MIAMI VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
REGIONAL EQUITY INITIATIVE SUB-COMMITTEE
MEETING SUMMARY

Guests Present
Kemo A'akhutera, ModFab, Inc.
Tania Arseculeratne, The Dayton Foundation
Peter Benkendorf, The Collaboratory
Niani Brown, Dayton Office of Sustainability
Debi Chess, Dayton Metro Library
Ellen Claiborne, Office of Strategic Initiative
Jakob Denney, City of Moraine
Stanley Earley, University of Dayton
Deogratias Eustace, University of Dayton
Dr. Derrick Foward, NAACP
Gayle Fowler, EJ Academy Alumna
Ebony Hastings
Jasmine Henderson, The Good Hood Foundation
Karen Hesser, Five Rivers MetroParks
Dustin Hughes, ABLE
Tom Kelley, United Way of the Greater Dayton Area
Adriane Miller, NCCJ
Nikol Miller, Miami Valley Urban League
Dee Wooding, Westwood Right Project

Staff
Michele Allen
Arnie Biondo
Bryce Gullett
Fabrice Juin
Brian O. Martin

The Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission hosted the Regional Equity Initiative Subcommittee meeting on August 26, 2026 at 2:30 p.m. at The Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission Office (6 N. Main Street, Suite 447, Dayton, OH 45402) & via Zoom Video Conference.

I. Welcome & Introductions

Program Manager Fabrice Juin called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m. and introduced the new Subcommittee Chairperson, Executive Director Nikol Miller of the Miami Valley Urban League. Self-introductions were made by meeting participants.

II. Program Manager's Report

Program Manager Fabrice Juin provided a report on recent program activities.

Beginning with the Health & Environment domain, the final stretch of the Thriving Communities Grantmaking Program effort was highlighted. Facilitated community sessions with Westwood residents and surrounding community members started in February 2026 and will continue until August 2026; with a graduation ceremony being planned for participants in September 2026. Each facilitated session focused on the seven elements of the EPA's Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Model, towards the education end empowerment of local communities to better engage with their elected leadership and decision-making stakeholders at the neighborhood level. Westwood Right Project CDC founder Dee Wooding shared details about a recent group visit to a City of Dayton Commission meeting, which included receiving the Mayor's verbal support on the "Don't Be A Litterbug" anti-litter and anti-dumping campaign. Program Manager Fabrice Juin will

compile a final report after the end of the project period (October 2026) to share with the Subcommittee and Institute Steering Committee.

Mr. Dustin Hughes mentioned ABLE meeting with neighborhood associations and different organizations regarding environmental justice legal issues. Ms. Gayle Fowler mentioned her opportunity to speak to a group of local cohorts about environmental justice, healthy homes, particularly intergenerational work.

Program Manager Fabrice Juin presented information on the BEAD program, the Digital Equity Act, and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). The Digital Equity Act and its associated federal funding has been restored by court order, but can only continue if the race related provisions are removed from the statute. More information is slated to be released towards the end of the year.

Program Manager Fabrice Juin also shared updates on recent collaborative work within the Greater Region Mobility Initiative; which included co-facilitating a workshop on 5310 funding applicants that addressed Title VI non-discrimination and ADA compliance. Staff also noted an upcoming public comment period regarding proposed regulations for e-bikes and e-motorcycles, emphasizing that substantive input from the Subcommittee and regional partners is encouraged to ensure the regulations do not unduly restrict individuals who rely on these devices for transportation. Mr. Earley requested additional information on e-devices. Executive Director Brian Martin noted key distinctions between higher-powered e-motorcycles and e-bikes, and indicated that local law enforcement and Representative Andrea White are actively exploring regulatory solutions for these devices.

III. Age-Friendly Initiative Update

Del Mar Encore Fellow Arnie Biondo provided an update on the Miami Valley Age-Friendly Network (MVAFN), reporting that the region now includes 21 designated age-friendly communities. An in-person MVAFN meeting is planned for September 15, with programming focused on Village-to-Village networks and their potential to expand services and resources for older adults. Staff are collaborating on the development of an Age-Friendly Network newsletter, which is currently underway. The next grant deadline for age-friendly communities is October 1. Mr. Biondo also noted that he will be presenting at an upcoming Parks and Recreation conference on that same date.

IV. Subcommittee Chair & Member Updates/Insights

Chairperson Nikol Miller noted the recent publication of the State of Black Dayton Report (Resilience & Renewal: Charting the Future for Black Dayton), which includes articles authored by various Subcommittee members and participants. Chairperson Miller thanked all for their contributions. The report is available online, may be accessed at the local library, or obtained in print for a small donation. Executive Director Brian Martin spoke to the importance of engagement with the project, particularly around issues of infrastructure and access. Meeting attendees were encouraged to share and promote the report broadly. Dr. Forward commended the entire team on the quality of the work.

Chairperson Miller also provided an update on the 2030 Census, noting that a local address canvassing operation is scheduled for May 2027. Jurisdictions will have an opportunity to review the master address file and submit updates for any data that may be incomplete or missing.

V. Hispanic Heritage Month & Native American Heritage Month

Program Manager Fabrice Juin noted recent difficulties and safety concerns affecting Hispanic residents in the Miami Valley; and the current collaborative with the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce to provide organizational consultation and strategic planning in support of the Hispanic

community in the region. It was shared that the Hispanic Heritage Festival is scheduled for September 19 at Riverscape MetroPark.

Information on Native American Heritage Month (observed in November) was also shared. Mr. Peter Benkendorf reported meeting with the Community Coalition for Indigenous Peoples and Stephanie Van Hoose. Along with other community partners, the Institute for Livable & Equitable Communities submitted a letter of support to REACH Indigenous Advocacy which assisted the organization in securing grant funding toward REACH Fest; scheduled for November 12 to November 15th at the University of Dayton.

VI. Other Informational Items & Next Meeting

Ms. Debi Chess announced that the Northwest Library will host social justice speaker Fred Hampton Jr. Ms. Chess encouraged attendees to visit the library's website for details and to attend the fifth year of the Social Justice Speaker Series. Ms. Debi Chess also reported on the recent installation of solar panels at the West Branch Library.

Ms. Karen Hesser announced a ribbon-cutting ceremony for a new playground at Eastwood MetroPark and the creation of a new ADA-accessible paved loop trail at Possum Creek MetroPark. The retirement of Ms. Carrie Scarff from Five Rivers MetroParks was also noted.

Ms. Niani Brown shared information about the Youth Climate Innovation Challenge Mini-Grant Program, which is available to youth ages 15–24 and offers awards of up to $5,000 for community climate projects. Proposed projects must align with the priorities of the City of Dayton's Office of Sustainability, as listed on the program website. The application deadline is October 2.

Program Manager Fabrice Juin noted that the next Subcommittee meeting currently scheduled for November 25 may conflict with Thanksgiving plans and suggested that the meeting could be restructured as an activity or outing. Mr. Martin proposed moving the meeting to an earlier or later date.

VII. Closing Remarks

Chairperson Nikol Miller adjourned the meeting at 3:45 p.m.