



MIAMI VALLEY

Regional Planning Commission

Shaping Our Region's Future Together

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION POLICY

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Introduction

The Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission (MVRPC), the local metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for Greene, Miami and Montgomery Counties, and Springboro, Carlisle and Franklin in northern Warren County, has long been committed to meaningful and proactive public participation. Many outreach methods have been used in the past with varied success. Throughout the years, many of these methods have been refined and successfully employed to attain valuable public input, resulting in commendations from the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). This policy represents a combination of MVRPC's past successful methods and the latest techniques proven by other Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) to be successful input devices. Public participation ensures that projects and planning activities evolve from and address public needs. MVRPC's plans – and ultimately projects – are more likely to be accepted and supported by community members who can see that they have had an active role in shaping the decisions embodied in the plan. Providing a forum for the many voices within the region recognizes citizens' rights to be heard. These forums, coupled with careful attention to feedback, will result in better, well-informed, legitimized, decision making.

Principles of the Public Participation Policy

Public participation is based on two-way communication aimed at incorporating the views, concerns, and issues of the public into the MVRPC decision-making process.

MVRPC's public participation process is designed to:

- Provide complete and easily understood information.
- Provide timely public notice of meetings and information.
- Provide full public access to key decisions throughout the planning process.
- Support early and continuing participation by the public.

This policy is intended to guide and facilitate meaningful discussion and consensus building throughout the transportation planning process, as well as in other non-transportation-related, but regionally significant plans and studies.

Goals of the Public Participation Policy

MVRPC's public participation strategies and procedures are designed to achieve the following three goals:

- Provide a Public Forum – through which consensus can be reached between public officials and citizens for regional planning issues. This will be achieved by discussing issues, negotiating conflicts, and reaching general agreement on importation regional decisions.
- Seek Public Input – and provide the opportunity for interested parties to comment on proposals that affect the general population and to actively contribute to the policy and decision-making process process.
- Educate the Public- on the process and issues involved in transportation planning and other programs in such a manner that it is easy to understand and stimulates interest among participants.

Objectives of the Public Participation Policy

The primary objectives of this policy are to:

- Bring a broad cross-section of the public into the public policy decision-making process process.
- Maintain meaningful public participation from the early stages of the planning process.
- Meet the diverse needs of the general public by using different combinations of public participation techniques.
- Make special effort to reach out to traditionally underserved communities, including low income and minority audiences to ensure environmental justice issues are addresses.

Core Components of the Public Participation Policy

In order to achieve the policy objectives outlined above, several core components must be embodied in the public participation process including:

- Educating the public continuously by making pertinent and understandable information available.
- Involving key stakeholders early and throughout the process.

- Collaborating with local stakeholders to maximize resources and to gain better understanding of localized concerns.
- Personalizing public participation meeting activities to obtain the most productive and contributive input as possible.
- Encouraging attendance and participation.
- Incorporating new and effective public participation techniques into the process.
- Developing partnerships with the media.
- Involving stakeholders with a significant interest in the economic, social or environmental aspects of the regional transportation planning process or project at hand.
- Periodically reviewing the Public Participation Policy to ensure a full and open public participation is achieved

The public participation process described herein is used to satisfy the public participation process for the Program of Projects (POP) for:

- ***Greater Dayton Regional Transit Authority (GDRTA)***
- ***Greene County Transit (Greene CATS)***
- ***Miami County Transit***

Related Rules, Regulations and Requirements

Federal/MPO-based

Federal laws and regulations require the formation and designation by the Governor of a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for each urbanized area with a population of more than 50,000 to coordinate a comprehensive and continuing transportation planning process. The Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission (MVRPC) is the designated MPO for Greene County, Miami County and Montgomery County, and the cities of Springboro, Carlisle and Franklin in Warren County, Ohio. The MPO operates in accordance with its bylaws. Because the region's population exceeds 200,000, MVRPC is also designated as a Transportation Management Area (TMA).



MVRPC MPO BOUNDARIES

MPO's that are designated a TMA have additional planning requirements compared to smaller MPO's. These requirements include:

- Review and certification of our transportation planning process by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) every four years.
- Maintenance of a Congestion Management System.
- Performance of the Air Quality Conformity Analysis.

Much of the transportation planning work done by the MPO is directly related to implementing and updating the Region's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). This work takes the form of studies, data collection and analysis, the use of management systems, forecasts of future travel patterns based on future land use, and prioritization of projects for funding and implementation.

Federal transportation law (such as ISTEA, TEA-21, SAFETEA-LU **and currently *Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21)***), requires that MVRPC produce and oversee a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the Region's short range transportation investment plan. The TIP prioritizes the Region's transportation-related projects within the constraints of federal, state, and local funding that the Region can reasonably expect to receive within the next four years. Projects that are included in the TIP must be selected from, or be consistent with, an approved LRTP. In order to develop plans that are derived from public sentiment, there must be adequate public

participation in the development of both the Long Range Transportation Plan and the TIP.

The membership of the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission includes local jurisdictions from Darke, Greene, Miami, Montgomery, Preble and parts of Warren County, as well as a number of non-governmental and quasi-governmental representatives. A complete listing is available on MVRPC's website at www.mvrpc.org.

MAP-21 Legislation-based

On July 6, 2012, President Obama signed into law P.L. 112-141, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21). Funding surface transportation programs at over \$105 billion for fiscal years (FY) 2013 and 2014, MAP-21 is the first long-term highway authorization enacted since 2005. MAP-21 represents a milestone for the U.S. economy – it provides needed funds and, more importantly, it transforms the policy and programmatic framework for investments to guide the growth and development of the country's vital transportation infrastructure. Several extensions have been passed since MAP-21 expired, but no new Federal transportation bill has been adopted.

MAP-21 creates a streamlined, performance-based, and multimodal program to address the many challenges facing the U.S. transportation system. These challenges include improving safety, maintaining infrastructure condition, reducing traffic congestion, improving efficiency of the system and freight movement, protecting the environment, and reducing delays in project delivery.

MAP-21 builds on and refines many of the highway, transit, bike, and pedestrian programs and policies established in 1991.

MAP-21 mandates that the metropolitan transportation planning process comply with Section 1201.134 (i) (6)-(8) – Updated July 6, 2012

(6) Participation by interested parties.—

(A) In general.--Each metropolitan planning organization shall provide 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 a reasonable opportunity to comment on the transportation plan.

(B) Contents of participation plan.--A participation plan--

(i) shall be developed in consultation with all interested parties; and

(ii) shall provide that all interested parties have reasonable opportunities to comment on the contents of the transportation plan.

(C) Methods.--In carrying out subparagraph (A), the metropolitan planning organization shall, to the maximum extent practicable—

- (i) hold any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;*
- (ii) employ visualization techniques to describe plans; and*
- (iii) make public information available in electronically accessible format and means, such as the World Wide Web, as appropriate to afford reasonable opportunity for consideration of public information under subparagraph (A).*

(7) Publication.--A transportation plan involving Federal participation shall be published or otherwise made readily available by the metropolitan planning organization for public review, including (to the maximum extent practicable) in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web, approved by the metropolitan planning organization and submitted for information purposes to the Governor at such times and in such manner as the Secretary shall establish.

(8) Selection of projects from illustrative list.-- Notwithstanding paragraph (2)(C), a State or metropolitan planning organization shall not be required to select any project from the illustrative list of additional projects included in the financial plan under paragraph (2)(C).

Other Public Participation Policy Considerations:

The Public Participation Policy must also comply with Presidential Executive Order 12898 Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations. “Environmental Justice” refers to federal mandates designed to ensure that projects and programs using federal funds are used fairly, so that low income and minority groups (referred to as “traditionally underserved”) do not suffer disproportionately from negative impacts of transportation projects. Conversely, assurances must be made to ensure that the traditionally underserved benefit equally from such projects along with the rest of the population.

ODOT’s published guidance on Environmental Justice and methodology were used in the development of the EJ section of MVRPC’s Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). This section of the LRTP will serve as a guide for determining impacted EJ neighborhoods in close proximity to transportation projects that could affect local residents. MVRPC’s LRTP is updated every four years. At that time, the EJ section and associated maps are revised based on the latest information and guidance available.

MVRPC will make every effort to demonstrate that the opinions, concerns, and input from traditionally underserved populations are valued and welcomed. To that end, the policies contained herein have been developed to ascertain meaningful input from all who wish to participate, making special efforts to ensure that traditionally underserved have an equal opportunity to be involved in the planning and decision-making process processes.

The Public Participation Policy shall comply with the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Act of 1990 and US DOT regulations “Transportation for Individuals With Disabilities.” Meetings and hearings must be held in ADA-compliant buildings and special accommodations must be made for those with disabilities to participate in meetings, planning, and programming activities.

State-based

Section 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code requires all public bodies to take official actions and to conduct all deliberations upon official business only in open meetings, unless specifically accepted by law.

MVRPC-based

MVRPC’s Bylaws provide for public participation through the membership structure as well as the guiding principles of the organization. Official MVRPC policies and related actions are approved by the Board of Directors. The complete text of the MVRPC Constitution and Bylaws is available on MVRPC’s website, www.mvrpc.org.

Major MVRPC Activities and Their Participation Standards

Among the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission’s responsibilities as the MPO, are the completion of the Long Range Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program, Distribution of Regionally-Controlled federal funds, acting as the designated recipient for Federal Transit Administration funds (**Section 5310**) and awarding grants to sub-recipients, and periodically updating of the Public Participation Policy. The following pages briefly describe generalized public participation requirement of each of these activities. While these are generally applicable, one or more of the requirements may be substituted or altered where necessary.

Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

The Long Range Transportation Plan is a long-range (20+year) strategy and capital improvement program developed to guide the effective investments of public funds in transportation facilities. It is updated every four years and is prepared by the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission in consultation with local and state officials, and other agencies. The Long Range Transportation Plan includes roadway, regional bikeway, pedestrian, transit and other multi-modal strategies, projects and programs. It may be amended as a result of investment as a result in changes in projected Federal, State and local funding; major investment studies, the congestion management process; interstate interchange justification studies; and environmental impact studies. The current LRTP is available for viewing in MVRPC’s office, as well as on the web at <http://www.mvrpc.org/transportation/long-range-planning-lrtp>.

At the beginning of the LRTP update (major update every 4 years), approximately a year prior to its adoption by the Board of Directors, MVRPC staff will prepare a summary outline of tasks and approximate timeframes required to complete the LRTP update at hand. The outline will identify specific public involvement activities that are relevant to the current update and will be shared with the public and MVRPC’s committees at an initial stakeholder kick-off meeting.

Activity	Public Participation Technique
Draft Document	MVRPC’s website and available at MVRPC office.
Public Comment Opportunities	The public will have many opportunities to have their comments heard. Providing comments at the public meeting is but one venue. Among the others are written comments accepted via email, online comment card, fax, mail or handed in personally. Additionally, people can submit their comments during the corresponding Board of Director’s meeting or the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting. In some cases, mail, phone or web-based questionnaires may be used to gather information about specific topics.
Public Meeting	Multiple meetings held during the update process. Separate public meetings for each the draft and final LRTP.

Public Meeting Notice	Four (4) weeks prior to the public meeting, the meeting date will be added to the agency website calendar. Three (3) weeks prior to the public meeting, a press release/public service announcement, web announcements, announcement posters and announcement letters will be sent. Two (2) to Three (3) weeks prior to the public meeting, paid media advertisement will run, if appropriate. Two (2) weeks prior to public meeting, a public notice will be published in various regional, local and minority newspapers. An “event” will be created on Facebook and reminders added to social media platforms (Facebook and Twitter).
Comment Period	The public comment period for both the LRTP update and any LRTP Amendment will last at least 30 days.
Amendment Notice	Same procedure as LRTP Update, however, no paid media advertisement will run, nor will a separate public meeting be held for a draft version. Amendment notices will be announced on MVRPC’s website http://www.mvrpc.org/transportation/current-long-range-plan/lrtp-amendments
Final, Adopted Document Availability	Posted on MVRPC’s website, also available at MVRPC office. Upon completion of final document, all MVRPC members will be notified by email or through announcements during meetings that the document is available on MVRPC’s website.
Summary of comments received	A public comment summary memo will be made available prior to the Board of Directors meeting, for both the LRTP Update and a LRTP Amendment. Written and verbal comments are summarized and included in a full public participation booklet and to a major LRTP update.
Evaluation Technique	Number of participants at meetings, the number and nature of comments received.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The TIP is a four-year plan that lists all regionally significant and federally-funded projects and services, in the three plus-county MPO, such as highway projects, bridge replacements, major corridor studies, transportation enhancements and bicycle/pedestrian enhancements. Projects that are included in the TIP must be consistent with, or be selected from an approved Long Range Transportation Plan. Additionally, the TIP must be fiscally constrained, or have funding mechanisms already in place for all projects and strategies. **Public notice, of public involvement activities and time established for public review and comments on the TIP, will satisfy the Program of Projects (POP) requirements of GDRTA, Greene CATS and Miami County Transit.**

Activity	Public Participation Technique
Draft Document	MVRPC’s website and available at MVRPC office.
Public Comment Opportunities	The public will have many opportunities to have their comments heard. Providing comments at the public meeting is but one venue. Among the others are written comments accepted via email, online comment card, fax, mail or handed in personally. Additionally, people can submit their comments during the corresponding Board of Director’s meeting or the

	Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting.
Public Meeting	Multiple meetings held during the public comment period. One public meeting for each the draft and final TIP.
Public Meeting and Notice	Four (4) weeks prior to the public meeting, the meeting date will be added to the agency website calendar. Three (3) weeks prior to the public meeting, a press release/public service announcement, web announcements, announcement posters and announcement letters will be sent. Two (2) weeks prior to public meeting, a public notice will be published in various regional, local and minority newspapers. An “event” will be created on Facebook and reminders added to social media platforms (Facebook and Twitter).
Comment Period	The public comment period will last at least 30 days.
Final, Adopted Document Availability	Posted on MVRPC’s website, also available at MVRPC office. Upon completion of final document, all MVRPC members will be notified by email or through announcements during meetings that the document is available on MVRPC’s website.
Summary of comments received	A public comment summary memo will be made available prior to the Board of Directors meeting. Written and verbal comments are summarized and included in a full public participation booklet and incorporated into the final TIP.
Amendment Notice	TIP Amendment notices will be announced on MVRPC’s website (http://www.mvrpc.org/transportation/short-range-plan-tip/current-short-range-plan). Opportunities to give comments will be afforded at the corresponding TAC and Board of Directors meetings.
Evaluation Technique	Number of participants at meetings, number of comments received

Regionally Controlled Funds Solicitation

Upon Board determination of funds availability, staff will solicit qualified government entities for new STP, TA and CMAQ projects. The solicitation cycle will typically start **in the fall**, with applications being due **approximately 2 months later** at MVRPC (these dates may vary annually to ensure they don’t fall on weekends). The projects selected will be added to the TIP.

Activity	Technique
Draft Summarizing Profile	MVRPC’s website and available at MVRPC office.
Public Comment Opportunities	The public will have many opportunities to have their comments heard. Providing comments at the public meeting is but one venue. Among the others are written comments accepted via email, online comment card, fax, mail or handed in personally. Additionally, people can submit their comments during the corresponding Board of Director’s meeting or the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting.
Public Meeting	Held during the public comment period.

Public Meeting Notice	Four (4) weeks prior to the public meeting, the meeting date will be added to the agency website calendar. Three (3) weeks prior to the public meeting, a press release/public service announcement, web announcements, announcement posters and announcement letters will be sent. Two (2) weeks prior to public meeting, a public notice will be published in various regional, local and minority newspapers. An “event” will be created on Facebook and reminders added to social media platforms (Facebook and Twitter).
Comment Period	The public comment period will last 30 days.
Final, Adopted Document and Availability	Posted on MVRPC’s website, also available at MVRPC office. Upon completion of final document, all MVRPC members will be notified by email or through announcements during meetings that the document is available on MVRPC’s website.
Evaluation Technique	Number of participants at meetings, number of comments received

Acting as the designated recipient for Federal Transit Administration funds – **Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310)** and awarding grants to sub-recipients

Activity	Technique
Draft Summarizing Profile	MVRPC’s website and available at MVRPC office.
Public Comment Opportunities	The public will have many opportunities to have their comments heard. Providing comments at the public meeting is but one venue. Among the others are written comments accepted via email, online comment card, fax, mail or handed in personally. Additionally, people can submit their comments during the corresponding Board of Director’s meeting or the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting.
Public Meeting	Held during the public comment period.
Public Meeting Notice	Four (4) weeks prior to the public meeting, the meeting date will be added to the agency website calendar. Three (3) weeks prior to the public meeting, a press release/public service announcement, web announcements, announcement posters and announcement letters will be sent. Two (2) weeks prior to public meeting, a public notice will be published in various regional, local and minority newspapers. An “event” will be created on Facebook and reminders added to social media platforms (Facebook and Twitter).
Comment Period	The public comment period will last 30 days.
Final, Adopted Document and Availability	Posted on MVRPC’s website, also available at MVRPC office. Upon completion of final document, all MVRPC members will be notified by email or through announcements during meetings that the document is available on MVRPC’s website.
Evaluation Technique	Number of participants at meetings, number of comments received

Public Participation Policy Update

The Public Participation Policy (PPP) outlines the strategies utilized to provide and receive information from the public on transportation planning and programming process including funding for projects, studies, plans, and committee actions.

Activity	Technique
Draft Document	MVRPC's website and available at MVRPC office.
Public Comment Opportunities	The public will have many opportunities to have their comments heard. Providing comments at the public meeting is but one venue. Among the others are written comments accepted via email, online comment card, fax, mail or handed in personally.
Public Meeting	Held during the public comment period.
Public Meeting Notice	<i>Four (4) weeks prior to the public meeting, the meeting date will be added to the agency website calendar.</i> Three (3) weeks prior to the public meeting, a press release/public service announcement, web announcements, announcement posters and announcement letters will be sent. Two (2) weeks prior to public meeting, a public notice will be published in various regional, local and minority newspapers. <i>An "event" will be created on Facebook and reminders added to social media platforms (Facebook and Twitter).</i>
Comment Period	The public comment period will last 45 days.
Summary of comments received	A public comment summary memo will be made available prior to the Board of Directors meeting, for the PPP Update. Written and verbal comments are summarized and included in a full public participation booklet and incorporated into the final PPP.
Final, Adopted Document Availability	MVRPC's website, also available at MVRPC office. Upon completion of final document, all MVRPC members as well as all county libraries will be notified by email that the document is available on MVRPC's website.
Evaluation Technique	Number of participants at meetings, number of comments received

Other Significant Activities

Other significant activities include Major Corridor Studies and their Alternatives, Project Development Activities from ODOT PDP, Roadway Functional Class Amendments or Updates, Regionally-Controlled Funds and TRAC Policy Updates, Annual Self-Certification, Certification every four years and Other Non-Transportation-related Public Participation (as determined on a case-by-case basis).

The meetings for these types of studies and projects, meetings are typically held at a location in or near the study or project area. MVRPC staff will coordinate with interested and affected parties (ODOT, municipalities, residents, organizations) to arrange meetings, as needed.

The sponsors of these types of projects may be required to make a presentation to the MVRPC, especially when seeking funding from the MPO or continued funding from the MPO.

Public Participation Summary Booklet

A summary booklet detailing all public participation process uses shall be published as required (see Activities Determination Matrix, Appendix A) and shall follow the following requirements:

- Included in the booklet will be a summary of the public outreach efforts and comments/questions/answers received at all public participation meetings.
- Meeting summaries shall be made available for review on the MVRPC's website, where appropriate.
- When significant written and oral comments are received on the Long Range Transportation Plan or the Transportation Improvement Program (including the financial plan), a summary, analysis and report on the disposition of the comments shall be made as part of the final LRTP or TIP.
- ***When consultants are responsible for public participation requirements, they will compile the summary booklet following these guidelines.***

MVRPC Committees

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is the policy-making governing board of the MPO. The Board is primarily comprised of local elected officials that are representatives selected by their member organizations.



LOCATION OF THE DABR

The Board of Director's Meetings are held the 1st Thursday of every month **at 9:00 am.**

Meetings currently are held at the Dayton Area Board of Realtors (DABR) at 1515 South Main St. Dayton, OH 45409 on the corner of River Park Dr. and South Main St, across from the Montgomery County Fairgrounds. Attendees should call the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission at (937) 223-6323, or log on to www.mvrpc.org to verify meeting times and locations.

Technical Advisory Committee

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) is a permanent committee appointed by members of the Commission to represent their respective organizations, and is responsible for working with the Executive Director and to advise the Board of Directors on technical issues or other delegated and assigned matters.

The Technical Advisory Committee Meetings are held the 3rd Thursday of each month at 9:30am, subject to cancellation due to lack of agenda items.

Meetings currently are held at the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission (MVRPC) Office at 10 N. Ludlow St., Suite 700, Dayton, Ohio, on the northeast corner of Third and Ludlow on Courthouse Square, across from the Dayton City Building. Attendees should call the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission at (937) 223-6323, or log on to www.mvrpc.org to verify meeting times and locations. Parking passes for the City Of Dayton's Municipal Garage will be distributed at meetings. The parking garage is located at 123 W. Third Street next to Dayton City Hall. There are numerous Greater Dayton RTA transit routes convenient to MVRPC offices on Courthouse Square including Wright Stop Plaza.

Stakeholders

Stakeholders are individuals and/or groups who have a direct interest, involvement, investment, or are generally affected by projects, programs, or plans. Identifying stakeholders outside of the formal organizational structure of MVRPC is necessary to obtain valid and adequate public input.

Stakeholders commonly include but are not limited to:

- People who live in or traverse a project area.
- Businesses in a project area, their employees and customers.
- Institutional services such as schools, hospitals, law enforcement and emergency services agencies.
- Local governmental units affected in the local project area.
- Civic and community associations.
- Environmental or special interest groups.
- Transportation system users, where applicable.
- Providers of public and/or private transit services.
- Providers of freight and/shipping services.
- Representatives of users of pedestrian and bicycle, transportation facilities.
- Representatives of the disabled population.
- Providers of non-emergency transportation services receiving financial assistance from a source other than title 49, U.S.C, Chapter 53.

Public Meeting Guidelines

Settings

The setting of a public participation meeting can have an enormous impact of the success of the meeting. Every effort will be made to hold meetings in appropriate locations and under the follow conditions:

- All meetings will be held in ADA-accessible locations and, whenever possible, close to transit routes.
- ***All meetings will be held in locations where free parking is available or MVRPC must provide vouchers when free parking is not conveniently located or available.***
- Interpreters for hearing impaired individuals will be made available upon request; requests must be made at least two weeks prior to the meeting date. For those requesting C-print interpretations, MVRPC will make arrangements for this service at no cost to the requesting individual(s).
- Hearing impaired individuals can reach MVRPC via TTY/DD at 1-800-750-0750
- When appropriate, meetings will be held in target locations, attracting citizens most heavily affected by the plan or project. In target locations, meetings may be held in places frequently visited by local residents such as churches, schools, community centers or libraries.
- Whenever possible, public participation meetings will be combined with other regularly schedules meetings of organizations in targeted areas.
- Every effort will be made to ensure that the tone and overall experience of meetings is comfortable and inviting
- All Board of Directors meetings and TAC meetings are open to the public. The opportunity to for public comment is available at each of these meetings.
- Meetings will be scheduled at the most convenient time of the day to maximize participation.

Special Requirements (meetings involving EA, EIS or CE)

- All public participation meetings involving Environmental Assessment(EA), Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) projects or

Categorical Exclusions (CA), must include an opportunity for the public to speak and be heard by their peers (public comment period, AKA - “open microphone”).

- If an Open House format is being utilized, a specified “open microphone” time period for comments must be advertised.
- Members of the public wanting to speak during the “open microphone” period must register to do so at the sign-in table. They will be given a total amount of three (3) minutes to speak.
- Meetings will be electronically recorded and meeting minutes will be developed based on the recordings.
- All comments made (either written or verbal) are part of public record and must be produced when requested. A notice will be posted at the sign-in table stating “All comments received are considered public comments and therefore, are subject to disclosure under Ohio’s Public Records Act. A record of each comment and how they were addressed will become part of the (National Environmental Policy Act) NEPA documentation.

Miscellaneous:

Meeting dates will be listed on the MVRPC’s website.

Meeting packet (when relevant) with agenda, background information, and contact person information mailed and/or e-mailed at least one week prior to meeting.

Meeting cancellations will be listed on the MVRPC’s website.

Types of Public Meetings

In order to engage the public to the greatest extent possible, several meeting formats may be used including:

- Open House
 - Includes information displays, comment cards, interactive mapping (when appropriate) and staff available to answer questions, record verbal comments, etc.

- Modified Open House

Includes all elements from the Open House format, plus a traditional meeting portion.

- Board/Committee Meetings

Primarily for formal member participation, with the meetings including a public comment period.

- Public Forum

Usually single-topic meetings, with or without speakers, affording attendees a full opportunity for open discussion.

Outreach Tools and Techniques

Effective public participation is paramount to any project's or plan's success. Knowing this, a variety of techniques are needed to engage the public in the decision-making process process. New techniques will be tried and incorporated as they emerge and are shown to be successful.

The type of public outreach efforts employed for a particular project will be determined based on the project's overall regional and local impact. Highly localized projects may require more specialized outreach within the project's area of influence, rather than the broad outreach efforts required by others.

Extensive outreach efforts throughout all areas of the region are conducted in order to assemble a broad cross-section of input into the decision-making process process, including traditionally underserved areas. MVRPC's outreach efforts in these areas will continue to provide these residents with an opportunity to voice their opinions and concerns. MVRPC will continue to conduct, sponsor, and participate in special and community events that reinforce the mission and strategic plan of the organization, educate the public, and provide opportunities for public input.

Tools

MVRPC's approach in publicizing its Public Participation Meetings may include the following outreach methods:

- **Public Notices**

Public notices and/or advertisements will be placed in minority and ethnic newspapers, in addition to major regional newspapers deemed appropriate for the project. Public notices will be translated into Spanish, when appropriate.

- **Press Releases / Public Service Announcements**

Press releases will be issued to ensure interested parties and the press is up-to-date on news and information concerning MVRPC activities. They will be sent to all television stations, radio stations and newspapers in the three county area and parts of northern Warren County.

Whenever possible and appropriate, public service announcements and meeting advertisements will be sent to the local broadcast media.

- Flyers/Posters

Informational flyers/posters will be developed for each public participation meeting and distributed to local libraries along with a letter.

Information flyers/posters will also be distributed to all the Greater Dayton Regional Transit Authority (GDRTA) transit hubs and to Greene CATS and Miami County Transit.

Materials will be translated into Spanish and distributed via the Latino Connection, and other outlets, when appropriate.

When appropriate, participation from target populations will be sought by posting flyers/posters and meeting notices in locations such as government centers, neighborhood shops, religious institutions, social service agencies, employment centers, senior centers, public health clinics, public libraries, community centers and popular meeting places.

- Traditional Letters

Informational letters about plans, studies, projects or any other information deemed important for public input, will be mailed out to interested parties.

- Paid Advertising

Various projects may require additional paid advertising in the form of newspaper, radio, website advertisements, or television ads. These will be more detailed than a standard Public Notice.

- **E-Newsletters**

When appropriate, **e-newsletters** to keep interested parties up-to-date on how projects are progressing will be distributed.

- Project Logo

When appropriate, a special project logo will be developed for certain studies/projects and be used as an identifiable icon on printed materials related to that specific initiative.

- Direct Mail

Postcards and flyers may also be distributed directly to residents via direct mail outlets.

- Visualization Techniques

Special projects may require the addition of multi-media visualization techniques to help convey the project better to the public. These may include 3-D visualization applications or other types of techniques and will be developed as needed.

- MVRPC's website (www.mvrpc.org)

MVRPC's website will be employed as a tool for disseminating information on meeting, project updates and background. New web-based approaches including e-mailing lists, newsletters, and project specific web pages will be used as appropriate.

MVRPC's website will be employed as a tool to describe and visually represent the Long Range Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the process by which they are created.

MVRPC's website currently includes an option to translate the site into Spanish. This enhancement allows Spanish speaking residents the opportunity to learn and comment about all regional projects.

- **Social Media Integration**

MVRPC's social media platforms (Twitter and Facebook) will be updated with relevant information regarding upcoming public participation meetings (see Social Media Policy, Appendix E)

Public Participation Meeting Principles

- Early Involvement

Early involvement with local community leaders will be obtained to determine suitable meeting forums and information formats to foster valuable input, especially when soliciting input from target populations.

- Understandable and Interesting Language/No Jargon

Meeting notices and materials will use appropriate, understandable language – acronyms and other technical jargon will be avoided to the extent that is possible to the subject matter.

Efforts will be made to tailor advertising, project campaigns and slogans to generate the most interest possible.

Information Gathering Techniques

- Internet

As internet usage and availability continues to increase, so will MVRPC's utilization of this technology to gather input.

- Mailing Addresses

Traditional mailing addresses for interested parties will also be maintained and utilized.

- Surveys

Common input gathering tools include statistically valid telephone surveys, user surveys, traditional postage-paid comment cards and online surveys.

- Door-to-Door Campaigns

When warranted, highly localized projects may benefit from door-to-door (business and/or residential) campaigns to distribute information, project updates and gather input and comments

- Direct Outreach

MVRPC planning staff will provide direct outreach to minority and/or low income groups, as well as other citizens in the study or project area, through contact with local community groups and their leaders.

- ***Comment Box***

A secure comment box will be available for visitors to submit their written comments.

Other Possible Techniques

Other public outreach techniques have been utilized by other public entities and MPOs with varying success. Appendix B contains a list of some of these other techniques and their inherent advantages and disadvantages. These and other techniques are examples of what could be utilized as techniques to reach as many members of the general public as possible while maintaining a cost effective approach to planning.

Other Public Participation Policy Considerations

Evaluating Public Participation Techniques Used

Federal regulations require that MPO's review the Public Participation Policy periodically to determine if the objectives of the process are achieved and if adjustments are necessary to make it more effective.

Several methods will be used to gauge the effectiveness of MVRPC's public participation methods, including input from citizens, public officials and other planning professionals. Techniques used to collect feedback may include formal surveys (online and in person), public comment cards, verbal comments at public meetings, and even face-to-face conversations held between staff/consultants and citizens/public officials/planning professionals about the Public Participation Policy.

Details such as perceived simplicity of information at the meeting, the aesthetic qualities of data and maps, and how they learned of the public meeting in the first place, will also be collected and analyzed.

It will be the responsibility of staff to document informal comments into a computer database and to compile at the end of the evaluation period for further analysis.

Activities Determination Matrix

MVRPC has developed an Activities Determination Matrix (Appendix A) to clarify what level of outreach/input is necessary for each transportation planning activity. The left column of the matrix includes MVRPC's transportation activities that require some form of public participation. The column headings detail the different public participation activities that may be utilized. The column footers detail the timeframe for each activity to be completed. MVRPC's non-transportation planning public participation activities will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Consultant Necessitation Clause

It is the policy of MVRPC that any consultant hired to do a project/study for MVRPC, will follow the guidelines in the Public Participation Policy, and will be responsible for the implementation of the required public participation activities, as outlined in the consultant contract. Such activities will be overseen by MVRPC staff and modified to fit the needs of the specific project of study of consideration.

2008 Public Participation Policy Update Procedures

To comply with SAFETEA-LU, MVRPC updated the Public Participation Policy in 2008. Updates include:

- Development of the announcement guidelines for MVRPC acting as the designated recipient for Federal Transit Administration funds (Section 5316/5317) and awarding grants to sub-recipients.
- Elimination of the Citizens Advisory Committee as a stand alone committee. All members will continue to receive meeting notifications.
- Utilization of more diverse outreach tools and techniques.

Also, while utilized tremendously before, MVRPC has made it a formalized policy to utilize the Internet as much as possible. The agency's website (www.mvrpc.org) features all press releases regarding Public Participation Meetings and links to information/exhibits relative to the topic/project. Additionally, in order to ensure a large portion of the Miami Valley's non-English speaking population has the ability to participate and provide input, MVRPC has added a translation-to-Spanish feature to our website.

2011 Public Participation Policy Update Procedures

To comply with the Ohio Department of Transportation's (ODOT) new policy with regards to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Public Involvement Process, MVRPC updated the Public Participation Policy in 2011. Updates include:

- Development of guidelines for MVRPC public participation meetings if/when the meeting includes an Environmental Assessment (EA), an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Categorical Exclusion (CE).

2015 Public Policy Update Procedures

To comply with MAP-21, MVRPC updated the Public Participation Policy in 2015.

Updates include:

- **Several changes have been made to the Public Participation Policy in reference to the new locations of the MVRPC office for TAC Meetings and DABR for Board meetings. These changes include:**
 - **Meeting directions for Board and TAC meetings.**
 - **Parking vouchers are made available for meetings at MVRPC main office where free parking is not easily accessible.**
- **With the growing use of social media, a reference regarding how these platforms will be integrated into promoting public participation meetings was added to the policy, as well as an appendix of the current Social Media Policy for MVRPC (Appendix E).**
- **To comply with FTA requirements for transit authorities Program of Projects to be included on the TIP, this verbiage was added to this policy.**

- *Public notice, of public involvement activities and time established for public review and comments on the TIP, will satisfy the Program of Projects (POP) requirements.*

Appendix A PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN ACTIVITIES DETERMINATION MATRIX

		Outreach Activities										Comment Period Duration (7)	
		Press Release, PSA, Web Announcement/Exhibits	Announcement Posters	Announcement Letters (4)	Public Notice in Newspaper (5)	Paid Media Advertisements (Radio, TV, etc.)	Public Participation Meeting for Draft Product	Public Participation Meeting for Final Product	Technical Advisory Committee Meeting	Public Comment Summary Memo	Board of Directors Meeting		Full Public Participation Summary Book (6)
Planning Activities	TIP Update	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	30 Days
	TIP Amendment						N/A	N/A	✓		✓		N/A
	LRTP Update	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	30 Days
	LRTP Amendment	✓	✓	✓	✓		N/A	✓	✓	✓	✓		30 Days
	Public Participation Policy Revision	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	45 Days
	Major Corridor Study Development Alternatives	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	N/A	☒		☒		N/A
	Major Corridor Studies (1)	✓	✓	✓	✓		N/A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	30 Days
	Project Development Activities (2)	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	N/A	☒		☒	✓	Varies
	Functional Class Amendment/Update								✓		✓		N/A
	Regionally Controlled Funds Solicitation (Applications Received)	✓	✓	✓	✓		N/A	✓	✓	✓	✓		30 Days
	Regionally Controlled Funds & TRAC Policy Update								✓		✓		N/A
	Annual Self Certification Process						N/A	N/A			✓		N/A
	Certification Review - every four years	✓	✓	✓	✓		N/A	N/A					N/A
	Non-Transportation Related Public Involvement (3)	* * * * * See footnote (3) below * * * * *											
		3 Weeks Prior to Meeting	3 Weeks Prior to Meeting	3 Weeks Prior to Meeting	2 Weeks Prior to Meeting	Starting 2-3 Weeks Prior to Meeting (as Appropriate)	As Appropriate	Minimum of 30 Days of Comment Period Prior to Adoption	As appropriate	Available Prior to Board Action	As appropriate	Submitted with Final Plan or Document	
		Outreach Activities - Approximate Timeframe											
		✓ = Applicable, Board Action Required			☒ = Applicable, for Info Only (as Appropriate)				N/A = Not Applicable				

- (1) Includes Major Investment Studies (MIS), and Feasibility Studies up for Board endorsement.
- (2) Includes Interchange Justification Studies (IJS), Environmental Assessments (EA), Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) and Design Plans.
- (3) MVRPC's non-transportation planning public participation activities will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- (4) Includes announcement letters to interested parties, libraries, stakeholder groups, etc.
- (5) Selection of newspapers utilized will depend upon the planning activity's area of influence.
- (6) Public participation summary book may be incorporated as part of the final report.
- (7) Public participation meeting can be held anytime during the comment period, providing the comment summary is available prior to Board action

Appendix B

From the Wisconsin DOT, Guidelines for Metropolitan Planning Organizations and Communities Developing a Public Participation Process, November 1993

Participation Techniques	Informational		Advantages	Disadvantages
	Give	Get		
Ad Hoc Committees/Advisory Groups Task Forces	Good	Good	Cost effective; Good Transfer of information between members and staff; Often can reach informed consensus.	May not be representative; Sometimes perceived as biases and elitist; Roles sometime not clearly defined.
Advertising	Good	Poor	The agency communicates it messages it wants; Reaches a wide range of publics.	May be perceived by the public as an attempt to buy good will and spending large amounts of taxpayer dollars to do it.
Brainstorming	Fair	Good	Pushes for creative solutions; Often can generate variety of ideas	Difficult to involve more than a small number of people. Generated may solutions which may be difficult to evaluate.
Brochures/Publications/Newsletters	Good	Poor	A direct means of providing a large amount of information to many people; Can provide detail	Preparation and approval can be time consuming; Potentially expensive
Charrette (Prolonged meeting to reach agreement)	Good	Good	Effective in achieving consensus among conflicting interests. Participants gain understanding of both sides if an issue.	Outside consultant usually necessary; Crisis issue prerequisite to motivating participants.
Citizen Training Programs	Good	Poor	Provides technical/issues background so citizens can participate effectively and equally; Train others and work together	Resent the suggestion that they need it; limited to small groups.
Community Workshops	Good	Good	High Quality of interchange among participants; Contribute to increased interest and commitment to project.	Takes staff resources to organize and conduct.
Computer Based Participation	Fair	Good	Permits participation by geographically dispersed people; stores information (data); permits involvement while offering anonymity; May help people visualize a project/program	Excludes people without computers; preset format dictated by a computer may cause resentment; Potential technical problems.

Conferences	Good	Fair	Results in sharing information which may change opinions	Takes time and energy to plan; Costly.
Contests/Events	Fair	Poor	Can gain publicity for the entire public participation program; Can draw out special interests; Good for arousing interest.	May not be applicable; May arouse interest and create expectations for continuous participation which may not materialize.
Cumulative Brochure	Good	Fair	Visible; Encourages open communication; No special status granted to individual or group.	Final brochure is large or cumbersome; Costly to reproduce the many editions; Forces pro or con response.
Day to Day Contacts	Good	Good	Immediate feedback	Time constraints; Non-representative; don't get group interplay.
Delphi Process (from experts, consensus on forecasts through use of questionnaires)	Fair	Good	Effective for achieving consensus on forecasts among experts; Minimizes dominance by single personality; Minimizes negative group dynamics.	May homogenize viewpoints; Public may not accept experts anymore than agency staff; Can be time consuming and cumbersome.
Dialogues	Good	Good	Encourages open communication; Helps break stereotypes; defines points of common interest; reduces perception as adversarities.	Focuses on broad issues; Not good for public involvement program considering a proposed action.
Direct Mail	Good	Poor	Targets every household	Costly; Percent interested may be small; Perceived as junk mail.
Exhibits and Displays	Good	Fair	Provides information on issues important to agency; May reach and increase interest of people who do not usually participate	Requires major staff commitment; If not coordinated, may arouse interest without providing follow-up.
Field Offices	Good	Good	Visible, informal, local and convenient; Communicates agency value locally; Staff have deep understanding of community.	Project or issue must justify high cost; If more than one community involved, community w/o facility might feel slighted.
Focus Groups (A market research technique as an alternative to surveys)	Good	Good	Provides fast general public reaction to proposal or project; Comparatively inexpensive.	No strong statistical validity; Requires skilled facilitator or consultant.
Forum	Good	Good	Constructive, balanced, educational; Visible; Exposes each others views; Inexpensive.	May have poor turnout of not appropriate timing and advertising

Hotline	Poor	Good	Convenient; Accessible; Fast	Staff must be provided training on issues and not respond defensively/insensitively to callers; Needs follow through.
Key Interviews	Poor	Good	Provides quick understanding of issues, dynamics and intensity of issue; Permits in-depth exploration.	Time consuming; Not representative; Lack visibility
Mobile Office	Good	Good	Good for sparsely populated areas; Lets people know you are accessible; Good for complex organizations; Can process large volumes of people	Will not work if coordination or relationship with media is poor; Expensive to staff and maintain
Negotiation	Good	Good	Provides alternative to adversary; Educated; Identifies workable solutions; High implementation rate of solutions.	All parties must be represented; Often time consuming; One party may not act in good faith.
News Conferences	Good	Poor	Increases story coverage; Cost effective; Reaches broad audience	Can result in the loss of credibility if not newsworthy; Requires careful advanced planning; Negativism on sensitive issues can feed on itself.
News Releases	Good	Poor	Effective method of obtaining publicity; Can stimulate media interest to go in depth	Media determines which stories are newsworthy; Credibility must be cultured/maintained with media
Newspaper Inserts	Good	Poor	Reaches a greater percentage of the population than other similar techniques	Expensive; Response rate of mail-back form is low; Cannot be represented as statistically valid
Nominal Group Process (Designed to help groups generate creative ideas and information)	Fair	Fair	Generates ideas; Provides preliminary estimate of acceptability of an idea; Permits people of different views to work together with minimum friction, Relatively easy to use.	Cursory job of evaluating ideas; Can create expectations that agency is bound by these preliminary ideas; Some people may feel processed rather than consulted

Open Houses	Good	Fair	Accomplishes educational objective in informal manner, encouraging more active involvement of average citizen; Opportunity for direct interaction results in correcting misinformation, developing relationships, in-depth explanation of opinions.	Primarily used to give information; Considerable preparation and time in publicity and displays, evening and weekends.
Ombudsman	Fair	Good	Effective lightening rod; Provides agency with means to solve problems while they are still manageable	Ombudsman must be given agency commitment, support and independence for degenerates into PR agent for agency
Panels	Fair	Poor	Educates; Permits interactions between experts in front of an audience.	Potential for dullness or personnel attacks; Limited participation of panelists
Participatory Television (Call-in shows/televised public meetings/two-way cable television)	Good	Fair	Reaches large audiences; Convenient, Educational	Unrepresentative audience; Issue may not be portrayed objectively; Not many people skilled in presenting info on TV.
Position Papers	Good	Poor	Test public response; May generate new ideas or opinions	Takes time; Limited in applicability.
Public Hearings	Good	Poor	Low cost; Meets legal requirements.	Low end of public participation effectiveness; Reactive public instead of proactive involvement; Often very low attendance
Public Information/Group Meetings/Presentations	Good	Poor	Exposure of information to large numbers of people; Provides visibility to the political process	Small percent have opportunity to speak; May be manipulation of the meeting by interest groups; Tends to increase polarization of positions; Limits to broad brush picture.
Public Service Announcements	Good	Poor	Free publicity; Potential to reach large audience	Must be brief, May not be used by station/paper.
Questionnaires/Polls/Surveys	Poor	Good	Reaches the public at large; Can identify values and attitudes; Representative; Systematic approach	Costly; Design and sampling techniques are critical to level of confidence; Difficult to collect

Reports	Good	Poor	Can communicate detailed complex information; Relatively low cost; Provide visible record of public involvement process	May not be read or understood; If too slick, may appear patronizing.
Simulation Games	Poor	Poor	Educates public on an issue or project and the consequence of various decisions; Enjoyable; Develop personal relationships.	May be confusing, technical, simplistic or applies inappropriately to real world; Customized games expensive; Does not provide opportunity to comment.
Technical Assistance to Citizens	Fair	Fair	Citizens may be intimidated by technical expertise of staff; Improves trust.	Assistance often provided to the most vocal; Results are biases; Results in bad feelings by those left out.
Town meetings	Fair	Fair	Sensitize management to concerns of local community; Can identify problems early; Shows public official care and can be reached.	Of more symbolic value; Because there is no set agenda; not suitable for specific proposal actions or plans.
Written Submissions	Poor	Fair	Can be formally requested or informal response; Autonomous	Usually limited to most vocal persons; No deadline on informal response, so difficult to begin content analysis.

Please return comments by September 14, 2007

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State _____ ZIP _____
 e-mail _____

YES!

Would you like a written response to your question? If yes, please provide address.

My questions and/or comments are as follows: _____

The Long Range Transportation Plan is a (20+ year) strategy and capital improvement program developed to guide the effective investment of the public funds in multi-modal transportation facilities. The Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission (MVRPC) would like to hear your comments/input regarding proposed Transportation Issues for the upcoming update of the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING

2030 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE

We welcome your comments regarding Transportation Issues



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING

2030 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE

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The Long Range Transportation Plan is a (20+ year) strategy and capital improvement program developed to guide the effective investment of the public funds in multi-modal transportation facilities. The Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission (MVRPC) would like to hear your comments/input regarding proposed Transportation Issues for the upcoming update of the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan.

My questions and/or comments are as follows: _____

Would you like a written response to your question? If yes, please provide address.

YES!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State _____ ZIP _____

e-mail _____

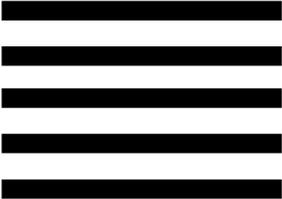
Please return comments by September 14, 2007



DAYTON OH 45402-9919
10 N. LUDLOW ST.
SUITE 700

MIAMI VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE



BUSINESS REPLY MAIL
FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 960 DAYTON, OH

NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATES

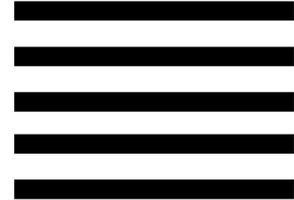


MIAMI VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
10 N. LUDLOW ST. SUITE 700
DAYTON OHIO 45402

MIAMI VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
10 N. LUDLOW ST. SUITE 700
DAYTON OHIO 45402



NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATES



BUSINESS REPLY MAIL
FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 960 DAYTON, OH

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

MIAMI VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
SUITE 700
10 N. LUDLOW ST.
DAYTON OH 45402-9919



Appendix D

Public Participation Meeting Worksheet

Prior to developing any transportation project, MVRPC staff should consider the following information when designing a project specific public participation meeting:

1. Develop the Public Participation Meeting schedule of activities
2. Determine the specific goals and objectives that public participation is to accomplish.

3. Identify the appropriate stakeholders that either might be interested in participating or whose involvement is necessary in order to achieve the objectives.

4. Select technique(s) for interacting with the public that is most appropriate and will achieve the project specific goals and objectives.

5. Select the most appropriate method to notifying stakeholders with the desired information.

6. Conduct the appropriate public involvement techniques.

7. Determine how the techniques are to be evaluated.

8. Incorporate the results of the involvement into the plan, document, special study or project.

Project: _____

Today's Date: _____

Staff: _____

Appendix E

MVRPC Social Media Policy

Overview and Purpose

Social media networks provide opportunities for Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission (MVRPC) to deliver highly-accessible content through a variety of new channels and platforms. Participation may augment current communication strategies to reach a broader audience and encourage greater citizen engagement. MVRPC offers these guidelines to help foster greater public participation, while building the awareness of MVRPC programs. The guidelines refer to official MVRPC social media interactions, not the personal, non-job related interactions of MVRPC staff during their own time, using their personal equipment.

Social Media Participation

MVRPC's social media content will be created and posted by Marketing and Public Outreach Associate serving as the "Social Media Coordinator." Agency directors shall appoint staff members to be official representatives, and submit proposed posts to SMC. SMC will develop information posts for the department and add the post to the Social Media Calendar. Social Media Calendar will be available to view what is scheduled and days needing content. This will also house approved text for posts. Draft posts will be created by SMC and approved by department representative who supplied topic. Social Media Calendar will track the success of the post and updates to the likes/follows to help develop future successful posts. Hootsuite, a social media management software, will be used to assist in managing posts as well as tracking of posts success. If a department does not have a topic for their day, a post may be selected to be posted or another department can fill in with another topic.

Default department assignments for each weekday:

- **Monday – Marketing/Public Affairs**
- **Tuesday – Long Range Transportation Planning**
- **Wednesday – Regional Planning**
- **Thursday - Short Range Transportation Planning**
- **Friday – Sustainable Solutions and Transportation Alternatives**

Social Media Participation Guidelines

Social media includes professional, official communications and branding that represent the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission, **supplementing** MVRPC's website, marketing materials, and press releases. The MVRPC Personnel Policies and Employee Handbook, Media Relations section (Page 21), addresses formal news media contact policy which should continue to be followed when dealing with the news media. Any staff member using social media on behalf of MVRPC should adhere to the following guidelines:

- **Respect your audience.** Always be respectful of the opinions and views of others. Don't use religious, racial or ethnic slurs, personal insults, or obscenity.
- **Protect Sensitive or Personal Information.** When sharing content on social media platforms, do not share personal or confidential information. If there is any question as to whether or not information is sensitive or personal in nature, consult with agency senior management before sharing content.

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- **Be Accurate.** Before posting content or responding to comments, ensure that the information or response is accurate. Accuracy is critical, because content on social media platforms is extremely visible and can be replicated in multiple locations within minutes.
- **Correct Mistakes.** If a mistake or inaccuracy is found, correct the mistake and communicate its subsequent correction clearly and quickly.
- **Be Considerate.** Ensure that all communication is professional, respectful, and factual. Remember that all content represents MVRPC.
- **Respect Copyrights & Trademarks.** When posting content, do not infringe upon copyright or trademark protections. If you are unsure, consult with SMC.
- **Use Agency Email Addresses.** Agency e-mail addresses (name@mvrpc.org) should be utilized to confirm to users that the content provided is official. Personal e-mail accounts (non-mvrpc, e.g. private Yahoo or Gmail accounts) should not be utilized for official agency communications through social media platforms.
- **Avoid Advertisements, Sponsorships & Endorsements.** When possible, MVRPC postings should avoid advertisements, endorsements, or sponsorships on social media communication platforms.
- **Misrepresentation.** Concealing or misrepresenting one's name or affiliation to mask unauthorized, fraudulent, irresponsible or offensive behavior in electronic communications, is prohibited.
- **Stay within Area of Expertise.** Consult with subject matter experts and obtain assistance preparing responses before posting content to maintain credibility and relevancy. Posting to MVRPC social media shall be limited to areas directly related to the job of the MVRPC employee and comments or information posted that is outside of the employee's role may result in disciplinary action.

Content and Engagement

Social media is intended to be very accessible and interactive. In order for social media platforms to remain relevant, content needs to remain current. Participation in social media platforms will require a significant commitment to ensure effective and sustained engagement. Please remember that even in online interactions, you are expected to adhere to MVRPC Personnel Policies and Employee handbook, especially Part VI, General Employee Guidelines.

MVRPC will reserve the right to monitor user comments including the right to delete or block users who engage in:

- Vulgar or offensive language.
- Content (or a user) that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation.
- Spam.
- Content that advocates illegal activity.
- Promotion of particular services, products.

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- Content that supports or opposes political campaigns or ballot measures.
- Infringement upon copyrights or trademarks.
- Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems.
- Content that is off topic.

Public Participation Meeting Integration

MVRPC will use social media platforms to promote public participation meetings in the following manner, but not limited to:

- By creating an event on Facebook with details of the public participation meeting on the day the press release is posted (3 weeks prior to meeting).
- By sharing created event on MVRPC Facebook for people to join to receive automatically generated reminders from Facebook platform.
- By posting 1 week before meeting, a reminder on Facebook and Twitter (even if the day does not correspond with the department's assigned day)
- By posting the morning of the public participation meeting, a reminder on Facebook and Twitter.
- By posting a reminder on Facebook and Twitter, 1 week before the comment period ends to remind followers there is still time to submit electronic comments if they missed the meeting.

Interactions with Businesses

Likes (Facebook) and Follows (Twitter) shall be limited to government agencies, MVRPC Board of Directors member jurisdictions/businesses and other entities related to MVRPC. MVRPC will not Follow or Like Pages for businesses or private users that are not related to the goals of the agency. Follows and Likes will be reviewed by the Executive Director.

Questions/Comments from users

A coordinated response to interactions on social media platforms is the goal of SMC. We understand that social media is a 24/7 medium; however, we cannot monitor, post or respond to comments 24/7, but we will respond as quickly as possible. Generally, we will post or respond to comments from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday thru Friday. Therefore, the following actions will take place as needed:

- Acknowledgement of posts/tweets on MVRPC pages will be gathered by SMC
- SMC will assign to specific departments based on topic to issue a proper reply.
- SMC will handle notification to departments about question/comment and post response.
- SMC will also capture screen shots and document interactions related to public participation.
- All comments made on MVRPC's social media sites are considered public records.

Appendix E

MVRPC Social Media Policy

MVRPC disclaims any liability for any loss or damage resulting from any reliance on such information. Anyone who posts comments participates at their own risk, taking personal responsibility for their comments, username and any information provided. For official inquiries or correspondence, visit our website, www.mvrpc.org or call us at 937.223.6323 or TTY/TDD at 800.750.0750.

Comments posted to MVRPC's social media sites represent the opinions of the individuals providing the comment and not the views, positions, or policies of MVRPC.

This comment policy is subject to modification at any time.

Personal Use of Social Media by Employees of MVRPC

These guidelines focus on agency participation on social media platforms; however, like any other citizen, employees have the right to participate in social media on their own personal time using their own personal IT resources.

- While staff members have the rights to express their own thoughts, views or opinions on their own personal social media accounts, please keep in mind that this policy applies to employees while employed at MVRPC.
- It is important that employees understand when creating content or posting comments, there should be no expectation of privacy.
- Social media is an extremely public forum and the lines between personal and professional opinions could easily become blurred; it is important to be cognizant of this fact.
- Any posting will become a public record subject to use by others or for potential legal information requests. A good rule of thumb is to never post or create anything that would be potentially embarrassing or considered offensive. Remember that even if information is shared from personal accounts, it could be identified by the press and reported in association with an employee's professional role.

In addition, in order to avoid the appearance of speaking on behalf of the agency, or to avoid the appearance of leveraging the stature of the agency, staff shall not use their assigned agency e-mail address. Official MVRPC e-mail addresses, such as "name@mvrpc.org" should not be used for personal communication in public forums.

Appendix F

Resources

Federal Highway Administration; The Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process: Key Issues.

Lancaster County Transportation Coordinating Committee; Lancaster County, PA; Public Participation Plan for Transportation Planning and Programming; Adopted January 2006.

Rapid City Area Metropolitan Planning Organization; Rapid City ND; Public Participation Plan; October 2003.

National Association of Regional Councils; Washington D.C.; Complying with SAFETEA-LU: Thirteen Items MPOs Must Address; June 1, 2006.

Wisconsin Department of Transportation; Madison, WI; Guidelines for Metropolitan Planning Organizations and Communities Developing a Public Participation Process; November 1993.

Michigan Department of Transportation; Lansing, MI; Michigan Statewide Planning Process Participation Plan; April 2006.

Corpus Christi Metropolitan Planning Organization; Corpus Christi, TX; Public Participation Plan; April 2006.

USDOT/FTA Circular C9045.1; Washington, D.C.; New Freedoms Program Guidance and Application Instructions, May 2007

ODOT; Columbus, Ohio; ODOT Office of Environmental Services (OES) Public Involvement Training, May 2015