

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

Guests Present

Peter Benkendorf, The Collaboratory
Debra Brathwaite, The Dayton Foundation
Niani Brown, City of Dayton Office of Sustainability
Nancy Byrge, City of Huber Heights
Taylor Curtis, YWCA Greater Cincinnati
Dennis Grant, United Rehabilitation Services, CEO
Rap Hankins, REI Chairperson
Jasmine Henderson,
Martha-Jeannette Rodriguez, City of Dayton
Nancy McHugh, Fitz Center for Leadership in Community, Executive Director
Tim Pritchard, City of Dayton Office of Sustainability
Richard Schultze,
Charles Weaver, City of Trotwood
Allison Williams, Npower

Staff

Serena Anderson
Arnie Biondo
Savannah Diamond
Bryce Gullett
Fabrice Juin
Matthew Lindsay
Brian O. Martin
Tonda Mingus

The Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission hosted the Regional Equity Initiative Sub-Committee meeting on February 24th, 2026 at 2:30 p.m. at The Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission and via Zoom Video Conference

I. WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Chairperson Rap Hankins called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m. Self-introductions were made.

II. PROGRAM MANAGER'S REPORT

Program Manager Fabrice Juin provided a report on recent program activities. The Institute for Livable & Equitable Communities Annual Program Report was presented to the Institute Steering Committee and Board of Directors. Juin shared program and strategic changes, program evaluations, canceled opportunities, regional recognition, and updates on domain prioritization and co-leads. It was affirmed to the group that "equity" stands for "everybody" here in the Miami Valley. Additionally, the Miami Valley Age Friendly Network now boasts 18 of the state's 41 age-friendly designated communities and continues its partnership with The Dayton Foundation and the Del Mar Healthcare Fund.

Program Manager Fabrice Juin also shared updates on the Great Lakes Thriving Communities Grantmaking Program, announcing the launch of the Academy for Thriving Communities this weekend. A Tier 1 award was secured for assessment and engagement efforts at the community level related to environmental and public health issues, which will help connect disadvantaged communities to actionable opportunities. This training and empowerment model is similar to the Environmental Justice Academy but is focused on a specific community. The program is working with the Westwood Right Project CDC to assess and engage with an illegal dumping and littering issue expressed by Westwood residents. The kick-off is this Saturday, with ongoing monthly half-day sessions on Saturdays at the Greater Dayton Rec Center focused on issue identification, community visioning, and strategic goal setting. The program utilizes participant stipends and local expertise to create tangible action. Finally, Fabrice provided an update on the Broadband Ohio & BEAD Program,

noting that the state's unserved internet locations were reduced from 300,000 to 60,000 between 2019 and 2025. Approximately \$310 million (or 39%) of the original federal allocation is designated for deployment, and non-deployment guidance expected in March could be directed toward literacy or workforce development.

III. AGE-FRIENDLY INITIATIVE UPDATE

Age-Friendly Network and Age-Friendly & Land Use Planning, was listed on the agenda, this topic was not discussed during the meeting.

IV. TRANSPORTATION DOMAIN: DEFINING TRANSPORTATION EQUITY

Program Manager Fabrice Juin shared specific domains have been prioritized, including Transportation, Health and Environment, and Technology and Connectivity. Fabrice Juin and Regional Transit Programs Manager Serena Anderson attended "Ohio Loves Transit Week" in Columbus to meet with state legislators representing the region on the Transportation, Insurance, and Small Business committees. The Transportation Committee Chair representing Clark County shared data metrics spanning the last eight years regarding transportation needs, noting a 3% increase in transit usage. Two legislators from Greene County highlighted that high insurance costs act as a massive barrier to transportation services and diverse transit options. Staff at the state level indicated that communities across Ohio need significant assistance regarding Civil Rights planning, Title VI nondiscrimination planning, and ADA compliance documentation. The concept of "Environmental Justice" was discussed as providing a specific name and justification for prioritizing the most vulnerable populations in environmental efforts, recognizing that while environmentalism inherently includes everyone, it hasn't always played out that way historically.

Program Manager Fabrice Juin also shared about the Technology and Connectivity Domain, acknowledging that internet connection is now an essential public utility. The issue is actively defined in three distinct buckets: Infrastructure, Affordability, and Literacy, such as in the Montgomery County Broadband Plan. Serena Anderson noted that weather is a primary transit issue in Montgomery County, creating a need for more physical shelters and community partners. Rap Hankins responded that shelters were previously put up but suffered damage, and the replacement costs unfortunately fell on the citizens. Jasmine Henderson pointed out the ongoing difficulties of navigating regional transportation for immigrants facing language barriers.

The committee then discussed defining Transportation Equity versus Mobility Justice, centered on the core philosophy that driving a car should not be the only way to get around; ideally, it should be the last option. Transportation Equity is the goal of ensuring that all community members have their needs met by the transportation systems available to them. Mobility Justice is the goal of ensuring that all people feel safe existing on their streets and can enjoy full freedom of movement regardless of elements of their identity. The committee outlined several priorities for future transportation planning, emphasizing mass movement over individual movement and making "a vehicle for everyone" unnecessary. Other priorities included limiting negative community impacts by planning infrastructure around communities rather than through them, ensuring developments do not come at the expense of air quality, water quality, climate, safety, or social cohesion. Success should be measured by social mobility rather than just ridership or ticketing metrics. Like public health, a truly good transportation system is one you don't notice. Indicators of success would include fewer vehicles per household, more visits to libraries and parks, and wider accessible distances between where residents live, work, study, and play to aid in reducing unemployment. Nancy McHugh, Fitz Center for Leadership in Community Executive Director additionally noted the critical connection between technology, transportation access, and economic or age-related issues.

V. SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR & MEMBER UPDATES

No additional updates or insights shared by the Subcommittee Chair or members during this meeting.

VI. BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Program Manager Fabrice Juin introduced Debra Brathwaite to discuss the State of Black Dayton Report created by the Miami Valley Urban League. The creation of this report charts the future of Black residents in Montgomery County, highlighting systemic challenges and implementing solutions for regional inequities. The report incorporated ideas from diverse stakeholders in Montgomery County and contracted an editor, a graphic designer, and a focus group facilitator to ensure it is accessible and engaging, with physical copies available at the library alongside digital formats.

Debra Brathwaite shared key learnings from the community engagements, emphasizing the desire for a region where every person is respected regardless of race or income. Discussions with high school youth revealed that they struggle to get to where they need to go. The youth identified homelessness as a primary concern, alongside a strong desire for mental health support within the school setting. Broadly, the community expressed a lack of trust in institutions, struggles with high childcare costs, and noted that Black communities generally have fewer resources. Focus groups highlighted that urban schools tend to focus more on training for jobs that currently exist, whereas suburban schools focus more on job creation and innovation, which was viewed as a very important distinction. Lastly noted the quality of local schools remains a primary factor in where people choose to move.

VII. OTHER INFORMATIONAL ITEMS & NEXT MEETING

This topic was not discussed during the meeting due to time constraints.

VIII. CLOSING REMARKS

Chairperson Rap Hankins adjourned the meeting at 4:10 p.m.

