule.html>) also contains meeting notifications, locations, and agendas. Interested citizens may have their name added to the contact list for meeting materials by contact-

ing WMSRDC. Policy and Technical Committee meetings comply with the Michigan Open Meetings Act, Public Act No. 267 of 1976.

Special meetings, such as Public Information Meetings and Public Hearings, will be held at convenient and accessible locations and times where it is feasible for most people to attend.

## 5. SIGNIFICANT PLANNING INITIATIVES

Significant planning initiatives include, but are not limited to, updating the Long Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program, corridor studies, port studies, freight studies, non-motorized studies, and transit plan implementation activities. When describing a significant planning initiative to the public, WMSRDC shall incorporate appropriate visualization techniques.

Significant planning initiatives are listed below. The charts below detail the milestones for each initiative and show a timetable for the best opportunities for public input in the planning process.



## UNIFIED WORK PROGRAM (UWP)

The purpose of the Unified Work Program (UWP) for the MPO outlines the transportation planning program of the West Michigan Metropolitan Transportation Planning Program (WestPlan). The UWP identifies how the available planning funds (federal and state) will be used to address the federal and state transportation planning requirements while concurrently addressing local transportation policies, programs, issues, and priorities. **The UWP is updated annually. The next update is due in June 2017.**

Milestone	Procedure	Public Notification Date	Length of Public Comment (Minimum)
Adoption of the draft document	Once the draft UWP document is complete, staff will bring it to the Technical and Policy Committees for approval. Public comment opportunities will be available at both committee meetings. The public will be notified of the public comment opportunities in the following ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Notice on website</li> <li>Email to interested citizen/agency list</li> <li>Press release</li> <li>Notice on social media (Facebook, etc.)</li> </ul>	Six (6) days prior to Technical Committee meeting.	A minimum of 7 days, beginning on the date of the Technical Committee meeting and ending at the Policy Committee meeting. The comment period length will vary depending on the amount of time between the meetings.



## LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (LRP)

The purpose of the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRP) is to ensure that transportation investments in the MPO area enhance the movement of people and freight efficiently, effectively, and safely. **The LRP is updated every four (4) years. The next update is due in May 2019. The next update will begin in the fall of 2017. The update process is an approximate two year process.**

Milestone	Procedure	Public Notification Date	Length of Public Comment (Minimum)
Kickoff to LRP Development	Once the LRP development process begins, WMSRDC staff will notify the public in the following ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notice and LRP information on website</li> <li>• Email to to interested citizen/agency list</li> <li>• Press release</li> <li>• Notice on social media (Facebook, etc.)</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A; Public involvement will be continuous through the LRP development process. Updates will be posted regularly on the website and given at committee meetings.
Pre-Programming	WMSRDC staff will invite the public to review and comment on goals and objectives. The public will be notified of the opportunity in the following ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notice and LRP information on website</li> <li>• Email to to interested citizen/agency list</li> <li>• Press release</li> <li>• Notice on social media (Facebook, etc.)</li> </ul> <p><i>The following tools and techniques may be used on an optional basis: Flyer, brochure or informational card printed and distributed, visual aids, radio PSA.</i></p>	Up to seven (7) days prior to the start of the public comment period	Fourteen (14) days

Milestone	Procedure	Public Notification Date	Length of Public Comment (Minimum)
Draft LRP, environmental justice, and air quality results (if applicable) completed and available for public comment	<p>Once the draft LRP document, environmental justice, and air quality analysis are complete, staff will bring the document to the public for comment. An open house will also be held to discuss these items. The public will be notified of the open house and the comment period in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notice on website</li> <li>• Email sent to interested citizen/ agency list</li> <li>• Press release of the public comment period and the open house</li> <li>• Notice on social media (Facebook, etc.)</li> <li>• Copies of the draft LRP distributed to jurisdictions within the MPO area.</li> </ul> <p><i>The following tools and techniques may be used on an optional basis: Flyer, brochure, or informational card printed and distributed; Visual aids; Radio PSA At this point, staff will contact state regulatory agencies (i.e., MDNR and MDEQ) to consult with them on the draft project list and potential impacts on environmentally sensitive areas.</i></p>	Seven (7) days prior to the public meeting and before the first day of the public comment period	Fourteen (14) days
Adoption of the draft document	<p>Once the draft LRP document is complete, staff will bring it to the Technical and Policy Committees for approval. Public comment opportunities will be available at both committee meetings. The public will be notified of this public comment opportunity in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notice on website</li> <li>• Notice on social media (Facebook, etc.)</li> <li>• Respond to public comments</li> </ul>	Six (6) days prior to Technical Committee meeting	A minimum of seven (7) days, beginning on the date of the Technical Committee meeting and ending at the Policy Committee meeting. The comment period length will vary depending on the amount of time between the meetings.

Milestone	Procedure	Public Notification Date	Length of Public Comment (Minimum)
*LRP Amendments. It is occasionally necessary to amend the LRP because of changes to projects listed within the document.	Staff will bring LRP amendments to the Technical and Policy Committees for approval. Public comment opportunities will be available at both committee meetings. The public will be notified of this public comment opportunity in the following ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notice on website</li> <li>• Notice on social media (Facebook, etc.)</li> <li>• Email sent to interested citizen/ agency list</li> <li>• Press Release</li> </ul>	Six (6) days prior to Technical Committee meeting	A minimum of seven (7) days, beginning on the date of the Technical Committee meeting and ending at the Policy Committee meeting. The comment period length will vary depending on the amount of time between the meetings.

\*Long Range Transportation Plan Amendments include:

- Add/delete regionally significant project
- Major scope/design change for regionally significant project(s)
- Move regionally significant illustrative list project into the LRP (new project)
- Change in air quality conformity model year grouping for regionally significant project



## TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is the list of road, transit, and non-motorized projects of which communities and agencies plan to implement over a four-year period within the WMSRDC MPO area. **The TIP is updated every 3-4 years. The next update is due in July 2019. The next update will begun in the summer of 2018.**

Milestone	Procedure	Public Notification Date	Length of Public Comment (Minimum)
Kickoff to TIP Development	Before the TIP development process begins, staff will notify the public in the following ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notice on website</li> </ul>	Seven (7) days prior to the first TIP	N/A; notification only
Draft project lists, environmental justice, and air quality results (if applicable) completed and available for public comment	Once draft project lists have been developed, environmental justice has been completed, and an air quality analysis has been performed, staff will bring these items to the public for comment. An open house will also be held. The public will be notified of the open house and the comment period in the following ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notice on website</li> <li>• Email to interested citizen/agency mailing list</li> <li>• Notice on social media (Facebook, etc.)</li> <li>• A public notice regarding the public comment period and open house will distributed to all jurisdictions within the MPO area</li> </ul>	Seven (7) days prior to the public meeting and before the 1st day of the public comment period	Fourteen (14) days

Milestone	Procedure	Public Notification Date	Length of Public Comment (Minimum)
Draft TIP, environmental justice, and air quality results (if applicable) completed and available for public comment	<p>Once the draft TIP document, environmental justice, and air quality analysis are complete, staff will bring the document to the public for comment. An open house will also be held to discuss these items. The public will be notified of the open house and the comment period in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notice on website</li> <li>• Email sent to interested citizen/ agency list</li> <li>• Press release of the public comment period and the open house</li> <li>• Notice on social media (Facebook, etc.)</li> <li>• Copies of the draft LRP distributed to jurisdictions within the MPO area.</li> </ul> <p><i>The following tools and techniques may be used on an optional basis: Flyer, brochure, or informational card printed and distributed; Visual aids; Radio PSA At this point, staff will contact state regulatory agencies (i.e., MDNR and MDEQ) to consult with them on the draft project list and potential impacts on environmentally sensitive areas.</i></p>	Seven (7) days prior to the public meeting and before the first day of the public comment period	Fourteen (14) days
Adoption of the draft document	<p>Once the draft TIP document is complete, staff will bring it to the Technical and Policy Committees for approval. Public comment opportunities will be available at both committee meetings. The public will be notified of this public comment opportunity in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notice on website</li> <li>• Notice on social media (Facebook, etc.)</li> <li>• Respond to public comments</li> </ul>	Six (6) days prior to Technical Committee meeting	A minimum of seven (7) days, beginning on the date of the Technical Committee meeting and ending at the Policy Committee meeting. The comment period length will vary depending on the amount of time between the meetings.

Milestone	Procedure	Public Notification Date	Length of Public Comment (Minimum)
*TIP Amendments. It is occasionally necessary to amend the LRP because of changes to projects listed within the document.	<p>Staff will bring TIP amendments to the Technical and Policy Committees for approval. Public comment opportunities will be available at both committee meetings. The public will be notified of this public comment opportunity in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notice on website</li> <li>• Notice on social media (Facebook, etc.)</li> <li>• Email sent to interested citizen/ agency list</li> <li>• Press Release</li> </ul>	Six (6) days prior to Technical Committee meeting	A minimum of seven (7) days, beginning on the date of the Technical Committee meeting and ending at the Policy Committee meeting. The comment period length will vary depending on the amount of time between the meetings.

Transportation Improvement Program amendments and administrative modification policy can be found on the WMSRDC website at <http://www.wmsrdc.org/reports&publications.html>.

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN (PPP)

The Public Participation Plan describes the ways in which WMSRDC will engage the public in the transportation planning process. **The Public Participation Plan is updated every two (2) years. The next update is due in June 2018. The next update will begin in the summer of 2018.**

Milestone	Procedure	Public Notification Date	Length of Public Comment (Minimum)
Draft Public Participation Plan developed and presented to the Policy Committee	After the draft Public Participation Plan has been developed and presented to the Policy Committee staff will bring it to the public for comment. Staff will notify the public of this opportunity in the following ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notice on website</li> <li>• Direct mailing sent to interested citizen/agency list</li> <li>• Notice on social media (Facebook, etc.)</li> </ul>	At least one (1) day before the public comment period begins	45 days; the public comment period will begin after the draft document is presented to the Policy Committee and will end at least one week before the final document is approved by the Policy Committee (approximately two months after the comment period begins)
Public Participation Plan approval	After all comments have been considered and the 45 days public comment period has concluded, the document will be brought to the Policy Committee for approval. The public will have an additional opportunity to comment on the document at the Policy meeting, and will be notified of this meeting in the following ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notice on website</li> </ul>	Six (6) days before the scheduled Policy Committee meeting	N/A

Various avenues will be considered when seeking public participation in these initiatives including, but not limited to, public informational meetings, surveys, mailings, and notices. In an effort to reach populations traditionally underserved (minorities, low income, senior citizens, disabled, etc.), emphasis will be made to inform such populations. Consideration of non-English language notices and public service announcements will also be made in accordance with the WMSRDC Title VI Plan. It is also understood that the MPO's public involvement process, stated above, also satisfies the need for public involvement in the programming of federal dollars for public transportation.

## 6. PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

WMSRDC recognizes that, in order for the public to participate in transportation decision making, it must understand the transportation system's problems, processes, and potential solutions. Information must be provided in a timely manner, be easily understandable, and be reasonably accessible.

WMSRDC will make available to the public the agency's library and map files. Copies of all WMSRDC planning documents, meeting minutes, and maps are available for review during normal business hours as well as online. Local public libraries have computers available for public use so access to the Web will not necessitate personal ownership of a computer. Meeting schedules and minutes, planning studies, the Long Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program, newsletters, and other applicable documents will be posted on the WMSRDC website. The WMSRDC's internet address is <http://www.wmsrdc.org>.

Local public libraries also receive copies of many documents published by WMSRDC. In addition, WMSRDC staff participates in public forums and conducts presentations upon request.

## 7. OUTREACH STRATEGIES

WMSRDC continually looks at ways to involve the public in the transportation planning process. WMSRDC will continue to be proactive in its approach in engaging the public and will continually expand its efforts to keep the public up to date on WMSRDC activities.

There are two primary audiences of WMSRDC information: the public (as described previously) and the media. The residents of Muskegon County and the northern portion of Ottawa County, as well as others who use the transportation system within the area represent one audience. The various media outlets are the other target audience for outreach. As new media formats and

technologies demonstrate their ability to engage different segments of the audience, it is important that WMSRDC consider their use as a public involvement tool. The following outreach goals were established to better inform the public and local media:

- **Establish a dialogue with members of the local media**
  - Create and regularly update a list of local media contacts for print and electronic news.
  - Proactively share information instead of reacting to incorrect or incomplete information.
- **Raise awareness about transportation planning efforts and the agency**
  - Raise awareness of WMSRDC responsibilities and functions.
  - Highlight successful projects of WMSRDC and its members.
  - Regularly update the online tools to increase traffic.
  - Encourage attendance at public involvement meetings.
- **Create an appropriate suite of media and public communication tactics to allow for faster dissemination of information.**
  - Create and maintain agency accounts using various appropriate social media outlets (Facebook, Twitter, etc.).
  - Establish policies and procedures for social media updates.

**Formats for outreach include, but not limited to:**

- **Electronic Media:**
  - Website (<http://www.wmsrdc.org>)
  - Bi-monthly newsletter posted on website and mailed to agency wide newsletter

mailing list

- Information Releases to News Media Outlets in Surrounding Area

- **Print Media:**

- Public Hearing Notices
- Newsletters to be Distributed to Jurisdictions, Libraries, and Other Agencies/Organizations
- Direct Mailings/Flyers to Impacted Organizations and Populations
- Comment Forms at Public Meetings/Hearings
- Access to Planning Documents at Local Cities, Villages, and Townships As Well As Local Libraries

- **Meetings:**

- Conduct Open Houses As Part of Kickoff of Document Development and Other Key Points in Document Development
- Public Meetings Prior to Document Adoptions
- Technical Committee Meetings and Policy Committee Meetings

## 8. MAKING PUBLIC COMMENTS

The public is encouraged to use the following methods for reviewing and commenting on significant documents being developed and published by the WMSRDC:

### Where to find transportation planning documents to review:

- West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC) Website (<http://www.wmsrdc.org>)
- Visit the WMSRDC offices
- Public libraries in Muskegon and northern Ottawa counties
- Attend public meeting, open house, or other scheduled activity (notices to be published on WMSRDC website as well as local govern-

ment jurisdictions)

- Attend committee meeting or hearing (Technical Committee and Policy Committee meeting schedules are available at <http://www.wmsrdc.org/meetingschedule.html>)

### To Request a Printed Copy of the Documents

- Call (231) 722-7878
- Email to [ahaack@wmsrdc.org](mailto:ahaack@wmsrdc.org)
- Internet address: <http://www.wmsrdc.org>

### To Request to be Added to the Email Distribution List

- Call (231) 722-7878
- Email to [ahaack@wmsrdc.org](mailto:ahaack@wmsrdc.org)
- Write to: West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission  
316 Morris Avenue, Suite 340  
Muskegon, MI 49440

### Comments May Be Submitted By:

- Email to WMSRDC at [ahaack@wmsrdc.org](mailto:ahaack@wmsrdc.org)
- Online at WMSRDC at [www.wmsrdc.org](http://www.wmsrdc.org)
- WMSRDC's Facebook Page
- At public meetings and hearings
- At Policy Committee meetings and hearings
- Phone at (231) 722-7878
- Mail letters to WMSRDC

## 9. TREATMENT OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

When public comments are received on plans, studies, or other activities, they will be summarized and forwarded to the Policy Committee prior to any formal action to adopt or approve a plan or study. A copy of all comments will be filed and made available for public review. The comments, or a summary of the comments, will be included in the document along with a discussion of how the comments were addressed prior to the adoption of the plans, major studies, and programs.

## 10. MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS

WMSRDC should review this plan and any social media product accounts periodically for their effectiveness. Some technologies can take months and even longer to be successful. WMSRDC should use several available analytical metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of each technology and report progress to the Policy Committee annually. As new technologies and formats emerge and gain traction, WMSRDC should consider using those media resources.

Such measures can include, but are not limited to; tracking website hits, social media interest, and comments received, etc.

Public Participation Tools	Evaluation Criteria	Suggested Performance Goal(s)	Method to Meet Goals
WMSRDC Website	Number of hits to website	Minimum of ten (10) hits per month with 5% increase in totals hits per year	Provide all agency documents on the WMSRDC website ( <a href="http://www.wmsrdc.org">www.wmsrdc.org</a> ); publish agency website information on all agency documents
Press Releases	Calls, emails, letter correspondence, etc.	Submittal of press release at key points in document development using email list of media outlets in Muskegon and northern Ottawa counties	Involvement of media in meetings of Technical Committee and Policy Committee, as well as during the development of agency documents
Social Media	Calls, emails, letter correspondence, etc; Number of "friends" and "followers"	Annual increase in "friends" and "followers" of ten (10)	Provide information announcements, access to surveys, meeting information, important action items;p maintain and monitor activity daily
Public Meetings /Hearings / Open Houses	Attendance at meeting / hearing; calls, emails, letter correspondence, etc.	One (1)% of affected population in attendance	Schedule meetings at convenient times and locations; use other public participation tools to increase awareness of meeting/hearing; Outreach to affected population (neighborhood associations, community groups, etc.)

Public Participation Tools	Evaluation Criteria	Suggested Performance Goal(s)	Method to Meet Goals
Email Announcements	Calls, emails, letter correspondence, etc.; Number of emails sent	Minimum of five (5) percent of meeting attendees / survey respondents indicated that they saw the email announcement	Increase email list by advertising availability of email announcements using other public participation tools; Email address on all agency documents
Visualization Techniques (Print and Electronic Formats)	Usefulness to explanation of document development	Comment on visualization during public comment period; hits on specific page within WMSRDC website	Publish visual aid in draft document and for use during public meetings; publish visual aid on WMSRDC website

## 11. REVISIONS TO THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

The public is invited to comment on this plan prior to final adoption by the Policy Committee. A review of this Participation Plan will periodically (at a minimum bi-annually) be undertaken by the Technical and Policy Committees. Major revisions will necessitate undertaking various measures as described in Section V.

### Comments or questions concerning this Plan should be directed to:

West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission  
 316 Morris Avenue, Suite 340  
 Muskegon, MI 49440-1140  
 (231) 722-7878  
 Email: [ahaack@wmsrdc.org](mailto:ahaack@wmsrdc.org)

# **Appendix A**

## **Acronyms and Definitions**

### **ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act**

The legislation defining the responsibilities of and requirements for transportation providers to make transportation accessible to individuals with disabilities.

### **EJ: Environmental Justice**

Environmental justice assures that services and benefits allow for meaningful participation and are fairly distributed to avoid discrimination.

### **FHWA: Federal Highway Administration**

A branch of the US Department of Transportation that administers the federal-aid Highway Program, providing financial assistance to states to construct and improve highways, urban and rural roads, and bridges.

### **FTA: Federal Transit Administration**

A branch of the US Department of Transportation that is the principal source of federal financial assistance to America's communities for planning, development, and improvement of public or mass transportation systems.

### **GIS: Geographic Information System**

Computerized data management system designed to capture, store, retrieve, analyze, and display geographically referenced information.

### **LRP: Metropolitan Transportation Plan**

A document resulting from regional or statewide collaboration and consensus on a region or state's transportation system, and serving as the defining vision for the region's or state's transportation systems and services. In metropolitan areas, the plan indicates all of the transportation improvements scheduled for funding over the next 20 years.

### **MAP -21: Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act**

On July 6, 2012, President Obama signed into law P.L. 112-141, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21). Funding surface transportation programs at over \$105 billion for fiscal years (FY) 2013 and 2014, MAP-21 is the first long-term highway authorization enacted since 2005. MAP-21 represents a milestone for the U.S. economy – it provides needed funds and, more importantly, it transforms the policy and programmatic framework for investments to guide the growth and development of the country's vital transportation infrastructure. MAP-21 creates a streamlined, performance-based, and multimodal program to address the many challenges facing the U.S. transportation system. MAP-21 builds on and refines many of the highway, transit, bike, and pedestrian programs and policies established in 1991.

### **MPA: Metropolitan Planning Area**

The geographic area in which the metropolitan transportation planning process required by 23 U.S.C. 134 and section 8 of the Federal Transit Act (49 U.S.C. app. 1607) must be carried out. (23CFR420)

**MPO: Metropolitan Planning Organization**

1) Regional policy body, required in urbanized areas with populations over 50,000, and designated by local officials and the governor of the state. Responsible in cooperation with the state and other transportation providers for carrying out the metropolitan transportation planning requirements of federal highway and transit legislation. 2) Formed in cooperation with the state, develops transportation plans and programs for the metropolitan area. For each urbanized area, a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) must be designated by agreement between the Governor and local units of government representing

**Public Participation**

The active and meaningful involvement of the public in the development of transportation plans and programs.

**TIP: Transportation Improvement Program**

A document prepared by a metropolitan planning organization that lists projects to be funded with FHWA/FTA funds for the next one- to three-year period.

**UPWP: Unified Planning Work Program**

The management plan for the (metropolitan) planning program. Its purpose is to coordinate the planning activities of all participants in the planning process.

**WestPlan: West Michigan Metropolitan Transportation Planning Program**

The Metropolitan Planning Organization for the urbanized of Muskegon and northern Ottawa County.

**WMSRDC: West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission**

WMSRDC is a federal and state designated regional planning and development agency serving 120 local governments in Lake, Mason, Muskegon, Newaygo, and Oceana Counties. WMSRDC staffs the Muskegon and northern Ottawa County MPO.

## **Appendix B**

### **MAP-21 Participation Plan Regulations**

#### **23 CFR Part 450.316 Interested parties, participation, and consultation.**

(a) The MPO shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, agencies or entities responsible for safety/security operations, providers of non-emergency transportation services receiving financial assistance from a source other than title 49, U.S.C, Chapter 53, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.

(1) The participation plan shall be developed by the MPO in consultation with all interested parties and shall, at a minimum, describe explicit procedures, strategies, and desired outcomes for:

(i) Providing adequate public notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including but not limited to a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;

(ii) Providing timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes;

(iii) Employing visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs;

(iv) Making public information (technical information and meeting notices) available in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web;

(v) Holding any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;

(vi) Demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input received during the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;

(vii) Seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services;

(viii) Providing an additional opportunity for public comment, if the final metropolitan transportation plan or TIP differs significantly from the version that was initially made available for public comment;

(ix) Coordinating with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes under subpart B of this part; and

(x) Periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the

participation plan to ensure a full and open participation process.

(2) When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft metropolitan transportation plan and TIP (including the financial plans) as a result of the participation process in this section or the interagency consultation process required under the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) transportation conformity regulations (40 CFR part 93), a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made as part of the final metropolitan transportation plan and TIP.

(3) A minimum public comment period of 45 calendar days shall be provided before the initial or revised participation plan is adopted by the MPO. Copies of the approved participation plan shall be provided to the FHWA (Federal Highway Administration) and the FTA (Federal Transit Administration) for informational purposes and shall be posted on the World Wide Web, to the maximum extent practicable.

(b) In developing metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs, the MPO shall consult, as appropriate, with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the MPA that are affected by transportation. To coordinate the planning functions to the maximum extent practicable, such consultation shall compare metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs, as they are developed, with the plans, maps, inventories, and planning documents developed by other agencies. This consultation shall include, as appropriate, contacts with State, local, Indian Tribal, and private agencies responsible for planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, freight movements, land use management, natural resources, conservation, and historic preservation. In addition, transportation plans and TIPs shall be developed with due consideration of other related planning activities within the metropolitan area, and the process shall provide for the design and delivery of transportation services within the area that are provided by:

(1) Recipients of assistance under title 49, U.S.C., Chapter 53;

(2) Governmental agencies and nonprofit organizations (including representatives of the agencies and organizations) that receive Federal assistance from a source other than the U.S. Department of Transportation to provide non-emergency transportation services; and

(3) Recipients of assistance under 23 U.S.C. 204.

(c) When the MPA includes Indian Tribal lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Indian Tribal government(s) in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.

(d) When the MPA includes Federal public lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Federal land management agencies in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.

(e) The MPOs are encouraged to develop a documented process(es) that outlines roles, responsibilities, and key decision points for consulting with other governments and agencies, as defined in paragraphs (b), (c), and (d) of this section, which may be included in the agreement(s) developed under § 450.314.

# Appendix C

## Comments on Participation Plan

The following is a compilation of the comments received during the 45 day public comment period of the Public Participation Plan. The public comment period was September 19 - November 3, 2014.

Comment from Connie Maxim, Muskegon County Grants Coordinator:

- I am Connie the new grants coordinator for Muskegon County. I just saw you are sending the transportation plan out for public comment, that's a great resource for me to write grants with. Do you have a place on the WMSRDC website where all of the planning documents you complete are posted. Just as a reference point for me to gather justification in the future?

Comment from Dave Bee, Director of the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission:

- Thanks Amy! I'll take a look at it. I just know there has to be a more efficient and effective way of getting the word out.

Comments from Rachael Tupica, Transportation Planner, Federal Highway Administration:

- Like I just said in my voicemail, you have done a fantastic job updating this PPP! I have some comments that I think will make it even better. I fully recognize this list looks like a lot, but they are not super significant comments.
- Table of Contents - Needs updated, some section titles and page numbers appear to be off
- Pages 1 & 2 - In the Introduction, the MAB is discussed (page 1). In the legend of the map (page 2) references MPO boundary. To clear up any confusion the public may have on the difference between the two, you may want to use consistent lingo.
- Page 5 - Under the UWP, one of the Procedures is "Information Release". What does this mean? Is this a press release?
- Page 9 - Last paragraph referring to public transportation - Kalamazoo Transit just went through their triennial review and FTA asked them to use slightly different language than what was in their PPP. You may want to talk to Steve Stepek, from KATS, to see what FTA recommended for them. KATS phone number 269-343-0766.
- Page 12 - Obtaining Public Comment.
  - Thinking about the user/reader (the public), it may make more sense to call this section Making Public Comments, or something like that.
  - To Request a Printed Copy of the Documents - If you win the lotto and move to Hawaii, you'd have to update the PPP. Is there a more general email address / contact info that could be used?
- Page 13 - Comments May Be Submitted By - can people submit comments on social media (Facebook)?
- Page 14 - It'd be nice to have the column headings on that table at the top of page 14.
- Page 16 - WMSRDC Acronym - Recommend putting in alphabetical order.
- Media Outlets - It's best to explicitly identify what specific media outlets the WMSRDC will be utilizing. Do you have specific newspapers you use, etc...? If yes, list these.
- Updated & Next Update - Each Significant Planning Initiative has an associated "Updated:" and "Next Update":
  - The UWP says "Updated: Annually" but the next update isn't until 2016. This could cause confusion since we are in 2014.
  - It may be best to clarify if the "Next Update" is when the update is to be started or completed. This occurred to me when reading the section for the LRP, since it's a multiyear process. I didn't think about this for Grand Rapids or for Kalamazoo, but it may be best to document the whole update timeframe. This would give the public a better idea of when to look for announcements.
- Email Distribution Lists - You reference a distribution/contact list in many spots in the document. Please document how someone can get added to those lists if they want to.
- Website comments:
  - Verify all hyperlinks are working properly, they didn't seem to work for me.
  - Whenever you reference the website, it may be helpful to list the full web address.
  - Whenever possible, it may be helpful to reference the exact website to visit (ie the page where Technical and Policy meeting info is housed, as opposed to just the main website)
  - You may want to publicize right on your front page that the PPP is going through the 45-day public comment period.
- Social media - I see you use social media, but didn't see where WMSRDC uses it in their Procedures for public engagement when updating documents. Is WMSRDC planning to use Facebook/social media in this way?
- Also, you could publish a specific participation plan for certain document updates. For example, if WMSRDC wants to put together a brochure for the LRP update that has more detailed information, schedules, dates, etc..., outreach activities, you can always do that. The info in those brochures would just build off of the PPP.
- Public engagement is the foundation for a great planning process that meets the needs of the people in your MPO. Thank you for your work on this. This will be very helpful to the public. Call me if you have any questions or if you want to sit down and go over anything.