

# **THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN IN TRANSPORTATION DECISION MAKING**

**WEST MICHIGAN METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION  
PLANNING PROGRAM (WESTPLAN)**

**ADOPTED: ADD DATE ONCE ADOPTED**

**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**

**EMAIL: [AHAACK@WMSRDC.ORG](mailto:AHAACK@WMSRDC.ORG)**

**[WWW.WMSRDC.ORG](http://WWW.WMSRDC.ORG)**

**PREPARED BY:**



**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 (MDOT), 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).



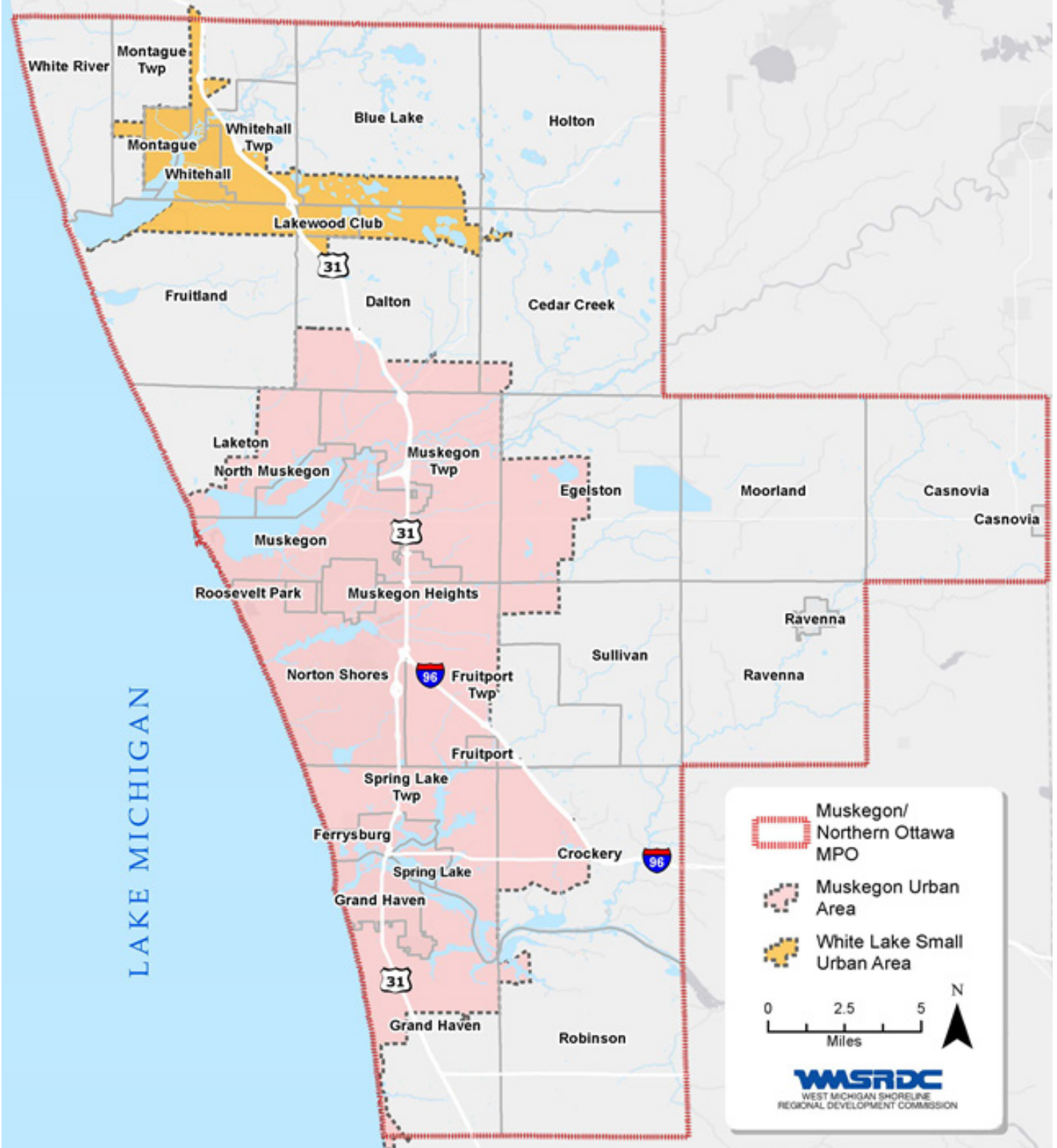
The current WestPlan MPO consists of the entire county of Muskegon and the City of Grand Haven, City of Ferrysburg, Village of Spring Lake, the townships of Crockery, Grand Haven, Spring Lake, and Robinson and a small portion of Port Sheldon Township in Ottawa County. WestPlan addresses transportation 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 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 are below. The full text relating to the public participation process within the FAST Act is in the appendix of this document.

- 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 internet;
- Holding public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;
- Seeking out and considering needs of traditionally under served 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.

# 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.”



Input from any individual, group, organization, agency, business, municipality, or service provider is encouraged. Activities encouraging the open dialogue with these groups include maintaining and updating a contact list of interested parties as well as receiving comments by mail, telephone, or e-mail and during committee meetings.

Participation is encouraged of persons who have been traditionally under served, as well as meeting the requirements of Executive Order 12898 related to Environmental Justice and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Groups will be worked with 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, it 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 committee member.

Stakeholder organizations representing the interests of:

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

Types of organizations located in the 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



These organization types are on the 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 virtually or 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 virtually and/or 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 website at [wmsrdc.org](http://wmsrdc.org). The schedule of meetings will also be posted in the WMSRDC office and distributed to each member unit of government for posting.

Monthly meeting notifications including agendas, location, and virtual meeting login information are sent to the cities, townships, villages, road commissions, and transit agencies within the area for public posting. The WMSRDC website at [wmsrdc.org](http://wmsrdc.org) also shows meeting notifications, locations, and agendas. Interested citizens may have their name added to the contact list for meeting materials by contacting WMSRDC. WestPlan 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 virtually or at convenient and accessible locations and times where it is feasible for the most 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, the Unified Work Program, corridor studies, port studies, transit studies, non-motorized studies, and other activities. When describing a significant planning initiative to the public appropriate visualization techniques will be incorporated. Please see the Transportation Overview located in the appendix of this document.

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.

## 6. CONSULTATION

Specific requirements are followed that outline what types of agencies or stakeholders need to be consulted during the transportation planning process and the type of information that needs to be shared with these interested parties. The overarching goal of this process is to eliminate or minimize conflicts with other agencies' plans, programs, or policies as they relate to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) planning process. When agencies such as land use management agencies are consulted during the development of the TIP, groups like these can compare the TIP project list and map with other natural or historic resource inventories. WMSRDC is also able to compare the draft TIP to any documents received and make adjustments as necessary to achieve greater compatibility. The consultation process is based on recommendations from the Federal Highway Administration and the MDOT. More information about the consultation process can be found in the current TIP document available on the WMSRDC website at [wmsrdc.org](http://wmsrdc.org) or by contacting WMSRDC.

## 7. ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Projects in the TIP are ensured to meet the principles of Executive Order 12898 relating to environmental justice (EJ). Specifically, the TIP identifies and, if necessary, addresses any disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs and policies on minority populations and low-income populations.

The process taken to analyze the principles of Executive Order 12898 includes mapping the areas of impoverished and minority population concentrations. These concentrations are overlaid with the current TIP projects and subjected to a visual analysis of potential impacts. Analysis of potential impacts center on three potential major areas of concern: 1: Disproportionally high adverse impact to impoverished and minority areas; 2: Minimizing/blocking access of low income areas and minority areas to the transportation system; 3: Neglect of the transportation system in low-income areas and minority areas. This participation plan works in concert with the EJ analysis to reach out to traditionally disadvantaged populations to ascertain the potential effects and or impacts of proposed projects. More information about environmental justice can be found in the current TIP document available on the WMSRDC website at [wmsrdc.org](http://wmsrdc.org) or by contacting WMSRDC. There are also EJ map overlays with the current TIP projects in the appendix of this document.

## 8. TITLE VI

Title VI prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in any program or activity that receives federal funds or other federal financial assistance. All people of the state of Michigan are served, including minority populations, low-income populations, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and those who traverse the MPO. The responsibility is recognized to provide fairness and equity in all programs, services, and activities, and federal and state civil rights legislation must be enforced. This participation plan works in concert with the Title VI Plan to reach out to traditionally disadvantaged populations to ascertain the potential effects and or impacts of proposed projects. The Title VI Plan can be found on the WMSRDC website at [wmsrdc.org](http://wmsrdc.org) or by contacting WMSRDC. The WMSRDC Equity Statement is in the appendix of this document.

## 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	Once the draft UWP document is complete, staff will bring it to the Policy Committee for approval. A public comment opportunity will be available at the committee meeting. 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 Policy Committee meeting.	A minimum of six (6) days, prior to the date of the Policy Committee meeting.
UWP Amendments. It is occasionally necessary to amend the UWP because of changes to the work program.	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: <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 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 2024. The next update will begin in the fall of 2022. 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, Staff will notify the public in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notice and LRP information on website</li> <li>• Email 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 throughout the LRP development process. Updates will be posted regularly on the website and given at committee meetings.
Pre-Programming	<p>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"> <li>• Notice and LRP information on website</li> <li>• Email 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 EGLE) 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 MPO area. **The TIP is updated every 3-4 years. The next update is due in June 2022. The next update will begin in the fall of 2021.**

Milestone	Procedure	Public Notification Date	Length of Public Comment (Minimum)
Kickoff to TIP Development	<p>Before the TIP development process begins, staff will notify the public in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notice on website</li> </ul>	Seven (7) days prior to the first TIP	N/A; notification only
<p>Draft project lists, environmental justice, and air quality results (if applicable) completed and available for public comment.</p> <p>The environmental consultation phase will begin at this point also.</p>	<p>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 and to consultation agencies for consultation.</p> <p>Staff will contact state regulatory agencies (i.e., MDNR and EGLE) to consult with them on the draft project list and potential impacts on environmentally sensitive areas.</p> <p>An open house will also be held. The public and consultation agencies 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 to interested citizen/agency mailing list and consultation agencies</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 document completed and available for public comment	<p>Once the draft TIP document is 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.</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 TIP 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 [wmsrdc.org](http://wmsrdc.org) or by contacting WMSRDC.

## 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 the summer of 2023. The next update will begin in the spring of 2023.**

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 under served (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 which can be found at [wmsrdc.org](http://wmsrdc.org) or by contacting WMSRDC. 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

It is recognized 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.

All agency's library and map files are available to the public. Planning documents, meeting minutes, and maps are available for review during normal business hours as well as on the WMSRDC website at [wmsrdc.org](http://wmsrdc.org). 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 at [wmsrdc.org](http://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

New ways are continually being looked at to involve the public in the transportation planning process. A proactive stance will continue to be taken in the approach to engage the public and expand efforts to keep the public up to date on activities.

There are two primary audiences of this 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 to 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 responsibilities and functions.
  - Highlight successful agency projects 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 social media outlets.
  - Establish policies and procedures for social media updates.



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

- **Electronic Media:**
  - Website ([www.wmsrdc.org](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:

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

- West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC) Website ([www.wmsrdc.org](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 government jurisdictions)
- Attend committee meeting or hearing (Technical Committee and Policy Committee meeting schedules are available at [www.wmsrdc.org/events](http://www.wmsrdc.org/events).)

### **To Request a Printed Copy of the Documents**

- Call (231) 722-7878
- Email to [ahaack@wmsrdc.org](mailto:ahaack@wmsrdc.org)
- Internet address: [www.wmsrdc.org](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 Technical and 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 an activity, 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 on a particular document, 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**

This plan as well as any social media product accounts should be reviewed periodically for their effectiveness. Some technologies can take months and even longer to be successful. Several available analytical metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of each technology should be used. As new technologies and formats emerge and gain traction, they should be considered.

Such measures can include, but are not limited to; tracking website hits, social media interest, and comments received through those means or verbally, written, 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 Committees, as well as during the development of agency documents
Social Media	Calls, emails, letter correspondence, etc; Number of "followers"	Annual increase in "followers" of ten (10)	Provide information announcements, access to surveys, meeting information, important action items; maintain and monitor activity daily
Public Meetings /Hearings / Open Houses	Attendance at meetings / hearings; 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.)
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. Major revisions will necessitate undertaking various measures as described earlier in this document.

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

West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission  
316 Morris Avenue, Suite 340  
Muskegon, MI 49440  
(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.

#### **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 authorized \$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 maintained the 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 can continue to move 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**

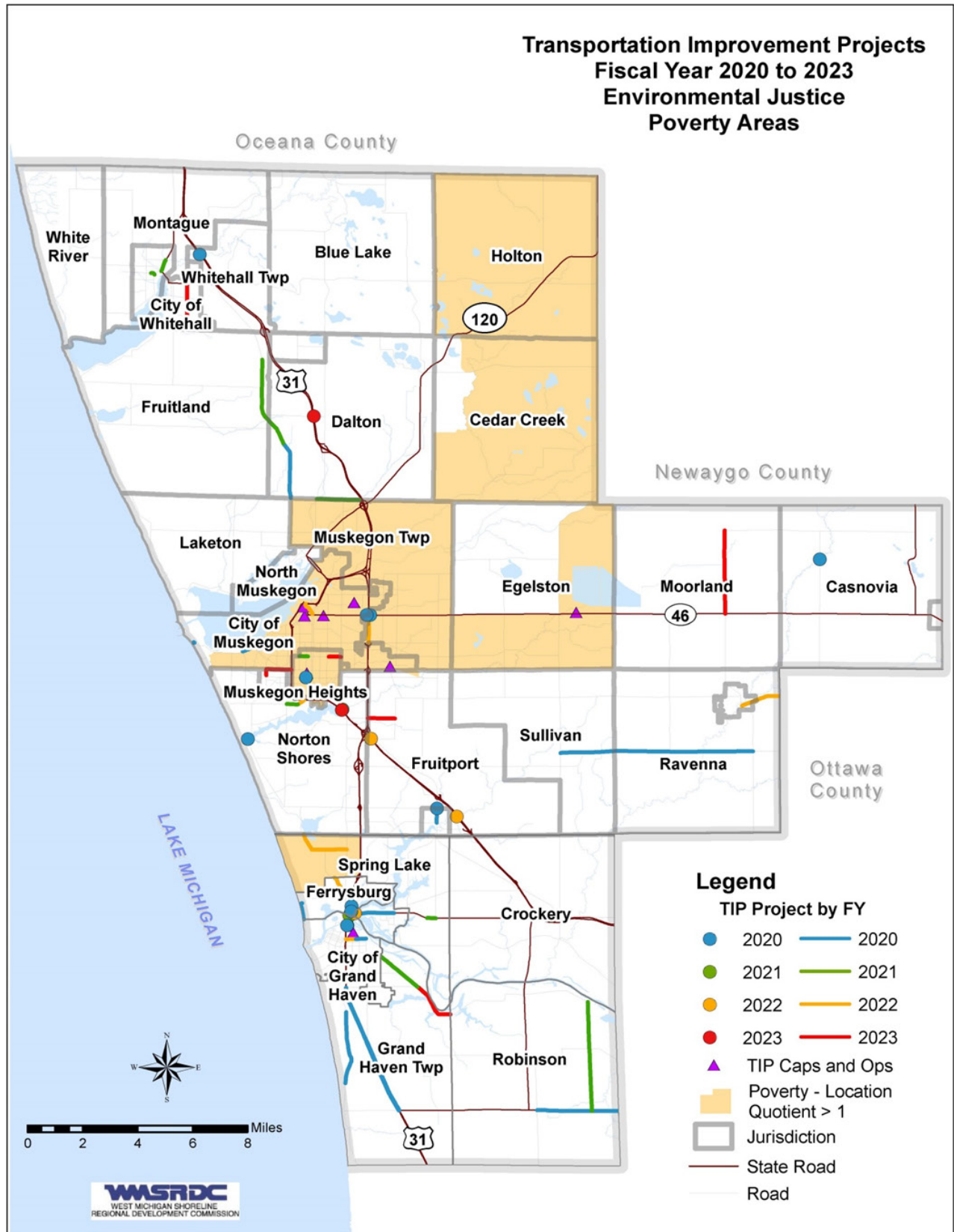
#### **23 CFR Part 450.316 Interested parties, participation, and consultation.**

(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.

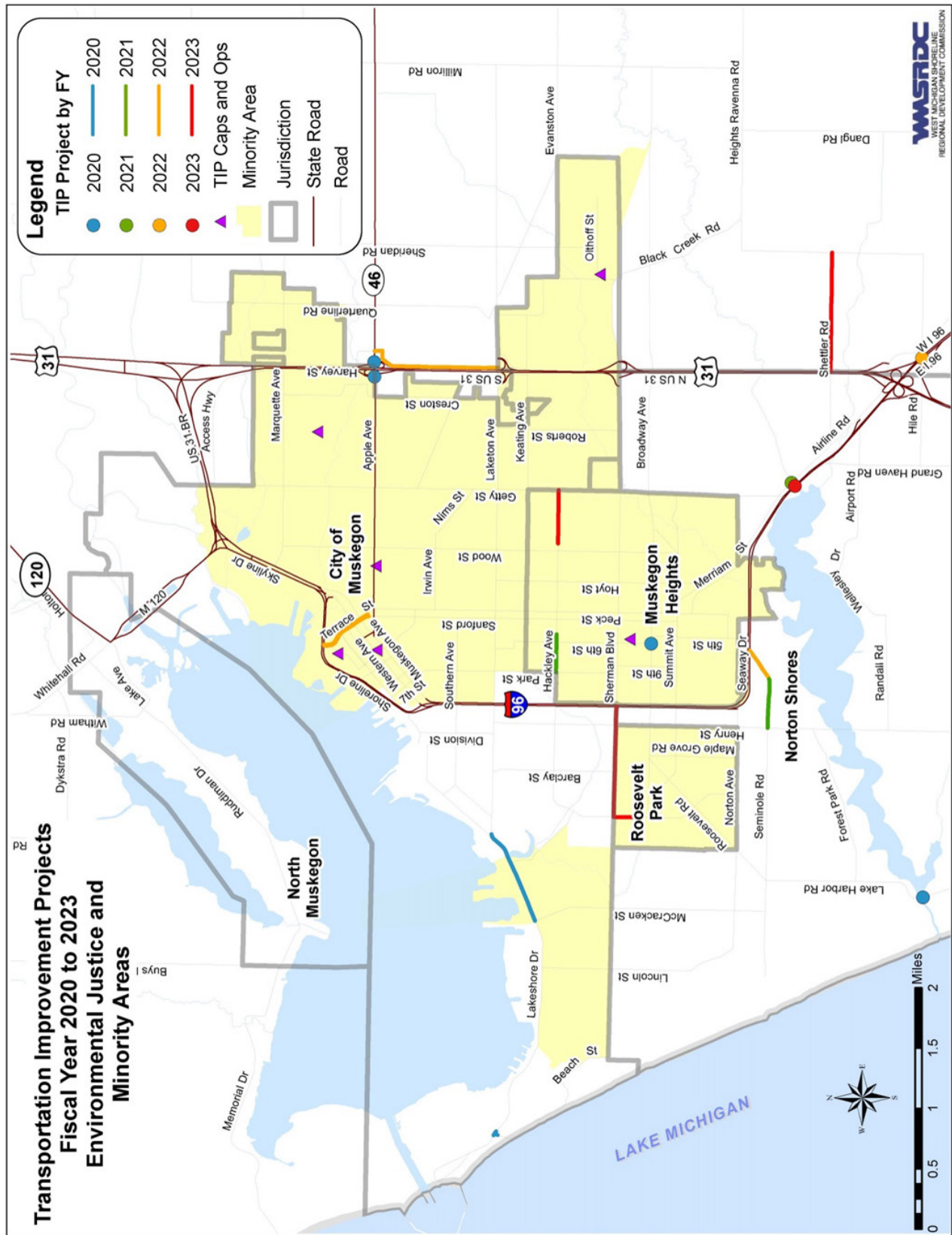
- (1) The MPO shall develop the participation plan in consultation with all interested parties and shall, at a minimum, describe explicit procedures, strategies, and desired outcomes for:
- (i) Providing adequate public notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment 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;

# Appendix C

## Maps of Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Projects and Environmental Justice Poverty Areas







## **Appendix D**

### **West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC) Equity Statement**

#### **Equity Statement**

The Commission defines equity as the intentional inclusion of everyone in society. Equity is achieved when systemic, institutional, and historical barriers based on race, gender, sexual orientation, and other identities and abilities are dismantled and no longer predict socioeconomic, education, and health outcomes.

The Commission recognizes structural racism and other forms of oppression have contributed to persistent disparities which the Commission seeks to dismantle within its region. The Commission strives to engage community members, especially those whose voices have traditionally been marginalized. The Commission works with local governments, residents, and public and private partners to provide resources, support, and opportunities that create prosperous and thriving communities for all citizens.

The Commission also strives to provide a work environment that recognizes individual differences, is free from discrimination, and is respectful of the rights and dignity of all individuals. The Commission has built its reputation on the foundations of excellence and integrity, and expects its employees to exhibit behaviors consistent with these standards.

Therefore, the Commission commits to leveraging our resources and assets to create more equitable communities through the programs it administers, as well as to develop racially conscious partnerships and processes that anticipate unintended outcomes to ensure the inclusion of all people in the region and organization.

## Appendix E Transportation Program Overview

### Transportation Program Overview

#### **METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO)**

The West Michigan Metropolitan Planning Program (WestPlan) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Muskegon County and northern Ottawa County.

WestPlan is a program of the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC). The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act requires that an MPO be designated for each urbanized area with a population of more than 50,000 people. The MPO carries out the metropolitan transportation planning process as a condition to receive federal transportation aid.

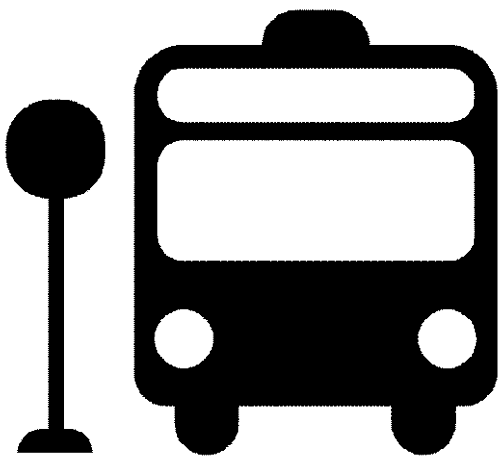


Every MPO, including WestPlan, consists of a Policy Committee and a Technical Committee. The Technical Committee recommends decisions to the Policy Committee. The Policy Committee is responsible for all final decisions regarding the MPO transportation planning process.

The following local communities and/or transportation agencies and providers are members of WestPlan:

- Muskegon County
- Muskegon County Road Commission
- City of Muskegon
- City of Muskegon Heights
- City of North Muskegon
- City of Norton Shores

- City of Roosevelt Park
- City of Whitehall
- City of Montague
- Village of Fruitport
- Muskegon Area Transit System
- Muskegon County Urban Townships (one representative for all)
- Muskegon **County** Rural Townships (one representative for all)
- Ottawa County
- Ottawa County Road Commission
- City of Grand Haven
- City of Ferrysburg
- Village of Spring Lake
- Ottawa County Urban Townships (one representative for all)
- Ottawa County Rural Townships (one representative for all)
- Harbor Transit Multi-Modal Transit System
- Federal Highway Administration
- Michigan Department of Transportation



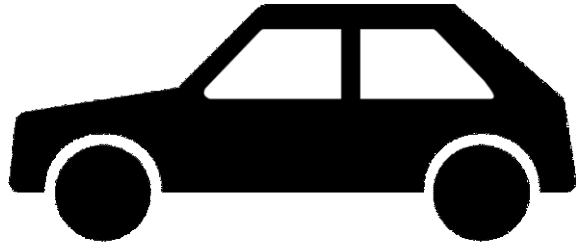
### **LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

Every MPO, including WestPlan, prepares a Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) in accordance with federal regulations that provides for a multi-jurisdictional, multi-year look at the Muskegon/Northern Ottawa area's future transportation system. The LRTP is updated every four years and outlines the transportation needs and resources for the evaluated 25 year period

with constrained finances. The plan also includes the use of local, state, and federal

transportation goals and objectives to guide transportation plans and projects. The WestPlan LRTP, in its continual development, is a cooperative effort of the MPO, the state, local communities, public transit agencies, transportation stakeholders, and the public.

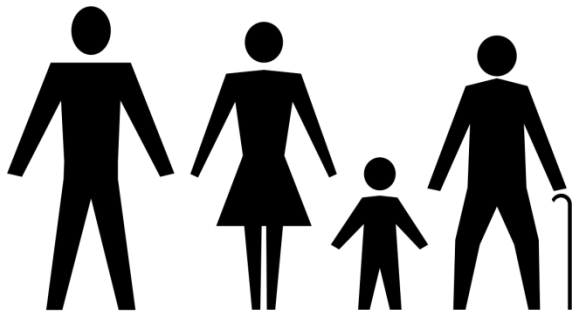
## **TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**



MPOs are also required to prepare a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP is a cooperative effort between federal, state, and local officials and serves as the final link in the planning process. Its primary purpose is to identify programs and projects to be funded with federal aid, in accordance with federal law and the regulations of the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration over the next four year period. Projects for the TIP are selected based on several factors, including need, local initiative, and requirements of the federal government through federal transportation regulations. Other considerations for project selection include impact on air quality and availability of funds. The TIP is amended continually and includes a detailed list of projects which are funded and scheduled for the upcoming four year (fiscal years) period. The development of the TIP facilitates the required “3-C” (Continuous, Comprehensive, and Cooperative) planning process. The TIP is a product of a *continuous* process on the part of local and state government to improve the regional transportation system. The TIP is *comprehensive* because it encompasses all modes of transportation. In addition, the TIP demonstrates a *cooperative* intergovernmental working relationship between local officials to mutually agree upon priorities and needs. The TIP project list is edited frequently and can be found on the WMSRDC website at [www.wmsrdc.org](http://www.wmsrdc.org).

## **UNIFIED WORK PROGRAM**

WestPlan develops a required Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) in cooperation with the state, local communities, public transit agencies, transportation stakeholders, and the public. The UWP includes a discussion of the planning priorities facing the region and serves as the core budget for the urban transportation planning activities of WestPlan's transportation program. It identifies the work proposed for the upcoming fiscal year by major activity and task in sufficient detail to indicate who will perform the work, the schedule for completing the work, the resulting products, the proposed funding by activity/task, and a summary of the total amounts and sources of federal and matching funds.



## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

WestPlan is committed to ensuring that citizen input will figure prominently throughout the planning processes and contribute to transportation issue identification through public comment

periods, public meetings, open houses, review of draft documents, and other methods. WestPlan is also federally required to explicitly set forth public participation policies that meet federal standards and guidelines. These policies are laid out in the Public Participation Plan in Transportation Decision Making which can be found on the WMSRDC website at [www.wmsrdc.org](http://www.wmsrdc.org).

## **MORE INFORMATION**

Joel Fitzpatrick, Transportation Director  
West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission  
316 Morris Avenue, Suite 340  
Muskegon, Michigan 49440  
[jfitzpatrick@wmsrdc.org](mailto:jfitzpatrick@wmsrdc.org)  
(231) 722-7878

**Appendix F**  
**Comments on this Plan**