

# RCRPC PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

*Approved May 28, 2014*

## INTRODUCTION:

Public participation is an integral part of the transportation process which helps to ensure that decisions are made in consideration of and to benefit public needs and preferences. Early and continuous public involvement; reasonable public availability of technical and other information; collaborative input on alternatives, evaluation criteria and mitigation needs; open public meetings where matters related to Federal-aid highway and transit programs are being considered; and open access to decision-making process prior to closure helps bring diverse viewpoints and values into the decision-making process. This process enables Richland County Regional Planning Commission (RCRPC) to make better informed decisions through collaborative efforts and builds mutual understanding and trust between the RCRPC and the public we serve. Successful public participation is a continuous process, consisting of a series of activities and actions to both inform the public and stakeholders and to obtain input from them which influence decisions that affect their lives.

The purpose of this document is to describe the public involvement process for the transportation planning program in Richland County, Ohio, which is conducted by the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The Coordinating Committee of RCRPC has been designated by the State and Federal governments as the MPO for Richland County. This document sets forth federal requirements, states local goals and objectives, and describes specific public participation procedures to be followed in the development of the Long Range Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and other documents and/or policies, as appropriate.

This Public Involvement Plan is intended to provide direction for public involvement activities to be conducted by RCRPC and contains the policies, goals, objectives, and techniques used by this MPO to solicit public involvement. **This plan is also used to meet the public participation requirements for planning for the Program of Projects of public transportation, and other transit related activities, that are carried out by the Richland County Transit Board.**

RCRPC, along with FHWA and FTA, commit to:

1. Promoting an active role for the public in the development of transportation plans, programs and projects from the early stages of the planning process through detailed project development.
2. Promoting the shared obligation of the public and decision makers to define goals and objectives for the State and/or metropolitan transportation system, to identify

- transportation and related problems, to develop alternatives to address the problems, and to evaluate the alternatives on the basis of collaboratively identified criteria.
3. Ensuring that, the public is actively involved in the development of public involvement procedures themselves in ways that go beyond commenting on drafts. (Notice in News Journal, May 1; Open House held May 16)
  4. Strongly encouraging the State departments of transportation, RCRPC, and transportation providers to aggressively seek to identify and involve the affected and interested public, including those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems and facilities.
  5. Strongly encourage using combinations of different public involvement techniques designed to meet the diverse needs of the general public.
  6. Sponsoring outreach, training, and technical assistance and providing information for Federal, State, regional, and local transportation agencies on effective public involvement procedures.
  7. Ensuring that statewide and RCRPC work programs provide for effective public involvement.
  8. Carefully evaluating public involvement processes and procedures to assess their success at meeting the performance requirements specified in the appropriate regulations during joint certification reviews, metropolitan planning and conformity findings, State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) approvals and project oversight.

### **Purpose of Transportation Planning**

The purpose of transportation planning is to fulfill goals by developing strategies to meet transportation needs. These strategies address current and future land use, economic development, traffic demand, public safety, health, and social needs. RCRPC considers there being two (2) fundamental reasons to undertake transportation planning in Richland County. They are:

1. Planning is the logical and reasonable thing to do.
2. Planning is required to receive Federal and State assistance for transportation projects.

Planning is a logical, systematic approach to problem solving and decision making. RCRPC's process for transportation planning includes the following steps:

1. Setting goals and objectives
2. Collection of data
3. Analysis of data to identify problems, needs and available resources
4. Identification of alternative solutions
5. Evaluation of alternatives
6. Selection of alternatives and establishing priorities
7. Implementation

## **History of Transportation Planning in Richland County**

The federal regulations that provide for transportation planning at the local level pertain to urbanized areas. The Census Bureau delineates urbanized areas (UA's) to provide a better separation of urban and rural territory, population, and housing in the vicinity of large places. An UA comprises one or more places ("central place") and the adjacent densely settled surrounding territory ("urban fringe") that together have a minimum of 50,000 persons.

The population of the City of Mansfield as determined by the 1960 decennial census was 47,325. In 1965, the Census Bureau conducted a canvas of the annexations to the City of Mansfield from 1960 to 1965. On the basis of the revised boundary, the 1960 population was determined to be 51,418 for the combination of the City and its annexations. The Mansfield urban area therefore was determined to be an urbanized area, and fell under the transportation planning requirements that were described in *the Federal Bureau of Public Roads Policy and Procedural Memorandum (PPM) 50-9*.

In 1966 it was determined that the planning process should be performed by the RCRPC. A Prospectus and a Work Program were developed and approved, a staff was hired, and the study was underway.

The year 1967 was established as the base year for the study. Social and economic data was collected, and an origin and destinations study was performed during that year. In the following years the base year data was analyzed, an ultimate land use plan was developed, socio-economic forecasts (1990) were made, transportation goals and objectives were established, financial resources were analyzed, traffic forecasts were developed and alternative networks were tested. In 1975, the first Richland County Wide Long Range Transportation Plan (1990) and Transportation Improvement Plan were adopted.

The initial Long Range Plan was considered to be a realistic plan that concentrated on improvements to existing facilities. A major project that was a part of the initial plan was the completion of missing or connecting links to the U.S. 30 expressway across the County. This first plan was highway oriented. By the time the Plan was completed in 1975 the community's public transportation service had been discontinued, and it did not appear that service would ever be restored to a point that it would affect automobile travel within the area. The planning process found that public transportation service was needed, and it

was feasible, so in December, 1977, a limited amount of public transportation was restored in Richland County.

As a result of federal rules and regulations promulgated in 1975, the transportation planning of the “Coordinating Committee of the Comprehensive Land Use and Transportation Study” being performed by the RCRPC was designated as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) by the State of Ohio. A “Transportation System Management” element was added to the planning program in 1979. In 1983 the federal rules and regulations recognized the differences between large and small urban areas, and that planning programs should be tailored to meet the areas’ varied needs.

The RCRPC’s transportation planning program has continued through the years to be flexible, and has adapted to changing state and federal requirements, policies, and program emphasis areas. The program also has been flexible in its capacity to adapt to local planning needs, and balancing its appreciation of the local issues, with the requirements from the state and federal level. This approach would seem to support the concept of the MPO planning, in that local decision makers understand the needs and priorities of an area, and can best decide how limited resources can be allocated to meet these needs.

### **Agency Description**

The MPO for the Mansfield Urbanized Area is the Coordinating Committee of the Continuing Comprehensive Land Use and Transportation Study. The MPO is organized through the RCRPC, which operates under the provisions of Section 713.21 & 713.23 of the Ohio Revised Code.

In 1959, a group of Richland County community leaders saw the need for planning. They envisioned that the issues a regional planning agency could address would range from infrastructure to zoning. They wanted to deal with issues affecting the development of the region as a whole, or more than one political subdivision within the region, which do not begin and terminate within the boundaries of any single municipality.

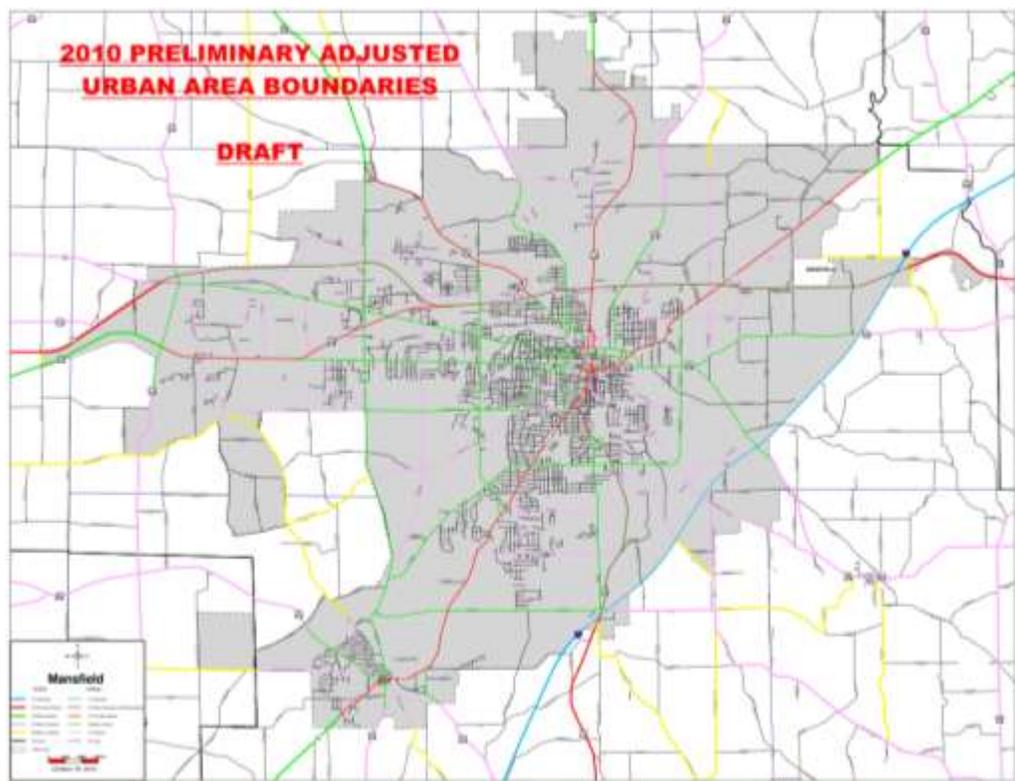
The City of Mansfield and Richland County Commissioner’s jointly created the RCRPC in 1959 to undertake this planning. The organization carries on today, still true to its original purpose -- most notably the ongoing focus on issues that *affect the development of the Region as a whole*.

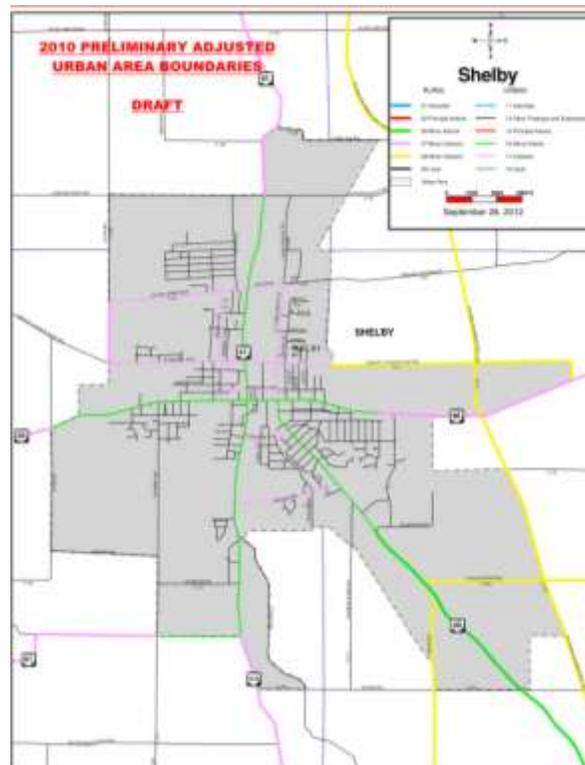
In 1966 it was decided that the most appropriate existing agency in Richland County to perform the Comprehensive Land Use and Transportation Study was the Regional Planning Commission. However, due to the fact that there were conflicts in the rules and regulations governing membership on the RCRPC and membership on the Policy Body of the Comprehensive Land Use and Transportation Study, it was necessary that a separate autonomous body, the “Coordinating Committee”, be formed to oversee this new transportation responsibility.

## **Agency Geography & MPO Boundary**

The RCRPC's geographic area of responsibility is all of Richland County, including every municipality and all of the unincorporated territory. The urbanized area geography for the MPO is identified on the following map, and generally corresponds to the more densely populated areas in and around Mansfield, Ontario and Shelby. It includes the following political subdivisions.

<b>Richland County Political Subdivision</b>	<b>All or Partial</b>
City of Mansfield	All
City of Ontario	All
City of Shelby	All
Village of Lexington	All
Madison Township	Partial
Washington Township	Partial
Springfield Township	Partial
Troy Township	Partial
Mifflin Township	Partial
Sharon Township	Partial
Franklin Township	Partial
Jackson Township	Partial
City of Galion	Partial

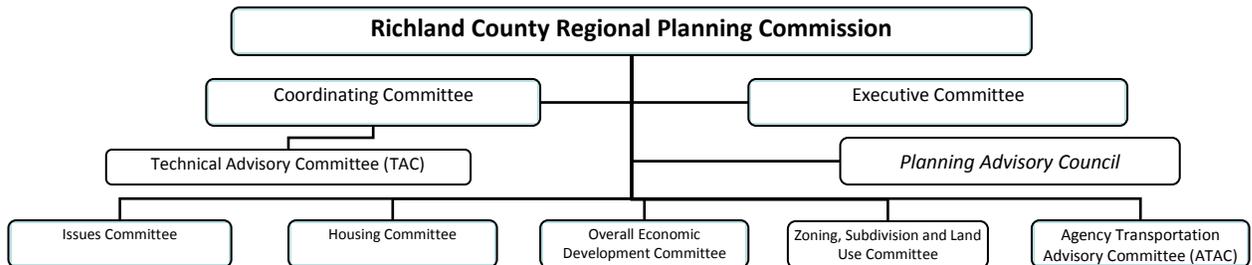




## Agency Organizational Structure

The RCRPC is the organizational unit for transportation planning in Richland County. The Coordinating Committee is the decision making “Policy Body” for Transportation Planning.

## Organizational Chart



## Outline of Organizational Arrangements & Relationships

Organizational Unit	Role & Responsibility	Membership
Richland County Regional Planning Commission	Organization established under Ohio Law.	Established by the Bylaws- Elected and appointed government officials as well as “at-large” membership representing various county interests.
Coordinating Committee of the Continuing Comprehensive Land Use and Transportation Program	As the Metropolitan Planning Organization, it is the decision making body for the transportation planning program.	All members of the RCRPC plus additional membership seats for additional elected officials from the urbanized area so that the MPO decision making is by a group with at least <b>51%</b> elected officials. Also membership positions for ODOT representatives.
Planning Advisory Council	All past presidents of the RCRPC.	Those who choose to remain active are entitled to voting privileges on the RCRPC

## Agency Committees and Roles

Committee	Role
Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)	Technical oversight of Transportation Planning Program
Executive Committee	Administrative and financial oversight of the RCRPC
Personnel Committee	Staff employment, compensation and policy issues
Zoning, Subdivision & Land Use Committee	Advisory assistance to RCRPC on matters relating to subdivision regulations and zoning, recommendations
Agency Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC)	Guidance and oversight of personal transportation coordination efforts and programs
Special Committees	Ad Hoc committees may be formed at the discretion of the Commission to address such topics as long term comprehensive planning, economic, and community development.

Generally speaking any transportation planning activity that the RCRPC undertakes follows the following basic steps:

1. The staff, along with the involvement of other technical persons, completes the necessary studies and develops recommendations that are forwarded to the TAC.
2. The TAC reviews the scope, status, and progress of work, and considers the staff recommendations.
3. The Coordinating Committee considers the results of the studies along with recommendations of staff and TAC and adopts plans and programs including the Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program.

## **Voting Representation**

<b>Richland County Regional Planning Commission Membership</b>	
<b>Representing</b>	<b>Appointed By</b>
County Commissioner	<i>Office</i>
County Commissioner	<i>Office</i>
County Commissioner	<i>Office</i>
County Engineer	<i>Office</i>
Mansfield-Ontario Richland Health Department	<i>Office</i>
Appointed/Elected County Official	<i>County Commissioners</i>
Appointed/Elected County Official	<i>County Commissioners</i>
County Priority Interest	<i>County Commissioners</i>
Mansfield Mayor	<i>Office</i>
Mansfield Public Works, Safety/Service Director	<i>Office</i>
Appointed/Elected Mansfield Official	<i>Mansfield Mayor</i>
Community Development/Law/Codes/Codes & Permits	<i>Mansfield Mayor</i>
Mansfield City Engineer	<i>Office</i>
Chair, Mansfield Council Zoning Committee	<i>Office</i>
President Mansfield City Council	<i>Office</i>
Mansfield City Priority Interest	<i>Mansfield Mayor</i>
Shelby Mayor	<i>Office</i>
Shelby Planning Commission	<i>Shelby Mayor</i>
Shelby Council Member	<i>Shelby Council</i>
Bellville Mayor Or Appointee	<i>Office</i>
Lexington Mayor Or Appointee	<i>Office</i>
Lexington Council Or Appointee	<i>Lexington Council</i>
Ontario Mayor Or Appointee	<i>Office</i>
Ontario Council Or Appointee	<i>Ontario Council</i>
Plymouth Mayor Or Appointee	<i>Office</i>
Shiloh Mayor Or Appointee	<i>Office</i>
Butler Mayor Or Appointee	<i>Office</i>
Lucas Mayor Or Appointee	<i>Office</i>
Township Trustee	<i>Township Association</i>
Madison Township	<i>Madison Township Trustees</i>
Mifflin Township	<i>Mifflin Township Trustees</i>
Washington Township	<i>Washington Township Trustees</i>
Industry	<i>At Large By Executive Committee</i>
Industry	<i>At Large By Executive Committee</i>
Industry	<i>At Large By Executive Committee</i>
Business (Realtors)	<i>At Large By Executive Committee</i>
Business (Shelby Economic Development)	<i>At Large By Executive Committee</i>
Business (Mansfield. Richland County Chamber)	<i>At Large By Executive Committee</i>
Civic	<i>At Large By Executive Committee</i>
Civic	<i>At Large By Executive Committee</i>
Civic	<i>At Large By Executive Committee</i>
Civic	<i>At Large By Executive Committee</i>
Civic (Economic Development)	<i>At Large By Executive Committee</i>
Education	<i>At Large By Executive Committee</i>
Minority Interests	<i>At Large By Executive Committee</i>
Minority Interests	<i>At Large By Executive Committee</i>

Richland County Regional Planning Commission Membership	
Representing	Appointed By
Richland County Transit Board	<i>At Large By Executive Committee</i>
Elderly/Senior Citizen's Interests	<i>At Large By Executive Committee</i>
Persons With Disabilities	<i>At Large By Executive Committee</i>
Agriculture	<i>At Large By Executive Committee</i>
Coordinating Committee - In addition to all RCRPC Members	Appointed By
Coordinating Committee-ODOT District 3	<i>ODOT</i>
Coordinating Committee-ODOT County Manager	<i>ODOT</i>
Coordinating Committee-Madison Township Trustee	<i>Madison Township</i>
Coordinating Committee-Washington Township Trustee	<i>Washington Township</i>
Coordinating Committee-Springfield Township Trustee	<i>Springfield Township</i>
Coordinating Committee- Trustee Association	<i>Township Association</i>
Coordinating Committee-Mansfield Council	<i>Council President</i>

## **MAP-21**

MAP-21 is a milestone for the U.S. economy and the Nation's surface transportation program. By transforming the policy and programmatic framework for investments to guide the system's growth and development, MAP-21 creates a streamlined and performance-based surface transportation program and builds on many of the highway, transit, bike, and pedestrian programs and policies established in 1991.

### **INFRASTRUCTURE**

- Program guidance:
  - National Highway Performance Program
  - Surface Transportation Program
  - Emergency Relief Program
  - Appalachian Development Highway System
  - Ferry Boats
  - Territorial and Puerto Rico Highways
- Guidance on infrastructure topics:
  - Asset management
  - National Highway System design standards
  - Construction management/general contractor contracting method
  - Buy America (including impact on utility relocations)
  - Stewardship and oversight
  - Collection of element-level bridge data
  - Interstate access justifications

- Strategy, schedule, and outreach on performance management
- Supplemental notice of proposed rulemaking on National Tunnel Inspection Standards
- Guidance and notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) on value engineering

#### UP NEXT

- Guidance on FHWA's revised stewardship and oversight process
- Rulemaking activity:
  - Final rule on value engineering
  - NPRM on establishing performance measures
  - NPRM on State asset management plans
  - NPRM on updated National Bridge Inspection Standards
  - Rule on National Tunnel Inspection Standards

#### SAFETY

- Guidance on safety programs and related topics:
  - Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) eligibility and reporting
  - Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP)
  - High Risk Rural Roads
  - State safety data systems
  - Penalty transfer provisions
  - Older road users
  - Railway-highway crossings

#### UP NEXT

- Activities related to High Risk Rural Roads:
  - Report to Congress
  - Best practices manual

#### FREIGHT

- Process for development of National Freight Network
- Guidance on freight-related topics:
  - Higher Federal share for freight projects
  - State freight advisory committees and plans
- Guidance and best practices re: special permits in emergencies

#### UP NEXT

- Draft map of Primary Freight Network
- Guidance to States on designation of critical rural freight corridors
- Final guidance on some freight-related topics

- Survey on projects of national and regional significance
- Report to Congress on State capacity to provide commercial truck parking
- Rule on 550 lb. weight exemption for idle-reduction equipment

## **CIVIL RIGHTS**

- Guidance on new MAP-21 requirements
- Monthly civil rights webinars to all Division Offices & stakeholders

## **UP NEXT**

- Revised guidance for On-the-Job-Training Supportive Services and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Supportive Services programs
- Call for statements of work on these two programs

## **ENVIRONMENT & REALTY**

- Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program
  - Interim guidance (including regarding operating assistance)
  - Proposed final guidance posted for comment in Federal Register
- Transportation Alternatives Program
  - Program guidance
  - Related webinars
- Accelerating project delivery:
  - Final rule on categorical exclusion (CE) for emergency repairs
  - Survey on use of CEs; solicitation of recommendations for new CEs
  - NPRM on CE for projects in the operational right-of-way
  - NPRM on CE for projects with limited Federal funding
  - NPRM for Surface Transportation Project Delivery Program (State assumption of NEPA responsibilities)
  - NPRM on programmatic agreements and CEs
  - Accelerated environmental decision-making guidance
  - Solicitation for participation in Relocation Demonstration Program
  - Guidance on State assumption of CEs

## **UP NEXT**

- CMAQ-related activities:
  - Final CMAQ guidance
  - CMAQ cost-effectiveness tables
- Rulemaking activity on various topics:
  - NPRM on transportation planning
  - NPRM on advance acquisition of property
  - Rule on Surface Transportation Project Delivery Program

- Rule on CEs in operational right-of-way and projects with limited Federal funding
  - Rule on programmatic agreements and CEs
- Report to Congress on project delivery timeframes (2005 and prior)

## **FEDERAL LANDS HIGHWAYS & TRIBAL TRANSPORTATION**

- Guidance on Federal Lands & Tribal Transportation programs
- Notice of funding availability and solicitation of grants for the 2% safety set-aside from the Tribal Transportation program (TTP)
- Establishment of Federal Lands Access Program decision committees in most States

### UP NEXT

- Selection and announcement of 2% TTP Safety set-aside tribal awards
- Selection and announcement of FY14 funding for Federal Lands Transportation Program and Federal Lands Planning Program
- Establishment of remaining Access Program decision committees

## **INNOVATIVE PROGRAM DELIVERY**

- Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) activities:
  - Notice of funding availability; responses to letters of interest
  - Revised program guide
- Interim tolling guidance and Q&As re: toll authority under 23 USC 129
- Major project financial plans:
  - Interim guidance
  - Draft final guidance posted for comment in Federal Register
- Federal Register notice for input on public-private partnership model contracts

### UP NEXT

- Additional guidance on tolling
- Final guidance on major project financial plans
- Completion of public-private partnership model contracts

## **RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT & TECHNOLOGY**

### COMPLETE

- Strategic Highway Research Program II (SHRP2) implementation:
  - Guidance on transfer of State Planning and Research funds
  - Two rounds of Implementation Assistance Program
  - Revised list of priority projects
  - Implementation planning workshops for eight products

- Launch of FHWA Research & Technology website
- Announcement of the State Transportation Innovation Council Incentive Program and notice of funding availability

#### UP NEXT

- Development of long-range plan for SHRP2
- Round three of the Implementation Assistance Program
- Implementation planning workshops for additional products

#### **FINANCIAL**

- MAP-21 apportionments and obligation limitation calculations and notices
- Guidance on use of funds from older programs
- FHWA Order on fund transfers to other agencies, between States, and between apportioned programs

## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT GOALS, OBJECTIVES and POLICIES

*Goals are broad; objectives are narrow.*

*Goals are general intentions; objectives are precise.*

*Goals are intangible; objectives are tangible.*

*Goals are abstract; objectives are concrete.*

*Goals can't be validated as is; objectives can be validated.*

*GOAL: The aim or object towards which an endeavor is directed. They are general expressions of community values. Goals set the direction rather than define the action needed.*

*OBJECTIVE: Based on facts rather than thoughts or opinions. Objectives set more specific directions.*

*POLICY: A course of action. Specific tasks or statements guiding decision-making, actions, and implying clear commitment.*

**The Goals of the RCRPC regarding public participation in the planning process are as follows:**

1. Provide the public with thorough information on transportation planning activities and project development, in a convenient and timely manner.
2. Assure that plans and activities have the support of those affected and those who must implement them.
  - a. Those affected by plans and programs should have the opportunity to learn about them and review and comment.
  - b. Those responsible for development of the plans and programs should have the responsibility to hear comments and respond.
  - c. Those responsible for implementation should have the opportunity to know what the public has said about the plan and how those comments have been responded to by plan developers.
3. Achieve a level and mix of public involvement appropriate to the scope and nature of planning activities or projects.
4. Meet the letter and spirit of MAP-21 public participation requirements.

The public involvement process establishes goals, objectives and policies to be carried out at three distinct but interacting tiers, or levels of activity. These can be described as ***Identify, Inform, and Involve***. Stakeholders and affected populations must first be ***Identified***, then ***Informed***, and finally ***Involved***.

This Public Involvement Plan outlines ways to **identify** and contact the community affected by the plan or activity; **inform** them of the need for the plan or activity through brochures, draft plans and activity summaries; and **involve** them in the decision-making process.

To **identify** the public, we have or can create an inventory of neighborhoods and school organizations, businesses, church groups, ethnic organizations, and special interest groups. The RCRPC has analyzed US census data using Geographic Information System (GIS) to identify targeted populations for Environmental Justice in the past and will continue to do so under MAP-21 requirements.

To **inform** the public, RCRPC utilizes memorandums to local governments, press releases, display ads, agendas, marketing materials, flyers and social media. The RCRPC shall distribute transportation plans, agendas and brochures that are written to familiarize the public with transportation projects and publish newsletters, newspaper inserts or social media describing ongoing transportation planning. Future plans may be distributed to local high school seniors as part of school government curriculum

To **involve** the public, the RCRPC holds public hearings and workshops or transportation summits. Staff will participate in established community events, create surveys and comment forms, and find opportunities to gauge public sentiment. Our public involvement plan philosophy and process will evolve to “take transportation planning to the people” rather than expecting them to find their way and attend formal meetings.

## **Goal 1**

**Objective 1:** The RCRPC shall actively **identify** and engage the public in the transportation planning process according to the policies, objectives and goals contained in this Public Participation Plan.

**Policy 1:** RCRPC shall maintain an up-to-date database of contacts including, at a minimum, the following persons to provide that all interested parties have reasonable opportunities to comment on the transportation planning process and products:

- A. Elected Officials
- B. Transportation Agencies (Airports, Transit, etc.)
- C. Local Media (TV, Radio, Print, etc.)
- D. Board of Realtors
- E. Civic Groups
- F. Special Interest Groups (Other Interested Parties)
- G. Libraries (For Public Display)
- H. Federal, State and local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation and historic preservation and other environmental issues for consultation on Transportation Plans and Transportation Improvement Programs.
- I. Private Freight Shippers

- J. Private Providers of Transportation
- K. Representatives of Public Transportation
- L. Representatives of Bicycle/Pedestrian Walkways Groups
- M. Representatives of Social Service Agencies involved in Transportation
- N. Persons who have requested updated information developed through the transportation planning process

**Policy 1.2:** The RCRPC shall employ visualization techniques to depict transportation plans. Examples of visualization techniques include: charts, graphs, photo interpretation, maps, use of GIS technology, artist renderings, physical models, and / or computer simulation.

## **Goal 2**

**Objective 2:** The RCRPC shall *inform* the public of significant on-going transportation related activities on a continuous basis through notices to the media and social media.

**Policy 2:** News media will be notified of any significant transportation activity that may affect the region.

**Policy 2.1:** RCRPC staff shall be available to provide general and project-specific information at a central location during normal business hours, and after hours at the request of community interest groups with reasonable notice.

**Policy 2.2:** RCRPC shall produce a transportation report for distribution to the public a minimum of once every two years and publish and/or advertised in the media.

**Policy 2.3:** The RCRPC shall maintain an internet web site to provide the most current and accurate transportation planning information available. The web site shall, at a minimum, contain the following information:

- A. Contact information (mailing address, phone, fax, and e-mail)
- B. Current RCRPC committee membership
- C. Meeting calendars
- D. Work products and publications (Transportation Improvement Program, Long Range Transportation Plans, Unified Planning Work Program, etc.)
- E. An annual listing of multimodal transportation projects funded for each federal fiscal year
- F. Comment/Question Form (See Appendix A)
- G. Links to related Federal and State agencies

**Policy 2.4:** The RCRPC will publish on an annual basis a listing of projects funded by the State and Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration.

## Goal 3

**Objective 3:** RCRPC shall *involve* all area citizens in the transportation planning process.

**Policy 3:** The RCRPC shall, whenever feasible, hold public meetings at a site convenient to public transportation and is accessible to persons with disabilities.

**Policy 3.1:** The RCRPC shall continuously evaluate public involvement techniques. This Public Participation Plan shall be reviewed and adopted, with revisions if necessary; at least every 3 years in order to improve the effectiveness of public involvement (see evaluation section).

## PUBLIC OUTREACH TOOLS

Listed below are descriptions of public participation tools currently being used, or with potential for use, by the RCRPC:

### RCRPC Web Site

*Description:* The site is used to provide basic information about the RCRPC process, members, meeting times, and contact information. Work products, such as the draft, and adopted, Public Participation Plan, Overall Work Program, Transportation Improvement Program and Long Range Transportation Plan are available from the site. Also, citizens will be able to submit comments to RCRPC. The site provides links to other transportation related sites at the local and national level. The website address is [www.rcrpc.org](http://www.rcrpc.org). The web site is maintained and updated by the RCRPC Web Site Coordinator and regularly reviewed.

### Biennial Transportation Report

*Description:* RCRPC staff produces a biennial transportation report that is published and widely distributed through various means and posted at [www.rcrpc.org](http://www.rcrpc.org).

### Direct Mailings

*Description:* Used to announce upcoming meetings or activities or to provide information to a targeted area or group of people. Direct mailings are usually post cards, but can be letters or flyers. An area may be targeted for a direct mailing because of potential impacts from a project developed through the transportation planning process. Groups are targeted that may have an interest in a specific issue, for example avid cyclists and pedestrians may be targeted for pathways and trail projects.

### Project Workshops/Open Houses/Transportation Summits

*Description:* These are targeted public meetings that are open and informal, with project team members interacting with the public on a one-on-one basis. Short presentations may be given at these meetings. The purpose of project-specific meetings is to provide project information to the public and to solicit public comment and a sense of public priorities.

**E-mail Announcements/Internet Message Boards**

*Description:* Meeting announcements and RCRPC information can be e-mailed to interested persons that have submitted their e-mail addresses to RCRPC staff.

**Public Hearings**

*Description:* These are public meetings used to solicit public comment on a project or issue being considered for adoption by the Coordinating Committee. Hearings provide a formal setting for citizens to provide comments to the RCRPC or another decision-making body.

**Comment Forms**

*Description:* Comment forms are often used to solicit public comment on specific issues being presented at a workshop or other public meeting.

**Surveys**

*Description:* Surveys are used when very specific input from the public is desired. A survey can be used in place of comment cards to ask very specific questions such as whether a person supports a specific alignment in a corridor study. Surveys are also used to gather technical data during corridor and planning studies. For example, participants may be asked about their daily travel patterns.

**Social Media**

*Description:* RCRPC has both Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Richland-County-Regional-Planning-Commission/138886562795659?ref=hl#!/>) and Twitter (<https://twitter.com/RichlandCRPC>) accounts where information is presented.

## APPENDIX A

### Public Comment Form

The RCRPC welcomes public comment and feedback on regional transportation issues. There are three ways that you can submit comments:

1. Fill out the form found on our website, and attached:  
[http://www.rcrpc.org/documents/Complaint\\_Form\\_&\\_Directions.pdf](http://www.rcrpc.org/documents/Complaint_Form_&_Directions.pdf)
2. Call RCRPC at 419-774-5684.
3. Attend RCRPC meetings, which are open to the public.