

# **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN (PPP)**

**DRAFT**

**2023**





# RICHLAND COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING

## Richland County Regional Planning Commission:

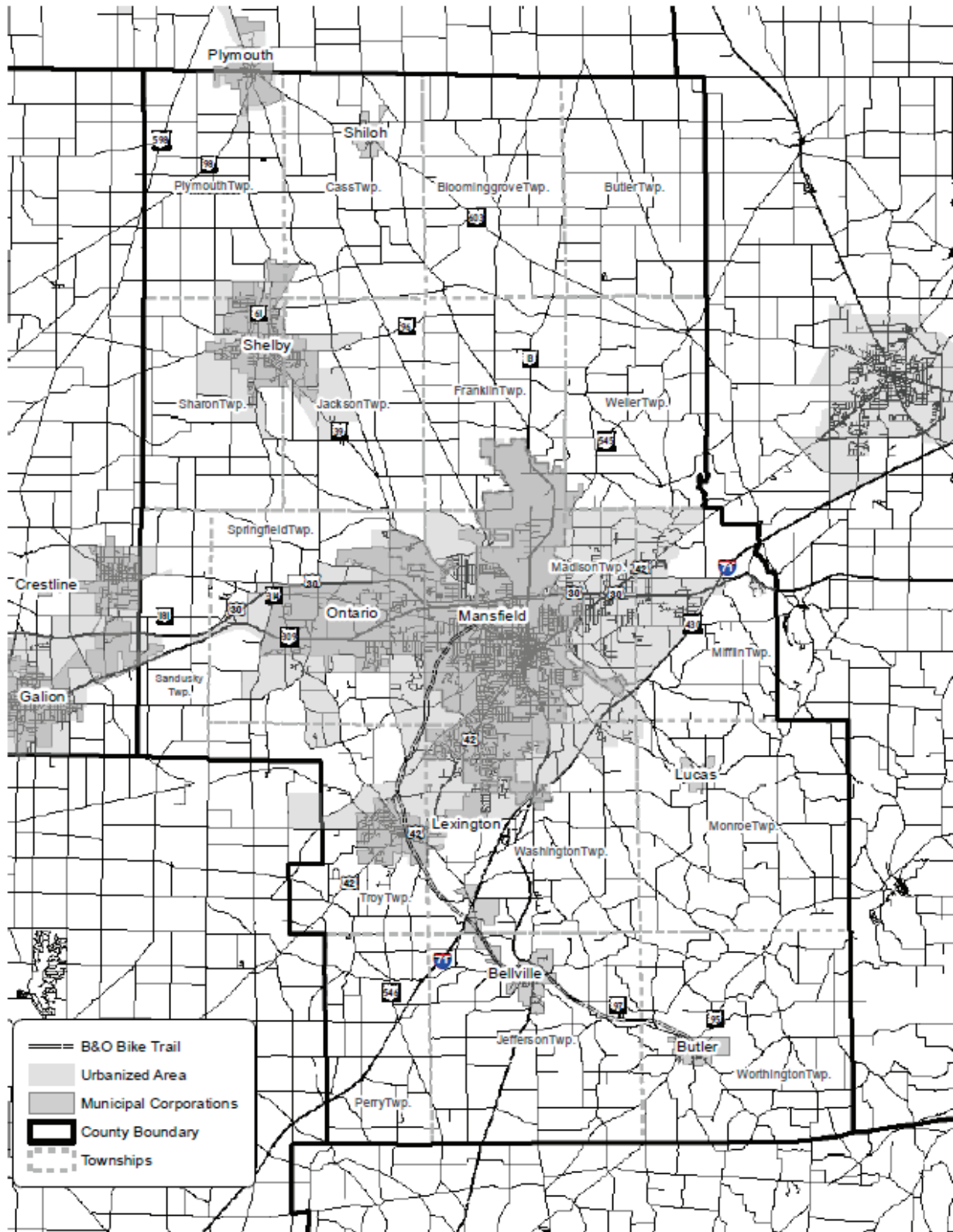
Over fifty years ago, a group of Richland County community leaders saw the need for planning. They envisioned that the issues a regional planning agency could address would range from infrastructure to zoning. They wanted to deal with issues affecting the development of the region as a whole, which do not begin and terminate within the boundaries of any single municipality. The City of Mansfield and Richland County jointly created the Richland County Regional Planning Commission in 1959 to undertake this planning. The organization carries on today still true to its original purpose -- most notably in the ongoing focus on issues that "affect the development of the Region as a whole."

## Mission Statement:

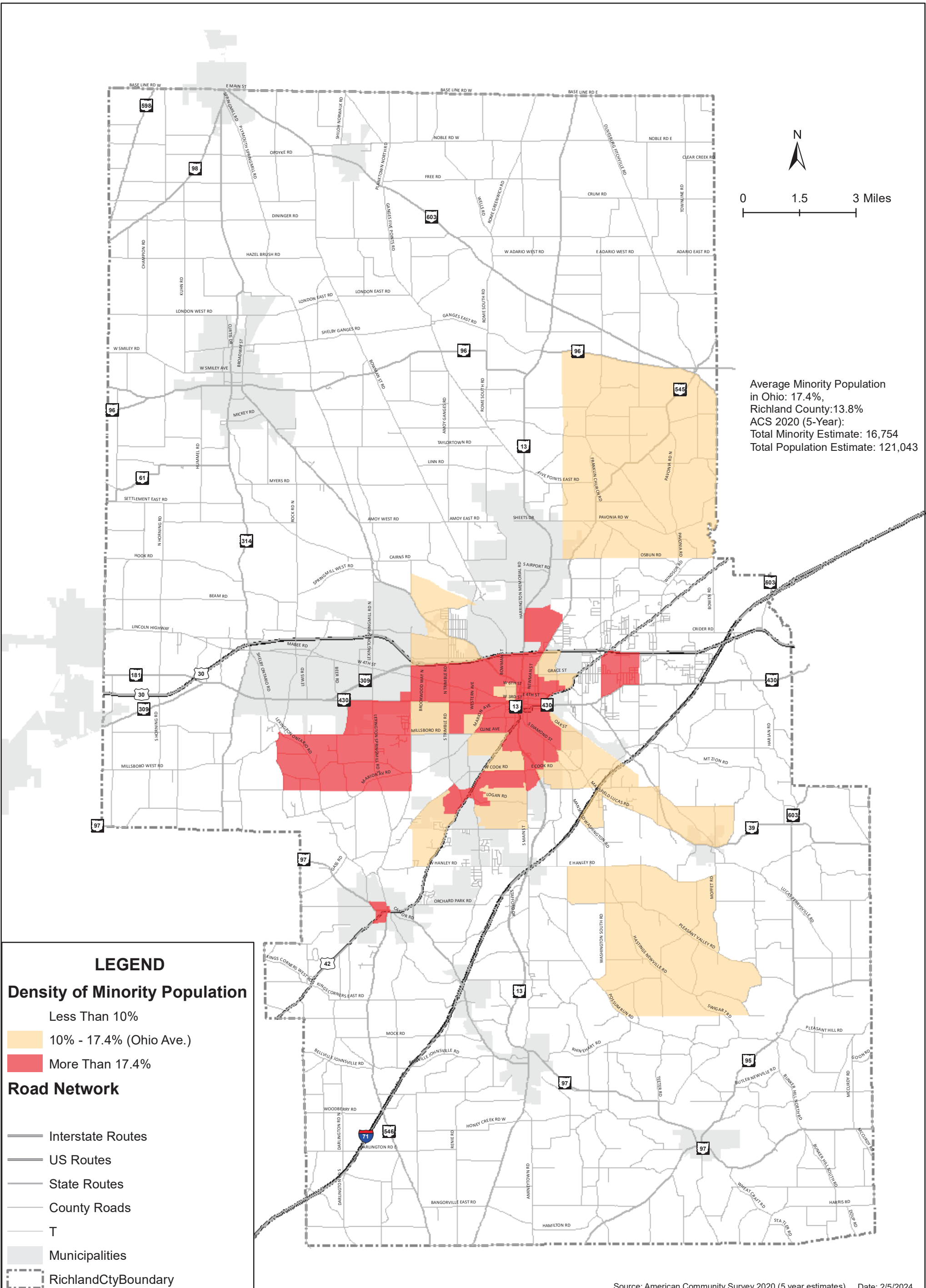
RCRPC will provide innovative information and regional planning services, in a professional and ethical manner, to our community partners and the general public, to facilitate the implementation of regional and local goals.

# Map of Richland County

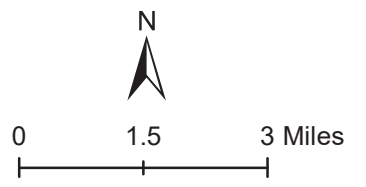
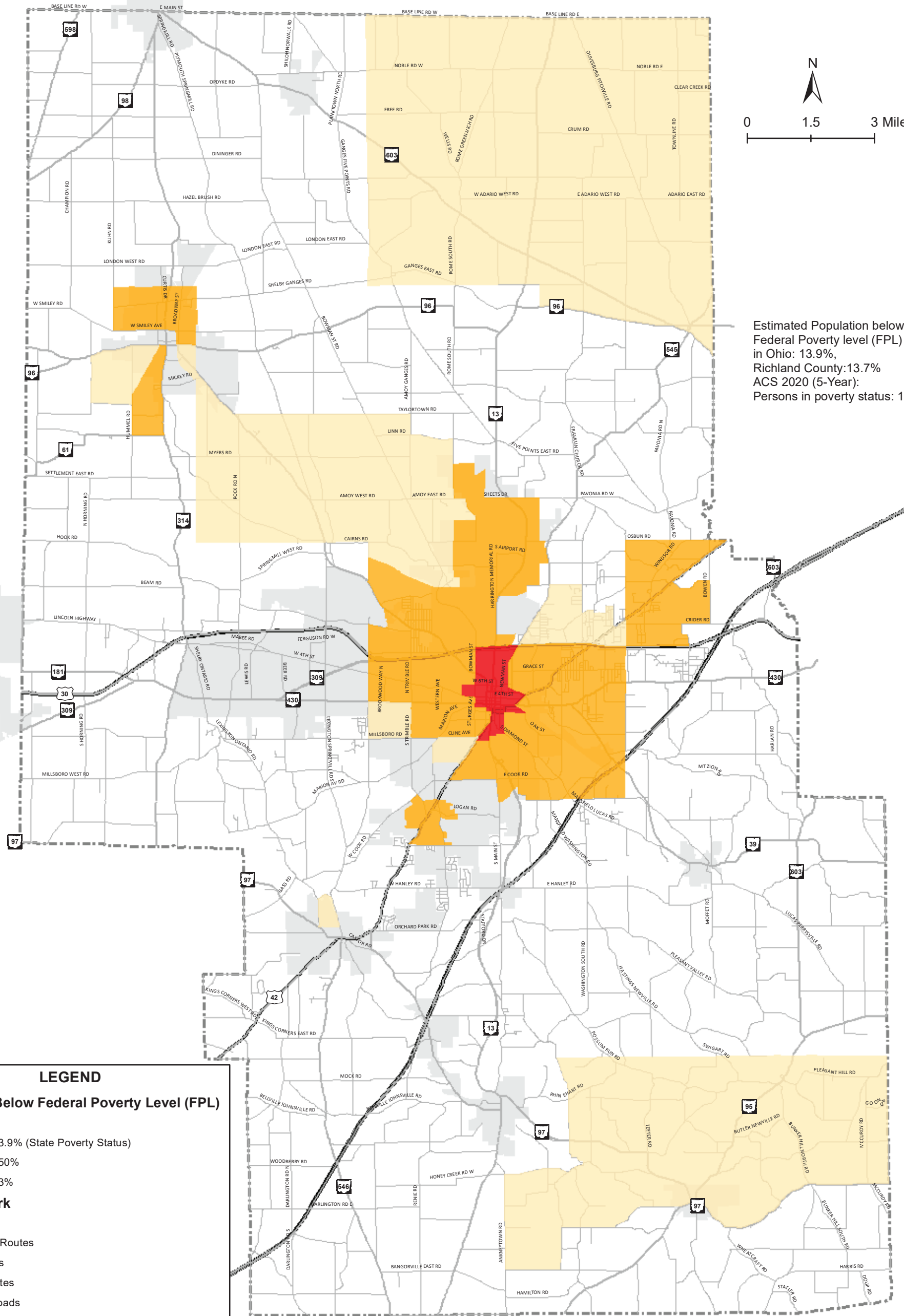
## RCRPC's Coverage Area



Document Path: \\CH-VM-F801\Regional\_Planning\GIS\Project\county maps\county map basic with urban.mxd



Source: American Community Survey 2020 (5 year estimates) Date: 2/5/2024



Estimated Population below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) in Ohio: 13.9%,  
 Richland County: 13.7%  
 ACS 2020 (5-Year):  
 Persons in poverty status: 15,542

**LEGEND**

**Population Below Federal Poverty Level (FPL)**

- 0% - 10%
- 10.1% - 13.9% (State Poverty Status)
- 13.91% - 50%
- 50.1% - 73%

**Road Network**

- Interstate Routes
- US Routes
- State Routes
- County Roads
- T
- Municipalities
- RichlandCityBoundary

Source: American Community Survey 2020 (5 year estimates) Date: 2/5/2024



## **ACRONYM PAGE:**

Here are a few of the acronyms you will see in the document:

ATAC – Agency Transportation Advisory Committee

DOJ – Department of Justice

EJ- Environmental Justice

FAST Act – Fixing America’s Surface Transportation

FHWA – Federal Highway Administration

FTA – Federal Transit Administration

ISTEA – Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act

LEP – Limited English Proficiency

LRTP – Long Range Transportation Plan

MAP-21 – Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act

MPO – Metropolitan Planning Organization

ODOT – Ohio Department of Transportation

PIP – Public Involvement Plan

RCRPC – Richland County Regional Planning Commission

RCT – Richland County Transit

RCTB – Richland County Transit Board

TAC – Technical Advisory Committee

TDP – Transit Development Program

TIP – Transportation Improvement Program

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## **INTRODUCTION:**

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 Richland County Regional Planning Commission (RCRPC) has been designated by the State and Federal governments as the MPO for Richland County. This document states local goals, 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 plan is also used to meet the public involvement requirements for planning for the Program of Projects of public transportation activities that are carried out by the Richland County Transit Board.

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 ensure public involvement takes place in a meaningful manner.



## AGENCY ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

<u>Organizational Unit</u>		
<u>Formal Name</u>	<u>Role &amp; Responsibility</u>	<u>Membership</u>
Richland County Regional Planning Commission (RCRPC)	Organization established under O.R.C 713.21 as a voluntary association of local governments engaged in a broad range of planning activities	Established by commission Bylaws-Elected & appointed government officials representing members, “at-large” membership representing various county interests.
Coordination 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 elected officials from the urbanized area so that the MPO decision making is by a group with 51% elected officials. Includes membership positions for ODOT representatives.
Planning Advisory Council (PAC)	Past presidents of the RCRPC who serve in an advisory capacity to the RCRPC	PAC are non-voting members except for PAC chair
<u>Committees</u>		
<u>Formal Name</u>	<u>Role &amp; Responsibility</u>	<u>Membership</u>
Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)	Technical oversight of Transportation Planning Program.	The TAC shall be made up of a thirteen (13) voting member committee (5 member nominating committee and 8 appointed voting members)
Executive Committee	Administrative and financial oversight of the RCRPC	Established by the Bylaws elected and appointed government officials representing members as well as “at-large” membership representing various county interests.
Personnel Committee	Employment, compensation and policy issues concerning commission staff	The Personnel Committee consists of at least five (5) members appointed by the president.
Agency Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC)	Guidance and oversight of personal transportation coordination efforts and programs.	The ATAC is made up of representatives of government entities, private and public social service agencies that are currently providing some form of transportation to disabled, elderly or otherwise disadvantaged individuals, and public and private transportation providers.
Special Committees	Ad Hoc committees may be formed at the direction of the Commission to address such topics as long-term comprehensive planning, economics, and community development.	Special Committees consist of interested stakeholder and general public participants for plans or projects.

## RULES, REGULATIONS, & REQUIREMENTS

Public involvement has been a requirement of federal transportation legislation since the creation of the 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act and has been a steady requirement since then.

### The FAST Act:

The current transportation bill, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act<sup>1</sup> replaced the MAP-21<sup>2</sup> bill. There have been standards included in federal transportation legislation relating to public involvement such as:

- The MPO must hold public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times.
- The MPO must make public information available in an electronically accessible format.
- The MPO must include input from "Interested Parties" such as general public, local businesses including their employees and customers, institutional services, local governments, civic and community associations, special Interest groups, transportation system users, providers of public and private transit services, providers of freight /shipping services, representatives of pedestrian/bicycle users and transportation facilities representatives of the disabled populations, Environmental Justice (EJ) populations, Limited English Proficiency (LEP) populations.

Federal regulations require the PIP to be consistent with other federal, state, and regional transportation planning documents. This includes the RCRPC Title VI commitments, which were developed to ensure RCRPC follows Title VI and subsequent nondiscrimination regulations, specifically regarding Executive Order 12898<sup>3</sup> on Environmental Justice and Executive Order 13166<sup>4</sup> on Limited English Proficiency (LEP). Title VI contains environmental justice strategies for minority, low-income, and LEP populations that assists the public participation goals and outreach strategies in the PIP. Both the PIP and Title VI Plan contribute to the overall planning process of the RCRPC's main plans.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/fastact/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/legislation.cfm>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.archives.gov/files/federal-register/executive-orders/pdf/12898.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.transportation.gov/civil-rights/civil-rights-awareness-enforcement/title-vi-executive-order-13166>

## ODOT Guidelines

ODOT provides guiding principles for public involvement along with a *45 day public input period* on projects. The guiding principles are listed below:

- Provide reasonable **public access** to technical data and policy information;
- Provide **Early and Continuous** public involvement opportunities;
- Provide **adequate notice** of public involvement opportunities and time for public review and comment at key transportation planning development milestones;
- Conduct **public meetings at convenient and accessible locations** and times;
- Employ **visualization techniques** to describe the planning process inputs and outcomes;
- To the maximum extent practicable, **make public information available in electronically accessible format**;
- Demonstrate **explicit consideration and response to public input** received;
- Enhance decision-making by integrating diverse interests and desires that identify community values and support transportation needs
- Seek out and **consider the needs and input of traditionally underserved populations**, including low-income and minority households;
- Provide information for/to populations with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), as needed.

## MAJOR RCRPC PLANS

As the MPO, the RCRPC, assisted by a staff, is responsible for the development, amendment (if needed), and update of:

### Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP):

Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) – ‘Direction: Looking Forward 2045’, is a document that guides policy and funding decision making for the entire region’s transportation system over twenty-five years. Federal requirements mandate the plan to be updated every five years. All transportation programs and projects requesting federal funds, within the entire region must be consistent with this plan.

### Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):

The Transportation Improvement Program, or TIP, is the Richland County Metropolitan Planning Organization’s (MPO) four-year transportation planning document. This document presents a fiscally balanced, multimodal transportation program for the region that includes project which have received federal funding and state and locally funded projects of regional significance that have been identified through the transportation planning process. It is also a requirement of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) that all projects using federal funds be listed in the TIP.

### Public Involvement Plan (PIP):

This document outlines how RCRPC involves the public in the transportation planning program. It describes goals and identifies specific approaches and tools.

### The Overall Work Program (OWP):

This document provides an overview of all major work activities and funds expended for Richland County Regional Planning Commission in the given fiscal year.

***In addition the staff has developed the following plans:***

### Richland County Comprehensive Plan:

RCRPC uses comprehensive planning to define the visions and goals for future community development in the Richland County area by analyzing and understanding the cause and effect of regional growth. The Commission develops and modifies a comprehensive plan that is laid out over a long range of time to outline the different projects and processes that will take place to improve the growth and development of the community

### Transit Development Program:

This is an annual plan that provides a report on past year overall transit ridership data, as well as a breakdown of transportation for the elderly, persons with disabilities, and those otherwise disadvantaged. Finally, a five year program and capital development plan is presented, along with vision and mission statements.

### Coordinated Transportation Plan:

The Coordinated Transportation Plan is intended to provide policies, goals, objectives, and techniques used for public involvement, planning and coordination activities to be conducted by the Richland County Regional Planning Commission, the Agency Transportation Advisory Committee and local partner agencies to provide coordinated public transit and human services transportation in Richland County, Ohio. Ultimately, it is meant to broaden the dialogue and support further collaboration between local and regional human service agencies and transportation providers to link people with the transportation services that they want and can use.

### Special Studies:

These documents are specified documents that RCRPC may produce for specific purposes such as safety plans, housing plans, intersection studies, etc.

## PURPOSE

RCRPC's Public Involvement Plan assures proper and thorough public involvement in the transportation planning and decision-making process. The RCRPC public involvement provides a meaningful planning process that seeks a range of representation in public input from different points of view, different needs, and different backgrounds. A strong general public input and focus-driven stakeholder input assures a great planning process and product.

The public involvement process accomplishes its purpose by establishing goals to be carried out at three distinct but interacting tiers, or levels of activity. These tiers can be described as **Identify, Inform, and Involve**. Stakeholders and affected populations must first be **identified**, then **informed**, and finally **involved**.

- RCRPC will **Identify** the appropriate stakeholders and actively make sure they have appropriate representation for projects being performed. The general public will always be a part of any planning effort and people with specialized interests will be targeted to be a part of stakeholder meetings.
- RCRPC will **Inform** the public of the projects or planning activities and give ample notice of the public involvement opportunities. This will be accomplished through various outreach tools listed in this plan and considered appropriate for the scope of the project.
- RCRPC will **involve** the public in projects and planning efforts throughout the process. Once the public and stakeholders are identified and informed of the projects or plans, then they will be provided ample opportunities to participate.

## GOALS

The goals of the RCRPC relative to the public participation process are as follows:

### 1. Seek maximum public participation in the planning process

RCRPC will involve stakeholders very early in the planning process after affected individuals are identified in the planning process. RCRPC will strive to constantly have large and diverse stakeholder groups for their projects and plans. The same effort will be made involving the public in the planning process. The public will be notified

as early and often as possible by RCRPC to ensure plenty of opportunities for public input and for this input to be considered and incorporated into the decision making process.

### 2. Identify stakeholders with representation from affected parties and underserved populations.

The process of picking stakeholders for a project will be tactfully done with a specific

emphasis on getting members of the affected population and underserved populations. Underserved populations typically refer to racial and ethnic, disabled, or people living in poverty. Other interested parties are businesses, transportation providers, or organizations with specific transportation needs. RCRPC will maintain an up-to-date database of contacts to facilitate stakeholder engagement.

### **3. Pursue the most effective tools to inform about public involvement.**

There will be certain tools to spread awareness to the general public that will be constantly used through all projects such as press releases to the local media outlets. The rest of the public outreach tools will be adjusted according to the project or plan being completed. This may involve using a combination of tools to reach the most people.

### **4. Inform and educate the public on the project to increase the quality of public input.**

During the public involvement process, RCRPC will provide information and resources to help the public give informed responses as part of the public involvement. RCRPC will use a wide variety of visualization formats in print and online and make documents easily available to the public. All reports, plans will include executive summaries that relay information in simple, easy to understand language.

### **5. Conduct outreach that bridges language, cultural, and economic barriers.**

RCRPC will keep in mind ways to reach out and get involvement from underserved populations. This includes having a Language Assistance Plan and informing staff on helping people with a language barrier participate in involvement. RCRPC will also hold meetings in locations with transit access, offer multiple times for public involvement, plus provide on-line access to involve the public who cannot attend in-person public meetings but want to participate in public involvement.

### **6. Provide reasonable accommodations for disabled populations to participate in public involvement.**

RCRPC will have all of their public meetings in locations that meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. Most meetings will take place at the RCRPC Office which is ADA compliant, however if for any reason the public involvement is moved then RCRPC will chose a locations that accommodates the disabled population.

### **7. Reevaluate the plan.**

There will be a constant reevaluation of the plan and current methods used for public involvement. The plan should be updated when deemed necessary or new techniques are identified to improve the public involvement process.



## GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR MEETINGS

RCRPC will take a proactive approach to providing an opportunity for the public and stakeholders to be involved in all phases of the transportation planning process and operate in a manner consistent with Title VI Regulations. This section outlines the procedures for RCRPC meetings and requirements for publication of legal notices.

- Regular RCRPC Policy Board and TAC Meetings

The location for regular RCRPC Policy Board meetings are held at the Kobacker Room at 28N Main St., Mansfield Ohio 44902 and TAC meetings will be held at 19 N Main Street, Mansfield OH. This facility is Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant. Public notification for regularly scheduled Policy Board and/or TAC meetings shall be provided to media outlets every year. The notification will include a meeting schedule providing the date, time, and location of meetings and shall be posted continuously on the RCRPC website.

- Location of Public Information Meetings

Public information meetings will be held at various locations in the Richland County area to inform the public of the planning process and to solicit ideas, input and feedback. Public hearings and public information meetings will be held at locations accessible to and at times convenient to minority and disabled residents. To the extent feasible, meeting locations held within the community will be ADA and public transportation accessible. Public notification for meetings advising the public of the date, time, and location shall be provided to media outlets and posted to the RCRPC website.

- Public Comment Opportunity

All regular and special meetings of the RCRPC Policy Board and TAC, will provide a public comment period. This comment period may be used by citizens to address their concerns, provide input, etc. to matters on the agenda or of a general nature as long as they relate to metropolitan transportation planning. Additionally, when major plans are placed on the agenda, public comment time shall be provided as part of the Board's or TAC's discussion of that item. Public comment may also be received about an item or items to be discussed at a meeting via email, mail, etc. prior to the meeting. In these cases, copies shall be provided to the Board and/or TAC members and noted for the public record during the meeting. Explicit attention to and consideration of public comments will be given and responses, when appropriate, provided to questions asked.

- ADA Accessibility and Interpreter Availability

Every reasonable effort will be made to accommodate individuals with disabilities who wish to participate in the public process. Meeting facilities are ADA and public transit accessible. All public hearings will be held in facilities fully accessible to individuals with disabilities and mobility impairments. Sign language for the hearing impaired and/or LEP interpreters will be provided if needed and requested at least seven working days in advance of a regular and/or special scheduled meeting.

<h2 style="text-align: center;">HOW TO GET INVOLVED IN TRANSPORTATION PLANNING</h2>	
	<p><b>CALL US</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">419-774-5968 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM Monday - Friday</p>
	<p><b>WRITE TO US</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Richland County Regional Planning Commission 19 N Main St Mansfield, OH 44906</p>
	<p><b>EMAIL US</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><a href="mailto:rcrpc@rcrpc.org">rcrpc@rcrpc.org</a></p>
	<p><b>GO ONLINE</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><a href="http://www.rcrcp.org">www.rcrcp.org</a> Facebook: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/RichlandcountyRPC">https://www.facebook.com/RichlandcountyRPC</a> Twitter: <a href="https://twitter.com/richlandcrpc?lang=en">https://twitter.com/richlandcrpc?lang=en</a></p>
	<p><b>COME TO AN EVENT</b></p> <p>RCRPC plans public events for citizens to learn about projects where they work and live and to review our documents. Notices are posted in newspapers, sent out via email, and advertised on social media.</p>
	<p><b>ATTEND A MEETING</b></p> <p>Boaed and Committee Meeting schedules can be found at <a href="http://www.rcrpc.org/meetings">www.rcrpc.org/meetings</a></p>
	<p><b>VISIT OUR OFFICE</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">19 N Main Street Mansfield, OH 44906</p>

## General Guidelines for Plans and Projects

The following are general minimum requirements for all plans and projects requiring public involvement:

1. A public notice inviting comments at the beginning of the review period containing the following:
  - a. Locations where the document can be reviewed;
  - b. Instructions for submitting comments;
  - c. Contact information for questions or additional information, noting that comments on the public participation process are also welcome;
  - d. The due date for comments;
  - e. Date, time, locations and special accommodations for any scheduled public meetings;
  - f. A link for additional information on the internet.
2. Staff will include maps, photos, or renderings on the public notices to attract interest, when possible.
3. The public notice (ad, poster or website notifications) may be submitted to the following outlets, which will also be advised of any significant developments during the public review period:
  - a. Local access cable television station;
  - b. MPO Website;
  - c. Press release to area media outlets will be made at or prior to the commencement of the public review period;
  - d. Local newspapers and representatives of the MPO municipalities based on the projects;
  - e. RCRPC and TAC members, as well as representatives of stakeholder agencies.
4. Documents shall be accessible for public review for 30 calendar days **or the period mandated by federal requirements** at the following locations:
  - a. RCRPC.org, RCRPC Office, Richland County Libraries: Mansfield, Madison, Lexington, Ontario, Bellville, Butler branches.
5. Documents should contain maps, photos, renderings, or other visualization tools to aid in understanding and shall be a jargon-free and succinct as possible.
6. During the public review period, comments should be submitted:
  - a. In writing;
  - b. Via standard mail, e-mail and fax or internet forms, if available.
7. Public comments received will be:
  - a. Acknowledged with a written or e-mailed receipt message;

- b. Responded to as appropriate, which could include a direct communication to the commenter or a response in the revised document;
- c. Documented and presented to the MPO's Commission and TAC, in summary form or verbatim, before a vote is taken to adopt the plan or document in question; and
- d. Included in summary form or verbatim with final documents, if sufficiently significant.

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH TOOLS**

The type of public communication and outreach for a project will be determined on the project's scale and significance. Localized projects may require more specialized outreach within the project area, while others may require extensive outreach efforts. Listed below are public participation tools currently being used, or with potential for use, by RCRPC:

### **In-Person Involvement Efforts**

#### **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.

#### **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.

#### **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.

### **Stakeholder/Steering Committee Meetings**

*Description:* These are meetings held when RCRPC develops a specific project or study. The meetings serve a core decision making body for that issue. This group should include representatives from all interest groups.

### **Focus Groups**

*Description:* These are meetings used to find out the community's perspective on a particular condition and how it can be improved. The participants of the meetings provide their opinions in a free-form style.

### **Engagement at Community Events**

*Description:* These are attempts at public outreach through local events such as fairs or festivals. Most of the time this consist of a few RCRPC employees working a booth to inform people of an upcoming project.

### **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.

## **Online Involvement Efforts**

### **RCRPC Website**

*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 website is maintained and updated by the RCRPC Staff and regularly reviewed.

### **Online Public Meetings**

*Description:* In the event that an in-person public meeting is unable to be performed RCRPC will conduct an online public meeting to the same extent as an in-person meeting would be held.

### **Online Surveys**

*Description:* Online Surveys are used when very specific input from the public is desired and a large audience reach is desired. An online survey can be distributed using social media outlets, websites, and emails.

### **Online Comment Forms**

*Description:* Online Comment forms are often used to solicit public comment on specific issues and plans made available online on the RCRPC website.

## **Ongoing Communication Channels**

### **Press Release**

*Description:* An official statement issued to newspapers giving information on a particular matter. A formal Press Release will be sent to all local outlets with ample time before the event.

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

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

### **Quarterly Newsletters**

*Description:* RCRPC produces a quarterly newsletter that discusses what major events have happened in the past season for RCRPC and Transportation in general. These newsletters typically come as spring, summer, fall, and winter editions.

### **Public Service Announcements**

RCRPC Staff will provide, as appropriate, public service announcements and interviews on radio  
and

Cable television local community channels to explain the subject matter and promote public participation.

## **Social Media**

*Description:*

[Website](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

## **Biennial Transportation Report**

*Description:* RCRPC staff produces a biennial transportation report that is published and widely distributed through various means and posted

## **Other Tools**

### **Fact Sheets**

*Description:* Fact Sheets present information and data of one or multiple projects, a study, or a transportation issue in a format emphasizing key points on a single printed page. Tables, bullet points, headings, and maps are commonly used to present information on the fact sheets. Fact sheets can be distributed through print-outs or electronically distribution such as email, social media, website, and other media outlets.

### **Flyers**

*Description:* Flyers serve as an advertisement intended for wide distribution. It is posted or distributed in public places/spaces, grocery stores, or handed out to individuals. Flyers can be distributed in a similar method as fact sheets.

### **Posters**

*Description:* Posters promote ideas or events in a public space. They present textual and graphic elements in an eye-catching and informative way. Posters are typically developed to be printed out and posted at public spaces. They can still be distributed in electronic forms like fact sheets and flyers

### **Brochures**

*Description:* Brochures are a small book or magazine containing pictures and information about a project or service. They are mainly designed to be print-outs and distributed in person. They can be sent electronically.



### QR Code

*Description:* A QR Code provides an easy way to access online information through a scannable code on print material. Information that can be linked with a QR code includes RCRPC websites, surveys, or other online based materials.

### Language Assistance Plan

*Description:* This plan can help ensure that an organization provides high quality and appropriate language services. A language assistance plan can also help ensure that an organization's staff members are aware of what to do when an individual with a language barrier

## **EMERGENCY PROVISIONS**

There are rare occasions when RCRPC/MPO is required to act immediately in order to meet a grant deadline, preserve spending authority or respond to an unforeseen opportunity or emergency. These unforeseen circumstances are likely to occur in response to a request by ODOT due to the serve time constraints the agency operates under. Emergency situations include manmade or natural disasters such as tornados, floods, epidemics, acts of terrorism, cyber-attacks, etc. If the situation demands immediate board action, staff may bring proposed actions forward to the TAC or Executive Committee and then to the Full Commission of Regional Planning. Once the actions are approved by the aforementioned entities, RCRPC will be able to act on the emergency situation accordingly. Certain emergency situations will require the enactment of the following emergency provisions and these provisions will supersede all other public involvement requirements.

Public engagement is very important to the MPO, ODOT, FHWA, and FTA. However, in an effort to protect public health and to comply with instructions, recommendations, and Executive Orders issued during a pandemic or other threat to community health, RCRPC/MPO will be proactive but flexible in meeting public involvement plan requirements. RCRPC is expected to continue to provide opportunities for public involvement plan activities to be delayed, deferred, cancelled, and/or replaced with other engagement strategies to ensure that all sectors of the population have an opportunity to participate. RCRPC will document any outreach activities that were originally required in the PIP for a specific project that were modified including strategies, if needed, to ensure sufficient and appropriate outreach is accomplished.

### **Strategies for Temporary Public Involvement:**

Depending on the emergency situation taking place RCRPC may use different types of public involvement to fulfill their requirements. Some of the most common ways to involve the public during an emergency situation include virtual meetings, telephone conferencing, online surveys, social media, press releases, and RCRPC's website. If public involvement can't be satisfied by using virtual resources then RCRPC can perform in-person involvement once the emergency is over and then add to the approved document. In the event of a cyber-attack RCRPC may postpone public involvement for a period of time.

### **Follow-up to Emergency Provisions:**

After the Emergency situation is deemed over by the entity that declared it. RCRPC with the recommendations from ODOT, FHWA, and FTA will determine if the public involvement that took place during the state of emergency is adequate or if there needs to be additional actions taken by RCRPC to meet requirements.

# Appendix A: Public Engagement Results