

The Public Participation Plan in Transportation Decision Making

West Michigan Metropolitan Transportation Planning
Program (WestPlan)

Adopted: August 15, 2018

West Michigan Metropolitan Transportation Planning Program
c/o West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission
316 Morris Avenue, Suite 340
Muskegon, MI 49440
Phone: (231) 722-7878

E-mail: ahaack@wmsrdc.org

www.wmsrdc.org

Prepared by the



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

Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
2. Requirements	1
3. The Public	3
4. Meetings.....	4
5. Significant Planning Initiatives & Opportunities for Public Input.....	4
Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).....	5
Long Range Transportation Plan (LRP).....	6
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)	9
Public Participation Plan (PPP).....	12
6. Public Notification.....	13
7. Outreach Strategies.....	13
8. Making Public Comments	14
9. Treatment of Public Comments.....	14
10. Measures of Effectiveness	15
11. Revisions to the Participation Plan	16
 Appendices	
Appendix A: Acronyms and Definitions.....	17
Appendix B: FAST Act Participation Plan Regulations.....	19
Appendix C: Comments on Participation Plan.....	21

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

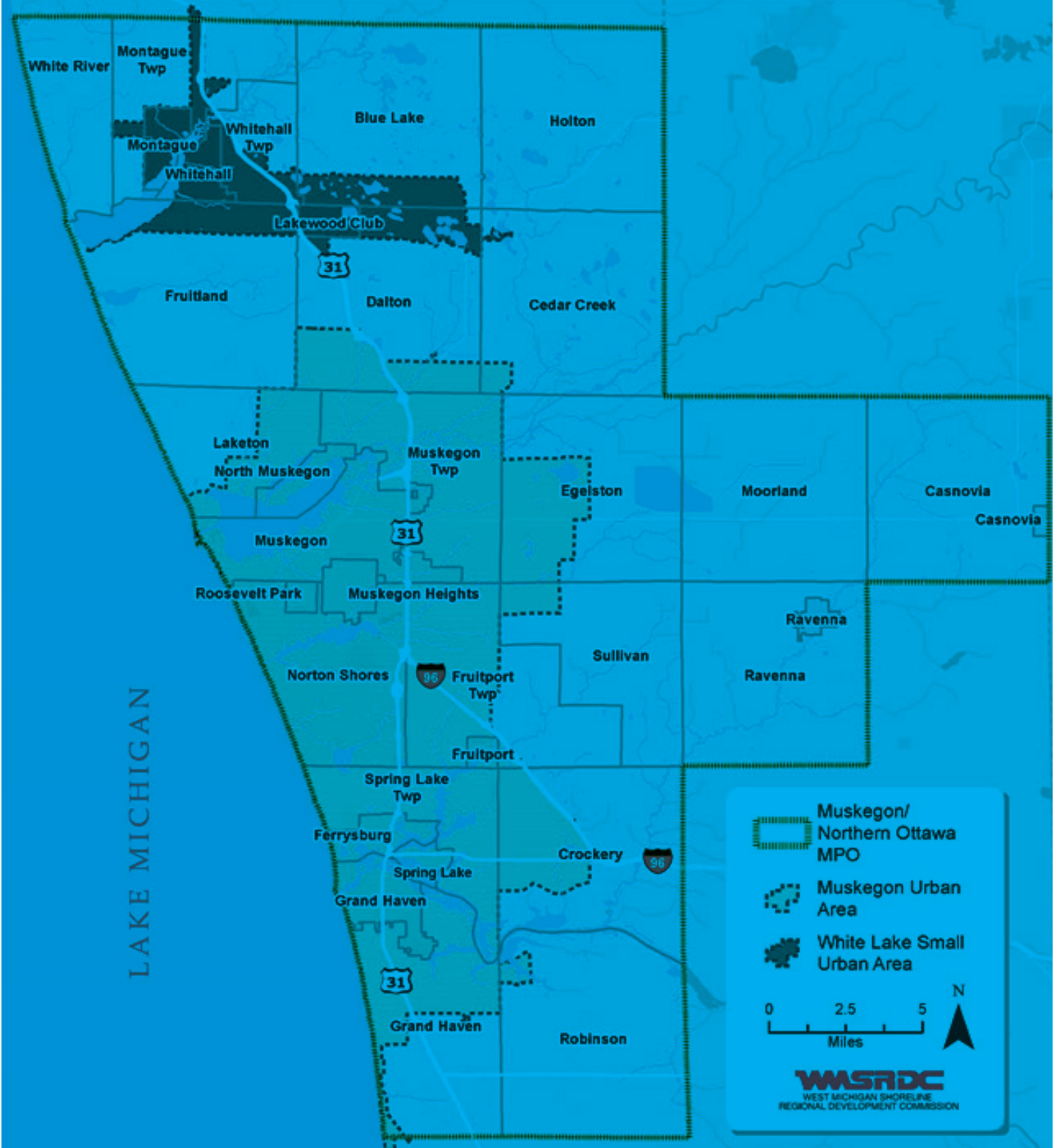
The current federal transportation act titled, Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, continues the emphasis placed by MAP-21 on extensive stakeholder participation. Highlights of the FAST Act requirements for public participation include:

- 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 the FAST Act 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

The FAST Act 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.”

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 will work with the Disability Connection of West Michigan to offer assistance to

individuals with disabilities and/or language barriers to read and/or comment on this and other documents. This assistance could be done on a same day basis or within a two day time-frame depending on the specific needs and desire.

Through written communication, e-mail, newsletters, or phone, WMSRDC 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.

The transportation needs and opinions of those with disabilities will be sought out. The planning process will be made accessible to such persons

as per the regulation provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Public meetings will be held in facilities that are on transit routes and that are accessible to persons with disabilities.

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 (www.wmsrdc.org/events/) also contains meeting

notifications, locations, and agendas. Interested citizens may have their name added to the contact list for meeting materials by contacting 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 in this document. The charts 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 in the month of June.**

Milestone	Procedure	Public Notification Date	Length of Public Comment (Minimum)
Adoption of the draft document	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notice on website Email to interested citizen/agency list Press release Notice on social media (Facebook, etc.) 	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.
UWP Amendments. It is occasionally necessary to amend the UWP because of changes to the work program.	<p>Staff will bring UWP amendments to the Policy Committee for approval. A public comment opportunity will be available at the committee meeting. The public will be notified of this public comment opportunity in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notice on website Notice on social media (Facebook, etc.) Email sent to interested citizen/agency list Press Release 	Six (6) days prior to Policy Committee meeting	A minimum of six (6) days, prior to the date of the Policy Committee meeting.

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 began 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	<p>Once the LRP development process begins, WMSRDC staff will notify the public in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice and LRP information on website • Email to interested citizen/agency list • Press release • Notice on social media (Facebook, etc.) 	N/A	N/A; Public involvement will be continuous throughout the LRP development process. Updates will be posted regularly on the website and given at committee meetings.
Pre-Programming	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice and LRP information on website • Email to interested citizen/agency list • Press release • Notice on social media (Facebook, etc.) <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"> • Notice on website • Email sent to interested citizen/ agency list • Press release of the public comment period and the open house • Notice on social media (Facebook, etc.) • Copies of the draft LRP distributed to jurisdictions within the MPO area. <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"> • Notice on website • Notice on social media (Facebook, etc.) • Respond to public comments 	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"> • Notice on website • Notice on social media (Facebook, etc.) • Email sent to interested citizen/ agency list • Press Release 	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 June 2019. The next update will begun in the fall 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"> • Notice on website 	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"> • Notice on website • Email to interested citizen/agency mailing list • Notice on social media (Facebook, etc.) • A public notice regarding the public comment period and open house will distributed to all jurisdictions within the MPO area 	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"> • Notice on website • Email sent to interested citizen/ agency list • Press release of the public comment period and the open house • Notice on social media (Facebook, etc.) • Copies of the draft LRP distributed to jurisdictions within the MPO area. <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"> • Notice on website • Notice on social media (Facebook, etc.) • Respond to public comments 	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"> • Notice on website • Notice on social media (Facebook, etc.) • Email sent to interested citizen/ agency list • Press Release 	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 www.wmsrdc.org/publications.

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 2020. The next update will begin in the spring of 2020.**

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"> • Notice on website • Direct mailing sent to interested citizen/agency list • Notice on social media (Facebook, etc.) 	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"> • Notice on website 	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 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 (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 (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 www.wmsrdc.org/events).

To Request a Printed Copy of the Documents

- Call (231) 722-7878
- Email to ahaack@wmsrdc.org
- Internet address: www.wmsrdc.org

To Request to be Added to the Email Distribution List

- Call (231) 722-7878
- Email to 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
- Online at WMSRDC at 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 (www.wmsrdc.org); 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 every two years) be undertaken by the MPO. Major revisions will necessitate undertaking various measures as described on page 12.

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

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.

Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act

On December 4, 2015, President Obama signed the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act (Pub. L. No. 114-94) into law—the first federal law in over a decade to provide long-term funding certainty for surface transportation infrastructure planning and investment. The FAST Act authorizes \$305 billion over fiscal years 2016 through 2020 for highway, highway and motor vehicle safety, public transportation, motor carrier safety, hazardous materials safety, rail, and research, technology, and statistics programs. The FAST Act maintains our focus on safety, keeps intact the established structure of the various highway-related programs we manage, continues efforts to streamline project delivery and, for the first time, provides a dedicated source of federal dollars for freight projects. With the enactment of the FAST Act, states and local governments are now moving forward with critical transportation projects with the confidence that they will have a federal partner over the long term.

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.

GPA: General Program Accounts

Federal regulation 23 CFR 450.324 (f) states projects that are not considered to be of appropriate scale for individual identification in a given program year may be grouped by function, work type, and/or geographic area using the applicable classifications under 23 CFR 771.117(c) and (d) and/or 40 CFR part 93. In nonattainment and maintenance areas, project classifications must be consistent with the "exempt project" classifications contained in the EPA transportation conformity regulation (40 CFR part 93). In addition, projects proposed for funding under title 23 U.S.C. Chapter 2 that are not regionally significant may be grouped in one line item or identified individually in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). In Michigan, these groupings of projects are called General Program Accounts (GPA). A project is defined as all the job numbers and phases for proposed work that are included

in the associated environmental documents. Projects that have similar work type activities can be grouped together in a GPA based on that work type activity and included in the state's metropolitan area TIPs and/or the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for non-metropolitan areas. Trunkline Project lists for each individual GPA are maintained by MDOT.

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.

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

FAST Act 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 individuals, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, public ports, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation (including intercity bus operators, employer-based commuting programs, such as carpool program, vanpool program, transit benefit program, parking cash-out program, shuttle program, or telework program), 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.

(1) The MPO shall develop the participation plan 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 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 made available for public comment by the MPO and raises new material issues that interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts;
- (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 transportation conformity regulations (40 CFR part 93, subpart A), 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 and the FTA 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 should consult with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the MPA that are affected by transportation (including State and local planned growth, economic development, tourism, natural disaster risk reduction, environmental protection, airport operations, or freight movements) or coordinate its planning process (to the maximum extent practicable) with such planning activities. In addition, the MPO(s) shall develop the metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs 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. 201–204.

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

(e) MPOs shall, to the extent practicable, 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

There were no public comments made regarding this plan.