

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN
OF THE
LIMA-ALLEN COUNTY
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
AS IT RELATES TO THE
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS**

**Revised
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SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

On December 4, 2015, President Barack Obama signed into law the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. The Act authorized approximately \$305 billion for fiscal years (FY) 2016 through 2020, funding highways and public transportation, as well as safety with respect to highway, motor vehicle, motor carrier, hazardous materials, and rail. The FAST Act was built on the foundation of, and refined the initiatives established in, its predecessors, including: the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (1991) (ISTEA), the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (1998) (TEA 21), and the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (2005) (SAFETEA-LU), and the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (2015) (MAP-21). The FAST Act not only supported the continuation and improvement of existing programs; but, it envisioned new initiatives to meet the challenges of improving automobile safety, protecting public and environmental health as well as creating opportunities for all Americans.

The overall goal of the FAST Act furthers the efficiency of the existing transportation system by continuing to fully integrate existing transportation modes rather than implementing new, expensive, and fragmented infrastructure. FAST Act provisions are to be implemented in conjunction with other Federal regulatory acts, including the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 (CAAA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). Collectively these regulations provide a complicated framework from which to rebuild our nation's transportation infrastructure. This framework, however cumbersome, provides direction to build a truly accessible, intermodal transportation system that addresses the needs of industry and commerce as well as those of the poor, the elderly, the frail, and the mobility impaired. While meeting the nation's diverse transportation needs, the system provides for an equitable distribution of infrastructure, investment, and services across geographic and socio-economic communities, yet considers the environmental impact and health concerns of local communities. Achieving the national goal of a holistic transportation system will serve the needs of local communities far into the future.

To further that goal, the transportation planning process is shaped by Executive Order 12898: Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low Income Populations. Signed into law in February 1994, the Order serves to amplify the provisions of the three-decade old Title VI of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 which states "that no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." The Order for Environmental Justice (EJ) requires that "each Federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse environmental effects of its program policies and activities on minority and low income populations."

1.1 Rationale

Federal regulations, taken collectively, call for a transportation system that supports a just distribution of benefits across racial and socioeconomic lines; a system that is as friendly to commerce and the disadvantaged residing within the community, as it is to the natural environment. The FAST Act, and the framework of supporting Federal legislation, demands that federally financed infrastructure support mobility, economic development, and global competition, while furthering an increased quality of life. Such legislation demands that infrastructure improvements be well planned in order to further long-term community sustainability, while assuring that infrastructure improvement decisions made today, to meet today's demands, do not jeopardize or compromise a community's ability to meet the needs and desires of future generations.

To ensure an equitable distribution of benefits from federally financed programs and/or services, the transportation planning process must meet the standards established by Title

VI and Executive Order 12898. Therefore, all federally funded activities must meet the inclusionary requirements identified by Title VI, while the consequences of such planning activities must be in compliance with Executive Order 12898. Collectively, Title VI and the Executive Order requires entities delivering federally financed programs and services to ensure not only the equitable distribution of such programs and services, but to guarantee an open and informed discussion with affected communities regarding the environmental, social, and economic impact of any such actions. In essence, to achieve Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)/Federal Transit Authority (FTA) objectives, and to comply with Title VI and the Order for Environmental Justice, a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) must develop a formal process to integrate public participation and input into, not only the transportation planning process, but the development of all long- and short-range transportation plans, including the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

1.2 Objectives of the Public Participation Plan

Pursuant to Federal requirements, MPOs must reinvigorate their attempts to involve the public in the transportation planning process. Moreover, MPOs must develop a formal Public Participation Plan (PPP) as a mechanism to guide and monitor the effectiveness of its planning process as it relates to the local citizenry.

In order to promote and develop an informed and involved citizenry in the transportation planning process the following objectives are critical. (1) Support 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) Promote the idea of a shared obligation between the public and decision makers to define the goals and objectives for the 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) Ensure that the public is actively involved in the development of public involvement procedures in ways that go beyond commenting on drafts. (4) Identify and involving the affected and interested public, including those traditionally under-served by existing transportation systems and facilities. And finally, (5) encourage a combination of different public involvement techniques designed to meet the diverse needs of the general public, examples might include: visualization techniques illustrating transportation plan and TIP development as well as electronic postings to the MPO website.

1.3 Overview

The local MPO recognizes that the PPP is intended to provide methods, strategies, and desired outcomes for public involvement and participation. The Plan stipulates outreach to a broadly defined audience of affected parties and expects interested parties to respond to (1) full public access to information and decisions, (2) timely public notices, and (3) early and continuing public involvement in plan and services development. This PPP addresses the requirements of the FAST Act, as well as the spirit of its predecessors, regarding public participation of, and consultation with, defined parties. In addition, it outlines the necessary strategies to support continued consultation by all affected parties in the planning process.

The document is composed of several sections. The introduction is followed by two chapters which address various aspects of federal regulatory requirements. Section 2 highlights the federal transportation planning framework, while Section 3 addresses the local transportation planning process and offers specific recommendations aimed at improving same. Section 4 presents an overview of the public involvement process which is to be implemented prior to the adoption, and/or any amendments to, the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Public Participation Plan (PPP), and Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

SECTION 2 TRANSPORTATION PLANNING & REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Federal legislation guides the current transportation planning process. Six (6) federal acts in particular the FAST Act (2015), MAP-21 (2012), SAFETEA-LU (2005), TEA-21 (1998), ISTEA (1991), and CAAA (1990) have collectively redesigned the transportation planning process and its elements. These pieces of legislation, together with Executive Order 12898 and the ADA, mandate specific processes and outcomes for transportation planning, programs, and projects in urban areas.

These Federal legislative initiatives targeted among other things accessibility issues, improved air quality, and the environmental review process, creating new synergistic opportunities. For example, the ADA was built on earlier law and required curb ramps in new, altered, or existing sidewalks and public buildings. The CAAA required states and MPOs to integrate both air quality and transportation planning to effectively reduce automobile emitted pollutants. ISTEA required states and MPOs to fully integrate the larger transportation system with pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities. TEA-21 stated that bicycle transportation facilities and pedestrian walkways should be considered, in conjunction with all new construction and reconstruction of transportation projects, except where bicycle and pedestrian activities are not permitted. SAFETEA-LU provided expanded eligibility for using federal Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality (CMAQ) funds for pollution abatement and projects that mitigate congestion and improve air quality. MAP-21 created a streamlined, performance-based, and multimodal program by building on and refining many of the highway, transit, bike, and pedestrian programs and policies already established in these aforementioned transportation bills. Finally, the FAST Act, improved mobility by establishing and funding programs to ease congestion and facilitate the movement of freight. It also worked to create jobs and support economic growth through the funding of roads, bridges, and active transportation improvements as well as to accelerate project delivery.

The remainder of this section is intended to provide the reader with an overview of Federal legislation that continues to influence the transportation planning process.

2.1 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (1991)

ISTEA, signed into law in 1991, established a new direction for the country's surface transportation systems. As stated in the Act, the purpose was "to develop a national intermodal transportation system that was economically efficient, environmentally sound, providing the foundation for the nation to compete in the global economy, and will move people and goods in an energy efficient manner."

The basis for ISTEA's direction was the Act's acknowledgment and response to decades of insensitive transportation decisions with respect to environmental, social, and economic impacts. Based on the concept that problems are created as well as solved by transportation facilities, and that transportation policy must address these problems, ISTEA made fundamental changes in the nation's transportation policy and expanded the scope of transportation planning.

ISTEA shifted the planning emphasis away from expanding the highway system towards one of constructing a truly multimodal system in which transit, ridesharing, bicycling, and pedestrian facilities offer viable travel alternatives to the single-occupancy vehicle commuter. The Act required transportation planners to reduce travel demand, not just manage it. ISTEA also addressed the transportation system's performance as well as its capacity. Moreover, it called for a financial plan to demonstrate how programmed projects were to be implemented based on available fiscal resources.

The provisions of ISTEA changed transportation planning in many ways. Funding was shifted to encourage multimodal problem solving. It also redistributed authority for planning and implementing projects, while reinforcing clean air objectives. Under previous transportation legislation, categorical program definitions were relatively narrow and program boundaries were generally inflexible. ISTEA expanded the types of projects and activities eligible under the basic transportation funding programs. The State and local transportation plans were required to reflect the widest consideration of modal options to most efficiently and effectively serve mobility needs within metropolitan areas.

2.2 Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (1998)

TEA-21 was signed into law on June 9, 1998. The legislation attempted to capitalize on the most successful initiatives established under its predecessor ISTEA, while introducing new programming aimed at invigorating the existing transportation system. TEA-21 shifted its focus from concrete, asphalt, and steel to the American people; a shift to developing opportunities for safer, healthier, and more fulfilling lives.

In addition to rebuilding America's infrastructure, the bill focused upon a wide array of health and safety initiatives by targeting increased seat belt usage, improving truck safety, establishing a blood alcohol percentage of 0.08 percent as a national standard, reducing the number of highway/rail-grade crossing crashes, and preventing pipeline explosions. TEA-21 also expanded provisions to improve the safety of bicycle and pedestrian facilities. In addition, TEA-21 increased Federal funding levels, and the flexibility within program guidelines, to allow local governments the use of CMAQ funds to promote attainment of National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

The major funding programs of TEA-21 included:

- Surface Transportation Program (STP), which provided state and local governments means to fund a wide variety of activities, such as:
 - highway and transit projects
 - pedestrian and bicycle projects
 - carpool projects and planning
- Transportation Enhancement (TE) Program, including:
 - pedestrian or bicycle projects
 - scenic or historic transportation related projects
 - tourism and welcome centers
- National Highway System (NHS) Program promoted the construction and repair of the interstate system of highways and major state roads
- Transit Program formula and discretionary grants provided for new construction and equipment, as well as, system maintenance
- Safety Infrastructure (SI) Program
- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program for projects explicitly aimed at helping urban areas attain clean air standards.
- Bridge Repair and Replacement Program
- New technologies, including Intelligent Vehicle Highway System and magnetic levitation train systems

For planning and implementing projects, the requirements of TEA-21 continued the shift from decision-making authority at the federal level to states and local jurisdictions. State and local governments were given more flexibility in determining transportation solutions. Planning was introduced as an integral part of TEA-21; under the Act, both MPOs and state transportation agencies were each required to compile a 20-year transportation plan and a series of 4-year transportation improvement programs that include balanced and identifiable funding sources.

The primary change in the new transportation legislation was the consolidation of the 16 metropolitan and 23 statewide planning "factors" into 7 broad "areas" to be considered during the planning process, both at the metropolitan and statewide level. The Act called for increased emphasis on systems management, operation, and efficiency. TEA-21 reflected increased interest in strengthening the financial aspects of the planning process, as well as improving the coordination, cooperation, and public involvement among federal, state and local stakeholders.

- 2.3 Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users**
On August 10, 2005, President George W. Bush signed Public Law 109-59, or SAFETEA-LU. With guaranteed funding for highways, highway safety, and public transportation totaling \$244.1 billion, SAFETEA-LU was the largest surface transportation investment in the nation's history.

ISTEA and TEA-21 reshaped the existing highway programs to meet the nation's changing transportation needs. SAFETEA-LU was built on their firm foundation, supplying the funds and refining the programmatic framework for investments needed to maintain and grow a vital transportation infrastructure. SAFETEA-LU continued a strong fundamental core formula program emphasis coupled with targeted investment.

SAFETEA-LU was drafted to address the challenges facing the nation's transportation system with measured goals of improving safety, reducing traffic congestion, improving efficiency in freight movement, increasing intermodal connectivity, and protecting the environment, as well as laying the groundwork for addressing future challenges. SAFETEA-LU was intended to promote more efficient and effective federal surface transportation programs by focusing on transportation issues of national significance, and giving state and local transportation decision makers more flexibility for solving transportation problems.

To facilitate statewide and MPO planning activities, SAFETEA-LU expanded to eight, the seven planning factors previously identified in TEA-21, as follows: (1) support economic vitality; (2) increase highway safety; (3) increase access and mobility options for people and freight; (4) protect and enhance environmental quality and energy conservation; (5) enhance integration and connectivity across transportation systems; (6) increase efficiencies in systems management and operation; and, (7) system preservation. Finally, SAFETEA-LU gave added emphasis to the role of (8) security as a planning factor, including transportation security as a separate and distinct factor.

Primarily, SAFETEA-LU added emphasis in two principal areas, security and the environment. Attention to the environment was expanded and now reflects a streamlined review process promoting some flexibility to promote consistency between long-range transportation plans with planned growth and development. Demands for increased coordination across federal, state, and local levels are central to the planning process, requiring discussions between agencies and urban/rural communities. Environmental streamlining, included a revised environmental review process for highways, transit, and multimodal projects as well as changed the frequency of conformity determinations and conformity horizons with respect to air quality. SAFETEA-LU also included significant new environmental requirements for the statewide and metropolitan planning processes, to include the development of mitigation strategies to address environmentally sensitive areas. The process must include collaborative efforts with a broad spectrum of stakeholders to include: federal, state, tribal, wildlife, land management, natural resources, conservation, and historic preservation as well as other regulatory agencies.

SAFETEA-LU identified security as a separate planning factor to increase modal safety elements and protect transportation system for both motorized and non-motorized users.

MPOs are now obligated to participate in processes related to strengthening security and local/state emergency preparedness plans with local authorities, including homeland security, fire, police, and emergency responders as well as ports, rail, transit, and paratransit providers.

2.4 Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (2012)

On July 6, 2012, President Barack Obama signed into law P.L. 112-141, or MAP-21, funding surface transportation programs at over \$105 billion for fiscal years 2013 and 2014. The Act created a performance-based, multi-modal program to address improving safety, maintaining infrastructure condition, reducing traffic congestion, improving efficiency of the system and freight movement, protecting the environment, as well as reducing delays in project delivery.

MAP-21 built on many of the highway, transit, bike, and pedestrian programs and policies established in 1991. It set the course for transportation investment in the nation's infrastructure:

- Expanded the National Highway System (NHS) to incorporate principal arterials not previously included and targets investments to enhance the NHS with more than half of highway funding devoted to preserving and improving the most important highways.
- Established a performance-based program, focusing on national transportation goals as well as increasing accountability and transparency by improving transportation decision-making.
- Authorized \$82 billion for road, bridge, bicycling, and walking improvements as well as encourages private sector investment.
- Supported DOT's safety agenda by doubling funding for infrastructure safety, by strengthening links between modal safety programs and makes progress toward reducing highway fatalities.
- Streamlined Federal highway transportation programs by consolidating the program structure into a smaller number of broader core programs.
- Accelerated project delivery to ensure the timely delivery of transportation projects.

In MAP-21, metropolitan and statewide transportation planning processes incorporate performance goals, measures, and targets into the process of identifying needed transportation improvements and project selection. Public involvement remains central to the planning process.

2.5 Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act

On December 4, 2015, President Obama signed into law Public Law 114-94, Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. The FAST Act funds surface transportation programs at over \$305 billion for fiscal years (FY) 2016 through 2020. The FAST Act builds on changes made by MAP-21, setting the course for transportation investment in highways by improving mobility, creating jobs and supporting economic growth, as well as accelerating project delivery. A significant part of the reforms made by MAP-21 included transitioning to a performance-based program, including establishing national performance goals for Federal-aid highway programs. The FAST Act supports and continues this overall performance management approach, within which States invest resources in projects that collectively will make progress toward national goals.

Accelerating project delivery is also a major theme of the FAST Act, designed to increase innovation and improve efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability in planning, environmental review, design, engineering, construction, and financing of transportation projects.

2.6 Clean Air Act Amendments (1990)

In 1990, the United States Congress adopted the Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA) to address the nation's air pollution problems. The CAAA contained several new provisions that have broader impact than previous laws. Notable aspects are the CAAA's provisions for controlling transportation sources which contribute to air pollution. Transportation sources are not the only cause of air quality problems, but have been especially difficult to control. The pollutant impact of transportation sources has been addressed in previous clean air legislation with mixed success. Previous laws resulted in lowering emission rates per motor vehicle, however, the air quality benefits of lowered vehicle emission rates are threatened by emission increases, resulting from a steady growth in motor vehicle travel.

Legislation was drafted to tie the transportation planning process to Federal air quality conformity regulations. The legislation identified "nonattainment" areas as geographic regions that did not meet NAAQA standards. In order to attain NAAQS, the CAAA required air quality plans for those metropolitan areas which exceeded established pollutant levels. Air quality plans quantify pollution reduction needs and commit to reduction strategies. To maintain air quality, the CAAA employs provisions for transportation planning to control the adverse effects of increased automobile travel. As detailed in the CAAA, transportation planning has expanded to include a process for protecting air quality, as well as meeting future transportation needs. Air quality is now a key issue for making decisions in transportation plans, projects, and programs. Alternative forms of travel are seen as significant considerations in State and national attempts to meet CAAA requirements.

2.7 Executive Order 12898 (1994) & Title VI (1964)

On February 11, 1994, President Clinton signed Executive Order 12898: Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low Income Populations. Executive Order 12898: Environmental Justice requirements established strategy to include programs, policies, planning, and public participation processes and enforcement related to human health or the environment that, at a minimum: (1) promote enforcement of all health and environmental statutes in areas with minority populations and low-income populations; (2) ensure greater public participation; (3) improve research and data collection relating to the health of and environment of minority populations and low-income populations; and (4) identify differential patterns of consumption of natural resources among minority populations and low-income populations.

This Order served to amplify the provisions of the three decade old Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which states "that no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination, under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." Pursuant to Title VI Section 200.5, governments are required to make good faith efforts to eliminate existing discrimination and ensure nondiscriminatory practices from any federally assisted program, project or service. In order to prevent unequal treatment under any program or activity receiving financial assistance from the Federal Highway Administration under title 23 U.S.C., Title VI bars intentional discrimination as well as disparate impact discrimination (i.e., a neutral policy or practice that has a disparate impact on low income and minority groups).

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) has defined Environmental Justice as: "the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies. Fair treatments means that no group of people, including racial, ethnic, or socio-economic group should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations or the execution of federal, state, local, and tribal programs and policies." In general, this means that for any program or activity for

which any Federal funds will be used, the agency receiving the funds must: (1) make a meaningful effort to involve low income and minority populations in the processes established to make the decision about the use of those funds; and (2) evaluate the nature, extent, and incidence of probable favorable and adverse human health or environmental impact of the program or activity upon minority or low-income populations.

Environmental Justice required that MPOs identify and address disproportionate effects of Federal-Aid Highway Program financed projects, programs, and services on minority and low-income populations and to consider such effects with regard to transportation investments. Title VI and Environmental Justice apply equally to the processes and products of all planning activities.

2.8 Americans with Disabilities Act (1990)

The ADA mandates “equal opportunity in employment, transportation, telecommunications, and places of public accommodations for individuals with disabilities”. The ADA had a significant impact on the design of public facilities as well as the level of services local transit providers must offer.

The ADA addressed a broad range of policies, practices, and procedures which State and local governments must assess and incorporate in service, delivery, and infrastructure development, especially in places of public accommodation. Title II of the ADA requires public entities that build sidewalks and trails to provide access to existing facilities and to design and construct new and/or altered facilities to be readily accessible to individuals with disabilities. A significant portion of Title II of the ADA addresses public transportation systems, and prohibits denying access to persons with disabilities, if they are able to use these services. Specific requirements include: (1) all newly leased or purchased vehicles on fixed route service must be accessible; (2) public fixed route systems must offer comparable paratransit service; (3) new facilities must be accessible; and, (4) alterations to existing facilities must meet Federal accessibility requirements.

The ADA regulations require public entities operating fixed route systems to provide paratransit, or other special service, to individuals with disabilities which are comparable to the level of service provided to individuals, without disabilities, who use the fixed route system. In terms of accessibility, this has the effect of compelling a transit operator to provide expensive paratransit services to an individual who cannot use regular fixed route transportation because of limitations directly associated with his/her ability to navigate sidewalks and street curbing. A list of criteria has been developed to help define "comparable" paratransit service. The paratransit service must: (1) operate in the same service area as the fixed route system; (2) have a response time that is comparable to the fixed route system; (3) have comparable fares (no more than twice the fare on the fixed route system); (4) have comparable days and hours of service; (5) meet requests for any trip purpose, no prioritization for trip purpose is acceptable; and, (6) not limit service availability due to capacity constraints.

Passage of the ADA changed many aspects of public disability policy, previously established under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The ADA set clear national goals as well as a specific and detailed course of action to meet these goals. Compared to Section 504, the ADA requires a much greater level of affirmative action in employment, programs, services, and policies. More importantly, the ADA as a civil rights law provides both incentives and penalties to strengthen compliance, including not only eligibility for Federal funding, but the prospect of legal liability.

2.9 Summary

Reviewed collectively, ISTEA, TEA-21, SAFETEA-LU, MAP-21, the FAST Act, and the CMAQ program were intended to realign the focus of transportation planning toward a more

inclusive, environmentally-sensitive, and multimodal approach to addressing transportation problems. These pieces of legislation, together with the CAAA, Executive Order 12898, and the ADA, revolutionized transportation planning, creating new opportunities to participate in a broad-based public participation process to further the ongoing development of a holistic national transportation system.

The FAST Act provided specific mandates with respect to state and MPO's process, programs, projects, and fiscal constraints. Although evolutionary overall, with respect to the transportation planning process, the legislation continued to require MPOs to more aggressively engage a wider range of community concerns. Tribal, bicycle, pedestrian, and disabled interests must be provided an opportunity to participate in the planning process. Finally, the legislation reinforced the concept of fiscal constraint; planning and programming must be meaningful, based on realistic assumptions about funding all capital, operating, and maintenance costs associated with the surface transportation system. The MPO is required to demonstrate sufficient funds (federal, state, local, and private) to implement proposed local transportation system improvements, as well as to operate and maintain the system.

SECTION 3 THE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS

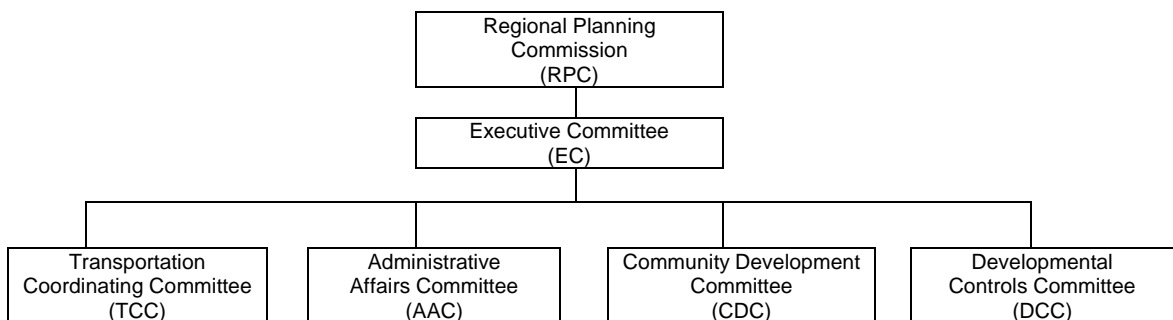
The federal legislation identified in Section 2 established the transportation planning framework for all MPOs and State transportation agencies. Collectively, the legislation established specific concerns and criteria necessary to ensure that federal monies are allocated in a manner consistent with congressional intent. Due to the requirements of the legislation, the planning process entails extensive collaboration between various State and local governments, while considering public input.

Summarized in this section are various aspects of the local transportation planning process. Section 3 begins with an introduction to the Lima-Allen County Regional Planning Commission (LACRPC), its fundamental roles and organizational structure as well as the responsibilities of the MPO. The Section continues with an overview of the mechanisms for intergovernmental coordination and stakeholders in the transportation planning process. Finally, the Section concludes with a summary of the transportation planning process and the various planning provisions guiding regional transportation developments.

3.1 The Lima-Allen County Regional Planning Commission

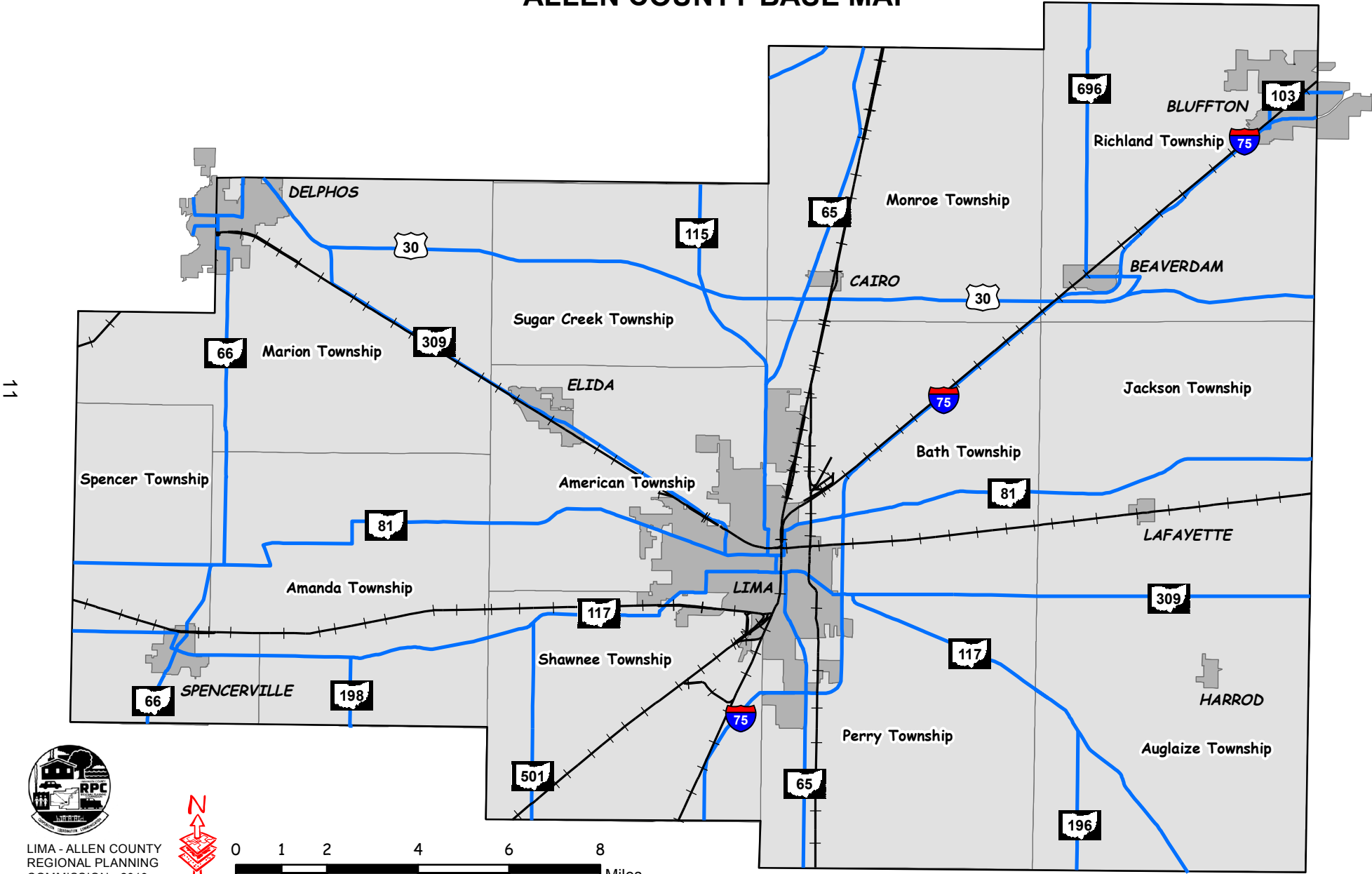
The Lima-Allen County Regional Planning Commission (LACRPC) was established in September 1964 and assumed the powers and duties of the Allen County Planning Commission created in 1954. The formation of the Regional Planning Commission was accomplished in conformance with Section 713.21 of the Ohio Revised Code and charged with the responsibilities of comprehensive planning and program implementation within Allen County and its various communities.

The LACRPC is a voluntary association of delegates from different political subdivisions, representatives of State and local government, as well as non-governmental organizations interested in understanding and addressing the needs of the region. The Commission serves as a forum for the discussion and sharing of ideas and information among communities about issues that may affect several communities and regional issues which cross over political boundaries. The LACRPC serves in an advisory capacity to community decision makers who rely on the data, analyses, and planning recommendations which are provided by the Commission. A 35-member Board of Directors assists the Commission by reviewing and recommending plans and strategies to develop and improve the region. The Board membership is distributed over a tiered committee structure designed to respond to local concerns. The Commission employs professional staff to provide assistance and advice in carrying out responsibilities. To accomplish specific goals, the LACRPC also consults with other professionals, such as city and county engineers, city and county sanitary engineers, local health officials, the Allen Soil and Water Conservation District, and local utilities.

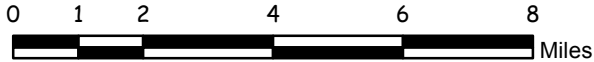


The powers and duties of the Commission are explicitly detailed in Section 713.21 of the Ohio Revised Code. The LACRPC provides a wide array of services to the region and undertakes special studies at the request of member communities. Typically, services

MAP 1 ALLEN COUNTY BASE MAP



LIMA - ALLEN COUNTY
REGIONAL PLANNING
COMMISSION - 2019



include preparing population and housing reports, providing traffic and crash analyses, facilitating the subdivision review and platting process, as well as providing zoning, land use, soil, and other development related information. The LACRPC also administers the Allen County Floodplain Management Regulations for the unincorporated areas of Allen County. In addition, the LACRPC serves as a data repository, having a wide array of historical data and archival maps, including aerial photos, as well as census, traffic flow, zoning, and land use maps.

3.2 The LACRPC as the Metropolitan Planning Organization

The LACRPC is the principal public agency conducting regional transportation studies for Allen County and the Lima Urbanized Area. The LACRPC serves as the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Allen County. The MPO is established by federal law in all urban areas of the nation in order to carry out the "3C" (continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive) transportation planning process. This process is required for the area to continue to receive U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) funding. And, the process is important, as millions of dollars in USDOT funding are spent annually in Allen County for highway, transit, bikeway, and pedestrian improvements.

Under Federal law, a principal function of the MPO is to produce a transportation plan for the region. The transportation plan is used as a basis to decide where federal transportation funds should be spent. The plan typically included various sections and elements, often based on horizon year (long and short range) and functional area (highways, transit, bikeways). The identification and implementation of highway improvements has historically been the principal focus of the local transportation plans; however, the MPO is cognizant of other functional areas and includes specific sections dealing with highway safety, public transportation, pedestrian facilities, and freight.

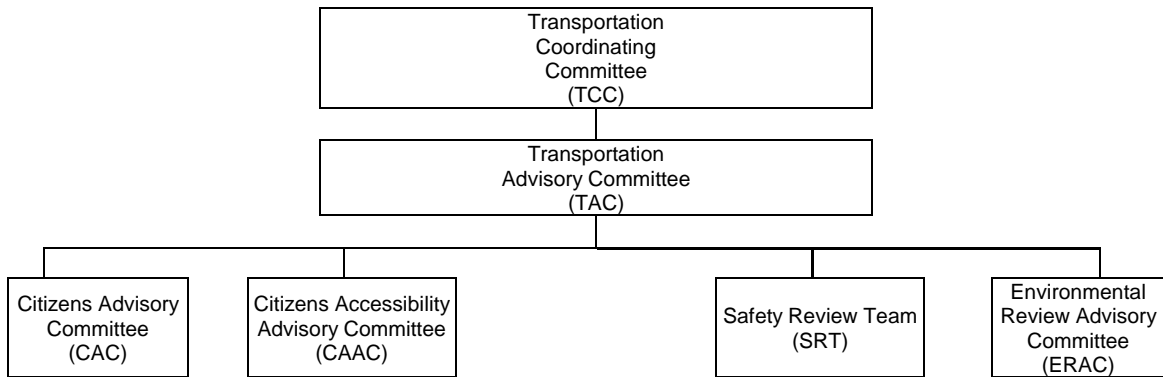
The MPO's transportation planning area includes all of Allen County, as well as, the section of the City of Delphos within Van Wert County, the portion of the Village of Bluffton in Hancock County, the Village of Cridersville located within Auglaize County and a portion of Douchquet Township located in Auglaize County. The MPO's travel demand model boundary includes all of Allen County; although, the villages of Bluffton, Cairo, Spencerville, and Elida are active members of the LACRPC, the Village of Cridersville is not a member, and communications are limited.

The MPO is governed by the Transportation Coordinating Committee (TCC) that includes members of the transportation planning area plus other members reflective of the function and geographic area of the MPO. Additional members of the TCC include representatives from the ODOT and the ACRTA. The TCC acts with the advisement of the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC). The TAC is a technical committee that reviews the activities of the MPO and provides recommendations to the TCC. The TAC is comprised of transportation-oriented representatives, surrogates for both public and private concerns that presently include various transportation modes (transit, paratransit, freight), as well as local engineering, utilities, and environmental interests within the area.

Together these two committees review and provide technical assistance and make recommendations on transportation and transit-related projects and programs planned for the region. The MPO's responsibility, to further an integrated transportation plan for the region, is a difficult task that requires an informed decision making process involving a diverse cross section of representatives from the community. These representatives review and approve the allocation of millions of dollars for needed capital improvements to the region's infrastructure.

The MPO is also responsible for ensuring that local residents are afforded the opportunity to utilize alternative commuting modes; therefore, the MPO also employs existing committees

of the LACRPC, including: the Developmental Controls Committee (DCC), the Administrative Affairs Committee (AAC), and the Community Development Committee (CDC) to provide additional input. In addition, several advisory committees are used to help review and ultimately prioritize expenditures for roadways, transit, paratransit operations, bicycle trails as well as walkways and other transportation amenities. The MPO committee structure has evolved to include a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), Safety Review Team (SRT), Environmental Review Advisory Committee (ERAC) and Citizens' Accessibility Advisory Committee (CAAC). These committees include LACRPC delegates, as well as representatives from the larger community, including: manufacturing, warehousing, freight, transit, paratransit sectors, law enforcement, engineering, health, and environmental advocates. In addition, the MPO works with the Chamber of Commerce, Manufacturer's Council. The following illustration reveals the committee structure of the LACRPC and the MPO.



3.3 Intergovernmental Regulations

As stated earlier, the transportation plan's development and implementation depends upon coordination with a number of diverse agencies and organizations. Included are national, state, regional, and local agencies/organizations responsible for the development and implementation of transportation plans, projects, and programs. The coordination of a truly integrated system is ensured when the planning process is designed to maximize the benefits and minimize the overlap, duplication, and potential conflict involved in proposed transportation plans, programs, projects, and services. A system of coordination exists because these agencies and organizations have a mutually agreed upon framework for achieving shared goals and objectives. The following entities are significant stakeholders in the local transportation planning process.

3.3.1 Federal Highway Administration

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has a significant role in local transportation. Through partnerships, policies, and the allocation of resources, FHWA facilitates the development and maintenance of the State and local transportation system. FHWA's two primary programs include the Federal-Aid Highway Program and the Motor Carrier Safety Program. The Federal-Aid Highway Program provides Federal financial and technical assistance to the states and MPOs to plan, construct, and improve our urban and rural roads and bridges. The Motor Carrier Safety Program promotes safe commercial motor vehicle operations to reduce crashes. The program develops and enforces performance based regulations to protect the nation's traveling public.

3.3.2 Federal Transit Administration

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is part of the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT), charged to assist in developing improved mass transportation equipment, facilities, and techniques, as well as funding such development. More specifically, FTA attempts to encourage the planning and establishment of urban mass transportation systems that are necessary to support

economical and/or desirable urban development patterns. FTA assists states, local governments, and their transit operators in financing area wide systems that provide the necessary mobility services to elderly individuals, individuals who are disabled, and the economically disadvantaged.

3.3.3 The Ohio Department of Transportation

The ODOT has responsibility for the statewide coordination of the highway system and is charged with maintaining and improving the infrastructure and operations of the system. This excludes the highway system lying inside of municipal corporation limits. In addition, ODOT monitors the MPO's compliance with State and Federal policies, as well as those planning and programming activities undertaken and supported with federal and state funding. ODOT passes Federal-Aid Highway Program funding to the MPO for systems planning, maintenance, and construction purposes. ODOT continues to provide technical support to the MPO providing surveillance activity assistance, traffic monitoring, and traffic modeling.

3.3.4 The Ohio Rail Development Commission

The Ohio Rail Development Commission (ORDC) participates in various rail related activities, including: railroad acquisition programs, rail rehabilitation programs, rail (re)construction programs, grade crossing upgrades, and crossing consolidation programs. The ORDC works closely with a number of State agencies to help stimulate economic development by providing incentives for businesses to locate and expand in local communities. The ORDC provides funding assistance to help construct and/or rehabilitate needed industrial tracks and rail spurs. The ORDC also works with local communities to preserve branch lines threatened with the potential loss of service through acquisition and rehabilitation assistance. The ORDC can also provide loans to help smaller Class I railroads to improve branch line safety and efficiency.

3.3.5 The Ohio Department of Public Safety

The mission of the Ohio Department of Public Safety (ODPS) is to “save lives, reduce injuries and economic loss, to administer Ohio's motor vehicle laws, and to preserve the safety and well-being of all citizens. . . .” Given that, ODPS is charged with various responsibilities, including, but not limited to, the management of the Motor Carrier Enforcement Program, State Emergency Management and Hazardous Materials planning and response, Homeland Security, Ohio Traffic Safety Office (OTSO) as well as management of the Integrated Traffic Crash Records. ODPS has supplied the LACRPC with financial support for traffic safety programming and deployed technical assistance to the community to assess traffic problems. ODPS should be considered an integral partner with respect to transportation safety.

3.3.6 The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) participates with a number of other State agencies (ORDC, ODOT, ODPS) to develop and implement various traffic safety strategies and implement specific initiatives to achieve quantifiable improvements in overall safety and system performance. While other state agencies have missions related to economic development, construction or enforcement, the PUCO has a broader role of creating the regulatory framework that governs commercial transportation in Ohio. One of these many tasks is the administration of state and federal monies for highway/rail grade crossing safety improvements and commercial vehicle safety activities. The PUCO enforces Federal Railroad Administration regulations and has certified inspectors in the disciplines of track, operating practices, and hazardous materials as well as motive power and equipment. The PUCO also makes funds available for various educational awareness programs.

3.3.7 Ohio Department of Natural Resources

The ODNR is a principal player in the funding of parks and ped/bike facilities throughout Allen County. ODNR is also a critical stakeholder in the project planning process when resource management and environmental concerns are identified, with respect to threatened and endangered species, by providing critical environmental data through its Natural Heritage Database. In addition, ODNR is a principal property owner along the Miami-Erie Canal which has been the focus of increased demands for upgrading with ped/bike amenities, including lighting and parking, integral to future redevelopment along the County's western edge shared with Van Wert County. ODNR retains some maintenance responsibilities for the Canal.

3.3.8 Ohio Environmental Protection Agency

The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) is the State agency charged with responsibilities related to air and water quality compliance. OEPA has supported various MPO sponsored activities aimed at improving stormwater runoff and meeting Phase II mandates of the Clean Water Act. The principal relationship that the MPO shares with OEPA however, relates to air quality monitoring and meeting the CAAA requirements discussed in Section 2.4. The MPO works with OEPA and ODOT, through the transportation conformity process, to ensure that the criteria necessary to test conformity of the long range and short range transportation plans with the CAAA remain valid, and that the travel demand model data are provided to meet the 8-hour ozone and fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) national ambient air quality standards in base and horizon years. Interagency coordination between OEPA, ODOT, and the MPO provides for a synergy of responsive communications. The OEPA and ODOT assess the results of the proposed plans and release the draft conformity determination reports for MPO/public review and comment prior to the final conformity determination report and MPO plan adoption.

3.3.9 Allen County Regional Transit Authority

The LACRTA is the local agency responsible for providing effective public transportation services within Allen County. Charged with supporting a safe, accessible, and equitable system, the LACRTA maintains fixed route and demand response services. As the LACRTA receives Federal, State and local funding, the agency strives to comply with planning and operational regulatory requirements as established under contractual arrangements. The LACRTA maintains a strong relationship with FTA, ODOT, and local jurisdictions. The LACRPC provides technical assistance to the LACRTA under contract as outlined in the LACRPC's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

3.3.10 Allen County Airport Authority

The Airport Authority is entrusted with the operations and maintenance of the Allen County Airport and related public facilities, including the provision of accommodations to comfort and sustain pilots and passengers as well as maintaining storage and fuel facilities. The Airport Authority receives certification and funding from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) through ODOT. Local financial support is provided by Allen County and local operations.

3.3.11 Local Units of Government

Various units of local government participate in the input and development of the region's long range transportation plan and short range transportation improvement programs. Local units of government provide the required local match for funding the transportation planning process and associated transportation improvements. Communication between representatives of the local jurisdictions, with ODOT, FHWA, and FTA is facilitated by the LACRPC and the ACRTA. The local

jurisdictions receive Federal-Aid Urban System Funds through the transportation policy committee of the LACRPC.

3.4 Metropolitan Transportation Planning Provisions

SAFETEA-LU, and subsequently MAP-21, identified various planning provisions to be considered in the development of transportation plans, programs, and services, including concerns for fiscal restraint, the planning horizon, and public involvement. In addition, MAP-21 continued to identify the list of SAFETEA-LU named stakeholders, to include land management, natural resource management, environmental protection advocates, public transit agencies, freight shippers, and social service agencies.

In general, the transportation planning process is required to provide for consideration projects and strategies that will achieve the eight planning factors, while involving the named stakeholders in the process. Those factors include: (1) support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity and efficiency; (2) increase highway safety; (3) increase the accessibility and mobility options available to people and for freight; (4) protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, and improve the quality of life; (5) enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system across and between modes for people and freight; (6) promote efficient system management and operation; (7) emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system; and (8) increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.

3.5 Transportation Planning - 3C Process

Pursuant to Federal legislation, the MPO is responsible for furthering the continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3C) transportation planning process. The process must develop plans and programs which address transportation needs, and are consistent with overall planned development in the metropolitan area. The planning process is to be carried out by the MPO in cooperation with the state, transit operators, and other local stakeholders.

The MPOs are primarily responsible for the development of long and short range plans and programs to maintain the safety and efficiency of the existing transportation system. The transportation planning process requires long range transportation plans to include environmental and intermodal considerations and provide a financially constrained 20-year vision of future transportation improvements.

There are specific federal air quality conformity regulations that apply to the LRTP. Collectively, CAAA and NAAQS standards and regulations require the MPO, ODOT, and OEPA undertake a quantitative analysis comparing motor vehicle emissions on the existing transportation system as well as the system with proposed improvements. An Air Quality Interagency Consultation process facilitates the air quality conformity analysis. On June 11, 2004, Allen County was designated as an 8-Hour Ozone non-attainment area; however, on May 16, 2007, the County was re-designated as a Maintenance Area for the 8-Hour Ozone assessment. However, all Federal-Aid Highway Program project alternatives shall continue to be assessed to assure air quality conformity. Short range TIPs function as strategic management tools to accomplish the objectives of the long range plans. TIPs are to be prioritized, financially-constrained, and subjected to air quality conformity requirements. Planning activities support and emphasize the safety, efficiency, and performance of the overall system, and must be able to develop strategies to address the eight planning factors.

3.6 Local Community Stakeholders Defined

As identified earlier, various legislative Acts have resulted in mandated inclusion of specific stakeholders within the transportation planning process. Such stakeholders have been determined to be necessary to ensure transportation projects, programs, and services are representative of the entire community. A list of mandated community stakeholder groups can be found in Table 1.

Pursuant to Title VI Section 200.5, the MPO shall make a good faith effort to ensure nondiscriminatory practices to any person or group of persons solely on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin entitled to receive benefits, directly or indirectly, from any federally assisted program, project, or service. In order to prevent unequal treatment under any program or activity receiving financial assistance from the Federal Highway Administration, Title 23 U.S.C. specifically states that the MPO must allow for citizen participation of these effected groups.

Environmental justice (EJ) requirements established strategy related to human health and the environment, to include programs, policies, planning, and public participation processes and enforcement. From a transportation planning perspective, the MPO must make (1) a meaningful effort to involve low income and minority populations in the processes established to make decisions about the use of the federal funds, and (2) document the impact of transportation projects, programs, or service investments projects on minority and low-income populations.

Each MPO shall provide citizens with a reasonable opportunity to comment on transportation plans, and/or transportation improvement programs, to include: affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transit, representatives of the disabled, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, and other interested parties. Affected public agencies has come to mean those federal, state and local regulatory agencies responsible for wildlife, land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation. MPOs are also encouraged to consult or coordinate with planning officials responsible for other types of planning activities affected by transportation, including planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, and airport operations.

3.7 Citizen Involvement

Commensurate with the stakeholders specified in MAP-21, the MPO is bound by transportation legislation (ISTEA, TEA-21, SAFETEA-LU, and the FAST Act) to increase public awareness of, and involvement in, the transportation planning and programming processes. In addition, EJ legislation coupled with Title VI requirements mandate the MPO make special efforts to involve minority and low income populations to address their transportation needs and prohibit discriminatory practices in programs receiving Federal funds.

3.8 Summary

The LACRPC houses the MPO functions. The MPO receives the benefits of shared office space, staff, equipment, resources, and data. The MPO utilizes the LACRPC intergovernmental review process to analyze and develop local long and short range transportation plans/programs and services. The Federal 3C process, coupled with the eight planning factors, is to guide the transportation planning process. MAP-21 established a performance-based program, focusing on national transportation goals as well as increasing accountability by improving transportation decision-making. Performance goals are used as benchmarks from which to assess successful plan development and implementation. The FAST Act further defines Federal expectations with respect to performance-measure goal setting and goal achievement. The success of the MPO's transportation planning process is heavily dependent upon several broad objectives: (1) the extent of cooperative working relationships developed between MPO and their planning partners; (2) its technical capabilities to address transportation and air quality modeling; and (3) the effectiveness of its public participation.

The MPO recognizes that the success of the planning process is heavily dependent upon public involvement and the manner in which the MPO manages public involvement in that process. The MPO public involvement process is the focus of the next and final section of this plan.

**TABLE 1
COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS LIST**

TRANSPORTATION PLAN	TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN	UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> citizens <input type="checkbox"/> representatives of public transportation employees <input type="checkbox"/> freight shippers <input type="checkbox"/> providers of freight transportation services <input type="checkbox"/> private providers of transportation <input type="checkbox"/> representatives of users of public transportation <input type="checkbox"/> representatives of users of pedestrian walkways & bicycle transportation facilities <input type="checkbox"/> representatives of the disabled <input type="checkbox"/> representatives of minority populations <input type="checkbox"/> representatives of low income populations <input type="checkbox"/> representatives of wildlife management agencies <input type="checkbox"/> representatives of land use management agencies <input type="checkbox"/> representatives of natural resources management agencies <input type="checkbox"/> representatives of environmental protection agencies <input type="checkbox"/> representatives of conservation agencies <input type="checkbox"/> representatives of historic preservation agencies <input type="checkbox"/> other interested parties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> citizens <input type="checkbox"/> representatives of public transportation employees <input type="checkbox"/> freight shippers <input type="checkbox"/> providers of freight transportation services <input type="checkbox"/> private providers of transportation <input type="checkbox"/> representatives of users of public transportation <input type="checkbox"/> representatives of users of pedestrian walkways & bicycle transportation facilities <input type="checkbox"/> representatives of the disabled <input type="checkbox"/> representatives of minority populations <input type="checkbox"/> representatives of low income populations <input type="checkbox"/> representatives of wildlife management agencies <input type="checkbox"/> representatives of land use management agencies <input type="checkbox"/> representatives of natural resources management agencies <input type="checkbox"/> representatives of environmental protection agencies <input type="checkbox"/> representatives of conservation agencies <input type="checkbox"/> representatives of historic preservation agencies <input type="checkbox"/> other interested parties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> citizens <input type="checkbox"/> affected public agencies <input type="checkbox"/> representatives of public transportation employees <input type="checkbox"/> freight shippers <input type="checkbox"/> providers of freight transportation services <input type="checkbox"/> private providers of transportation <input type="checkbox"/> representatives of users of public transportation <input type="checkbox"/> representatives of users of pedestrian walkways & bicycle transportation facilities <input type="checkbox"/> representatives of the disabled <input type="checkbox"/> representatives of minority populations <input type="checkbox"/> representatives of low income populations <input type="checkbox"/> other interested parties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> citizens <input type="checkbox"/> affected public agencies <input type="checkbox"/> representatives of public transportation employees <input type="checkbox"/> freight shippers <input type="checkbox"/> providers of freight transportation services <input type="checkbox"/> private providers of transportation <input type="checkbox"/> representatives of users of public transportation <input type="checkbox"/> representatives of users of pedestrian walkways & bicycle transportation facilities <input type="checkbox"/> representatives of the disabled <input type="checkbox"/> representatives of minority populations <input type="checkbox"/> representatives of low income populations <input type="checkbox"/> other interested parties

SECTION 4 IMPLEMENTING THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

Consistent with the policies of MAP-21 and the FAST Act, the intent of the MPO is to develop and manage a public participation plan (PPP) that provides MPO staff and stakeholders, including local elected officials, area media outlets, and the general public, with an effective mechanism of strategies that support a pro-active public involvement at all stages of project planning and development. The performance standards for the proactive public involvement process include the following: (1) early and continuous involvement; (2) reasonable public availability of technical information; (3) collaborative input on alternatives, evaluation criteria, and mitigation needs; (4) open public meetings where matters related to Federal-Aid Highway Program and transit programs are being considered; and (5) open access to the decision-making process.

To achieve these objectives, during development of the MPO's transportation plans, transportation improvement program, as well as other plans, projects, programs, or services, the MPO commits to the following: (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 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 in ways that go beyond commenting on drafts; (4) strongly encouraging the transportation providers to aggressively seek to identify and involve the affected and interested public, including those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems and facilities; and (5) carefully evaluating public involvement processes and procedures to assess success at meeting the performance requirements as specified in the appropriate regulations.

Central to the success of the transportation planning process is the early involvement of local public officials, private citizens and interested agencies that represent a wide range of disciplines, areas of expertise, and specific concerns. Public involvement is required to ensure that the social, economic, and environmental effects of projects are identified early on in the planning process, and especially during project selection. These points drive the public participation plan and the 3C process.

In carrying out local planning activities, the MPO commits to consultation with Federal, State, regional, and local governments. To that end, the MPO will include local officials, those with responsibility for developing or providing transportation infrastructure/services, as well as, those charged with development of transportation plans, transportation improvement programs, and planning activities outside of the MPO's planning area. In general, long and short range transportation plans, programs, and services will be developed, as appropriate, in consultation with Federal, State and local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation and historic preservation. In developing long and short range transportation plans, programs, and services, the MPO will provide interested citizens with a reasonable opportunity to comment on such proposed plans, programs, and services. Such opportunity shall include, but not be limited to, elected officials and affected public agencies as well as representatives of private providers of transportation, users of public transportation, users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, the disabled, providers of freight transportation services, and other interested parties.

4.1 Goals of the Public Participation Plan

The goals driving the public involvement process outlined in this Plan are intended to satisfy those planning requirements identified in Title VI, ISTEA, TEA-21, MAP-21, and the FAST Act. The MPO commits to address the legislation with the following public involvement process goals: (1) the public will be provided the opportunity to actively participate in the evaluation and decision making processes; (2) residents will have an opportunity to help shape the region's transportation system through a process that ensures an educated public with reasonable access to complete information about

transportation planning issues and events; (3) the public will be provided with timely notice of all transportation issues and events; (4) the transportationally underserved will be identified and afforded an opportunity to participate in the planning process; and (5) involvement techniques will be developed to meet the diverse needs of the general public.

Each of the goals are supported by policies and supporting objectives. To assess Plan effectiveness and progress, benchmarks, or performance indicators are identified. The MPO suggests that local stakeholders have a vested interest in the 3C planning process and also bear public responsibility for developing and ensuring an effective public participation process; supporting roles of responsibility are identified. Plan objectives are sometimes quantifiable; such measures will be reviewed to ascertain Plan effectiveness and develop revisions as required. The public involvement goals of the MPO are depicted in tabular format for ease of reference in Tables 2 through 6.

The MPO's PPP will evolve to meet the needs of affected parties as specific plans, projects, or services require. As affected parties change, MPO citizen involvement will change in a manner consistent with the respective population. The MPO accepts an evolving public involvement process that includes benchmarks and a process of evaluation and adjustment.

4.2 Public Involvement Procedures

To be effective, the MPO must take responsibility for managing the public involvement process. To achieve the goals of the PPP, the MPO has adopted an open and inclusive relationship with area stakeholders and the general public. The MPO has developed this relationship over the last 40 years and maintains staff and offices with regular business hours. The public is invited to share concerns with staff members on either an appointment or walk-in basis; staff routinely responds to questions and concerns. Telephones, e-mail, fax, and web access are maintained to facilitate the 3C process. MPO staff attends meetings with community stakeholders regularly. The co-location of the MPO and the LACRPC create synergies as population, housing, land use, natural resources, and cultural resources are managed in a manner considerate of transportation planning functions. Communication and data sharing between entities promote a more comprehensive and holistic understanding of specific issues/projects.

The tiered internal committee structure addressed earlier in Section 3.2 provides the MPO (and the LACRPC) with additional external relations and insights. Meetings of committees are regularly held and advertised, posting notices of the meetings on the Agency website and sends notices of the meetings to board members and other affected parties including the electronic and written media. Committee members and affected parties are provided detailed information/reports for any and all projects, programs, and/or services discussed at such meetings and afforded an opportunity to comment on the information/projects before final actions are taken. The meetings are open; affected parties and members of the general public are welcome to attend. Reports are distributed at committee meetings, public meetings, and posted to the website as they are accepted/adopted. Newsletters detailing current events are released quarterly. Annual reports highlighting agency accomplishments are published annually.

In order to ensure access and participation, the MPO maintains a valid and confirmed contact list to promote informational exchanges, press releases, and meeting notifications. Contact lists include, but are not necessarily limited to, elected officials, as well as representatives of Federal, State and regional agencies governing transportation, land management, natural resources, or environmental protection. Also included are local media outlets, representatives of neighborhood associations, social/human service organizations, bicycle/pedestrian users, transit and paratransit operators/users, freight operators/users as well as the elderly and disabled communities serving the transportationally disadvantaged. The MPO coordinates with the ACRTA to ensure that all public meetings can be serviced with transportation services and that such meetings are conducted in accessible facilities.

**TABLE 2
GOAL 1: ENSURE THE PUBLIC IS PROVIDED THE OPPORTUNITY TO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN THE EVALUATION AND DECISION MAKING PROCESSES OF THE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS.**

POLICY	OBJECTIVES	PERFORMANCE MEASURES	STAKEHOLDERS
<p>In order to ensure that the general public is served by its internal committee structure, the MPO will assess the relevancy and representation of its existing internal committee structure (policy, technical, and advisory committees).</p>	<p>The MPO will seek active participation of federally mandated stakeholders (including elected officials, faith based groups, the transportationally disadvantaged, environmental justice advocates, other mandated stakeholders). The MPO will review the representation and effectiveness of its current committee structure and biennially evaluate its internal committee membership roster to assess geographic and socio-demographic variability and representativeness.</p>	<p>The MPO will assess internal committee composition predicated upon boundary area representativeness, Title VI, EJ, and those identified by federal transportation legislation, such as: those responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation as well as those from the transportationally disadvantaged communities/sector. Deficiencies will be noted and omitted representation addressed accordingly. A database of committee member profiles will be maintained regarding Title VI, EJ, federally mandated representation, participation, etc. New member profiles will be developed to track participation of federally mandated stakeholders.</p>	<p>MPO Internal Committee Structure, MPO Staff, LACRTA, ODOT and Community Stakeholders.</p>
		<p>The MPO will assess the need for new committees to be formed.</p>	<p>MPO Internal Committee Structure.</p>
<p>The MPO will work to identify the most pressing transportation needs within the region in an attempt to help the committee structure, and the general public, prioritize needed improvements.</p>	<p>The MPO will prepare, distribute, and post on the MPO website the results of surveillance activities, safety studies, and model results which support local decision making. The MPO will assess/utilize various mechanisms to identify, solicit, and prioritize the communities transportation problems and concerns, including such forums as: information booths, open houses, surveys, neighborhood meetings and local media, to include: newspaper, television, radio, and social media – not only in the form of news articles, but also call-in talk and interview formats.</p>	<p>During the TIP/STIP cycle, as identified by ODOT, and if deemed appropriate, the MPO will facilitate at least one open house and solicit/prioritize community concerns via a community survey. To further solicit community concerns, the MPO will address eight (8) neighborhood meetings per TIP cycle.</p>	<p>Local Governments, MPO Internal Committee Structure, MPO Staff, LACRTA, ODOT, Community Stakeholders and the General Public.</p>
<p>The MPO will develop alternatives to address transportation problems, and work to identify and evaluate the alternatives on the basis of collaboratively identified criteria with its stakeholders and members of the general public.</p>	<p>As part of the transportation planning process the MPO will develop and assess potential solutions, including a wide range of public transportation alternatives designed to address identified transportation problems at a corridor or sub-area level of analysis.</p>	<p>The MPO and project sponsors will need to identify and evaluate alternative designs to address localized problems. The MPO will utilize and review the Agency's travel demand model to assess effectiveness of alternative designs when appropriate. LACRTA staff will be involved in all alternative review processes until the preferred alternative is established. Air quality conformity determinations will be requested for alternative analyses.</p>	<p>Project Sponsors, MPO Internal Committee Structure, MPO Staff, LACRTA, ODOT, Community Stakeholders, and the General Public.</p>
	<p>Sufficient information will be provided to enable stakeholders to make their own findings regarding project justification and local financial commitment prior to the adoption of the locally preferred alternative. Such information regarding available options will be made available in a format and in such a manner as that the material is easily understood by the traditionally underserved.</p>	<p>The MPO will encourage project sponsors to develop and deliver meaningful communications with the media and general public on a regular basis.</p>	<p>Project Sponsors, ODOT, MPO Internal Committee Structure, MPO Staff, Local Governments, Community Stakeholders, and the General Public.</p>
<p>The MPO will conduct its public involvement process in a manner to ensure accountability and ensure that the public has the ability to participate in the transportation planning process prior to final decisions.</p>	<p>The MPO will provide opportunities for anyone who chooses to become involved in the maintenance, improvement, and/or further development of the region's transportation system, by affording opportunities to participate in meaningful ways throughout the planning process by providing solid information, maintaining continuous communication, ensuring consistent approaches, and delivering timely decisions.</p>	<p>The MPO will maintain the names and contact information for interested parties. The MPO routinely fills advisory committee membership rosters with persons claiming interest. The MPO will make all reports available in digital and paper copy formats. The MPO will release a quarterly newsletter. Status updates on Federal fund projects will be provided to the MPO's internal committee structure, stakeholders, and members of the general public.</p>	<p>MPO Internal Committee Structure, MPO Staff, LACRTA, Community Stakeholders, and the General Public.</p>

**TABLE 3
GOAL 2: PROVIDE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR LOCAL CITIZENS TO HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE OF THE REGION'S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM THROUGH A PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS THAT ENSURES AN EDUCATED PUBLIC WITH REASONABLE ACCESS TO COMPLETE INFORMATION ABOUT TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ISSUES AND EVENTS.**

POLICY	OBJECTIVES	PERFORMANCE MEASURES	STAKEHOLDERS
<p>The MPO will evaluate and improve the manner in which the Agency's roles and responsibilities are understood within the planning area.</p>	<p>The MPO will re-evaluate its organizational structure and documentation for effectiveness in communicating the 3C process and the MPO's roles and responsibilities. The MPO will target for consideration its committee structure and composition as well as its core business program and its outreach efforts to assess the organization's effectiveness in communicating the roles and responsibilities of the MPO, relevant transportation issues, current transportation funding, and projects under consideration.</p>	<p>Within the PPP cycle, the MPO will re-evaluate its newsletter and website to ensure content provides timely, relevant information that addresses the planning process and related programs. Effectiveness will be assessed by the MPO internal committee structure. The internal structure of the 4-core business documents (LRTP, TIP/STIP, PPP, and UPWP), as well as summary reports, will be evaluated to assess stated rationale and objectives. Newsletters will be assessed based on coverage of the 3C process, project, and meeting date information. Website interest will generate 25 hits per month; deficiencies will be noted. MPO staff will meet in TIP/STIP cycle to discuss MPO responsibilities with elected officials in each planning area community.</p>	<p>MPO Internal Committee Structure, MPO Staff, Project Sponsors, ODOTA, LACRTA, Community Stakeholders, and the General Public.</p>
		<p>The MPO will develop summary sheets of the TIP, LRTP, PPP, UPWP, and AQCR as well as summary reports. Such summaries will use non-technical language targeting the general population. All such summaries shall be developed prior to the initiation of the public involvement process and updated as required. Website postings shall be monitored for hits.</p>	<p>MPO Internal Committee Structure, MPO Staff, LACRTA, Community Stakeholders, and the General Public.</p>
<p>The MPO will promote a wider understanding of transportation planning issues with the general public, using appropriate public outreach techniques in an attempt to broaden public support and acceptance of MPO responsibilities, policies, and actions.</p>	<p>The MPO will work with the local media on an ongoing basis to cover and promote proactive aspects of transportation planning, traffic engineering, traffic safety, transit services, and the implications of a well developed, balanced transportation system on the region.</p>	<p>Electronic media interviews will be solicited - events, coverage areas, listenership/viewership, and demographics will be tracked for each. Social media will be used disseminate information. Newspaper coverage will be sought regarding current transportation programs, projects, and services; circulation and demographics will be tracked for each event. Increased media focus will generate coverage of at least one per month transportation program, project, or service.</p>	<p>MPO Internal Committee Structure, MPO Staff, Project Sponsors, and LACRTA.</p>
	<p>The MPO will continue to work with interested non traditional stakeholders attending public meetings to discuss current events and relevant planning initiatives/projects and processes.</p>	<p>The MPO will evaluate its stakeholders list to ensure that affected parties, Federal transportation legislation mandated stakeholders, as well as other interested citizens) are being notified and served. The MPO will continue to advertise the availability of documents and public meetings in appropriate and accessible places employing visualization techniques where necessary to better convey plans, issues, and concerns.</p>	<p>MPO Internal Committee Structure, MPO Staff, LACRTA, and Community Stakeholders.</p>
<p>The MPO will ensure reasonable access to complete information about transportation planning issues and events.</p>	<p>The MPO will make available for public consumption draft and final reports on specific programs, projects, and/or services, using its office location and staff, the Agency website (www.lacrpc.com) and the Lima Public Library. Members of the internal committee structure will be provided with paper or digital copies of draft and final documents for their review and reference. Upon request, with a 21-day notice, MPO staff will make reasonable attempts to provide report copies in audio, Braille, or large-font format. In addition, reports can be translated to a language other than English, to comply with limited English proficiency (LEP) requirements, within the confines of federal Safe Harbor provisions.</p>	<p>To ensure reasonable public access, the public's access to information, staff, staffing levels, business hours, and telecommunication capabilities, will be assessed based on such access within similar-sized MPOs. The MPO will monitor report accessibility based on website hits, reviews/participants, and events held. The need for language translators will be assessed and provided within the confines of federal Safe Harbor provisions. In addition, accommodations will be made for the hearing impaired as well as those who need Braille or large-font services. An acronym table and/or glossary will be developed to aid the public's understanding of MPO planning documents.</p>	<p>MPO Internal Committee Structure and MPO Staff.</p>

**TABLE 4
GOAL 3: THE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS WILL ENSURE THE PUBLIC IS PROVIDED WITH TIMELY NOTICE OF ALL TRANSPORTATION ISSUES AND EVENTS.**

POLICY	OBJECTIVES	PERFORMANCE MEASURES	STAKEHOLDERS
<p>The MPO will evaluate and develop a notification process that ensures adequate representation and feedback from affected parties.</p>	<p>The MPO will assist local political subdivisions and project sponsors utilizing newsletters, websites, internal committee schedules, etc. The MPO will re-evaluate its notification process for effectively communicating the project and timelines, including meeting dates in project/plan development.</p>	<p>Return rates will not exceed 2% for notices mailed to committee members; return rates for newsletters will not exceed 10%. Participatory rates will be monitored to ensure adequate representation; public meetings will be surveyed after each event.</p>	<p>MPO Internal Committee Structure, MPO Staff, Project Sponsors, ODOT, LACRTA, and Community Stakeholders.</p>
		<p>The MPO will evaluate its PPP biennially to incorporate any improvement strategies identified during public involvement evaluations.</p>	<p>MPO Internal Committee Structure, MPO Staff, Project Sponsors, ODOT, and LACRTA.</p>
	<p>The MPO will utilize traditional local media as well as social media to further and develop an effective public notification process. The MPO will review the use of press releases, earned media, and public service announcements (PSAs).</p>	<p>Social media as well as traditional press releases will be used to announce public involvement events for all Federal aid projects, plans, and/or programs. Requests for media interviews will be supported. PSAs may be developed to support ongoing programming messages/concerns. Coverage areas and media saturation will be tracked.</p>	<p>MPO Internal Committee Structure, MPO Staff, Project Sponsors, ODOT, and LACRTA.</p>
	<p>The MPO will use its stakeholders list to notify affected parties. Non-traditional stakeholders will require non-traditional outreach approaches, including meeting announcements posted in locations used by the underserved populations to ensure timely and relevant notification of meetings.</p>	<p>Stakeholder lists will be developed and regularly updated. Return rates will not exceed 10% for notices mailed to non-traditional stakeholders regarding planning events. Locations serving the underserved populations will be identified and assessed for access regularly. The usage of placard postings will be assessed biennially to ensure adequate geographic and demographic coverage.</p>	<p>MPO Internal Committee Structure, MPO Staff, and Community Stakeholders.</p>
<p>The MPO will seek to ensure that its committee membership and the general public receive adequate notification of committee meetings.</p>	<p>The MPO will post anticipated committee meeting dates annually on the Agency website (www.lacrpc.com). The MPO will send committee members notification of committee meetings and agendas, or meeting cancellation notices prior to any scheduled meeting, using the best method as requested by the committee member, i.e. facsimile, surface mail, or email. The MPO will request that <i>The Lima News</i> print general notification of committee meeting dates prior to committee meetings, although publication cannot be guaranteed. MPO meetings are public meetings and meeting notices will be sent to local media outlets, in addition social media will be used to disseminate meeting information.</p>	<p>Meeting dates shall be established each year in January and posted to the Agency website. Such postings will be monitored and updated as the need arises. Committee members will receive notification of committee meetings, or meeting cancellation, by facsimile, surface mail, or email at least six (6) days prior to any meeting. Internal committee meeting notification will be sent to <i>The Lima News</i>, although publication cannot be guaranteed. Newsletters will be released quarterly with committee meeting dates identified. Return rates for mailed notices will not exceed 10%.</p>	<p>MPO Internal Committee Structure and MPO Staff.</p>
<p>The MPO will ensure that the general public is notified during preparation or amendment of the agency's TIP, LRTP, AQCR or PPP.</p>	<p>The MPO will review, verify, and integrate all public notice requirements for all federal aid projects, programs, services and/or publications in consultation with the adopted PPP. The MPO will ensure the public involvement process timeline appropriate for each project, program, and/or plan adoption, as follows: TIP, LRTP, PPP; AQCR, UPWP, TDP, transit service modifications, and other MPO summary reports.</p>	<p>The MPO will ensure a minimum 21-day public involvement process timeline. The MPO will document legal notices in local newspapers, when required. When appropriate, the MPO will send to identified stakeholders public meeting notification by surface mail at least 21 days prior, a press release will be sent to traditional media outlets 14 days prior, and by email, with the availability of a usable email address, to identified stakeholders at least 13 days prior. Notification will also be posted to the Agency website (www.lacrpc.com). The MPO will also utilize social media to assist in the notification of the general public.</p>	<p>MPO Internal Committee Structure, MPO Staff, ODOT, and LACRTA.</p>

**TABLE 5
GOAL 4: IDENTIFY AND INVOLVE TRADITIONALLY UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES IN THE REGION'S TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS.**

POLICY	OBJECTIVES	PERFORMANCE MEASURES	STAKEHOLDERS
<p>The MPO will strongly encourage local transportation providers to aggressively seek to identify and involve the affected and interested public, including those traditionally under-served by existing transportation systems and facilities.</p>	<p>The MPO will work to identify advocates for the transportationally disadvantaged groups. To enable participatory representation and advocacy, the MPO will target those agencies and organizations that service those populations most often associated with Title VI, EJ, and ADA populations, as well as, other federally mandated stakeholders.</p>	<p>The MPO will identify those entities that serve, or claim to serve, the following demographic groups commonly identified as the transportationally disadvantaged including: minority populations, elderly population, mobility limited population, population existing below poverty levels, and the population without access to a motor vehicle. Federal legislation also targets representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, and private providers of transportation services, as well as, representative users of public transportation, pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, and representatives of the disabled. Finally, the MPO will identify those entities responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation such lists will be forwarded to project sponsors. The MPO will work to establish and maintain databases of the aforementioned stakeholders.</p>	<p>MPO Internal Committee Structure, MPO Staff, ODOT, LACRTA, Local Governments, and Community Stakeholders.</p>
	<p>Outreach in non-traditional public spaces must be identified and targeted for inclusion within the transportation planning process to afford the opportunity for affected parties to attend public meetings whenever possible.</p>	<p>The MPO will geographically identify concentrations of the following demographic groups identified by Title VI, EJ, and ADA legislation. Such populations include minority, elderly, mobility limited, poverty, and those without access to a motor vehicle. Maps and tables will be prepared using GIS to identify the residential location of such population concentrations, enabling project sponsors to target proven effective techniques supporting their inclusion in the planning process. Such databases will be forwarded to each project sponsor. Locations serving the underserved populations will be identified and assessed for access within the PPP cycle. The use of placards also will be assessed within the PPP cycle to ensure adequate geographic and demographic coverage of events and effectiveness.</p>	<p>MPO Internal Committee Structure, MPO Staff, LACRTA, and Project Sponsors.</p>
		<p>Public meetings will be conducted in readily accessible buildings served by public transportation services and without architectural barriers barring the disabled from attending. Public meeting site accessibility, using available public transportation services and ADA standards per event, will be monitored.</p>	<p>MPO Internal Committee Structure, MPO Staff, and LACRTA.</p>
<p>The MPO will promote a wider understanding of transportation planning and transportation issues in an attempt to broaden public support and acceptance of MPO responsibilities, policies and actions especially those supporting environmental justice.</p>	<p>The MPO will continue to work with interested non-traditional stakeholders attending public meetings to discuss current events and relevant planning initiatives/projects and processes that support the transportationally disadvantaged.</p>	<p>The MPO will work to strengthen its internal committee structure to better represent the transportationally disadvantaged and their respective advocates. The MPO will work to address transportationally disadvantaged neighborhoods on transportation and transportation-related issues. The MPO will visit and solicit feedback from two advocacy groups per fiscal year in order to establish and foster a mutual understanding and lasting relationship with service advocates within the community.</p>	<p>MPO Internal Committee Structure, MPO Staff, Community Stakeholders, and the General Public.</p>

**TABLE 6
GOAL 5: ENSURE THE PUBLIC IS PROVIDED WITH VARIOUS PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT TECHNIQUES THAT WILL MEET THE DIVERSE NEEDS OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC.**

POLICY	OBJECTIVES	PERFORMANCE MEASURES	STAKEHOLDERS
The MPO will provide opportunities for public involvement through various techniques and means.	The MPO will assess/utilize various mechanisms to facilitate the 3C planning process. The MPO will maintain a presence in the community and develop an internal committee structure of representative stakeholders in order to identify and prioritize the communities transportation problems and concerns, including: the use of information booths, open houses, surveys, neighborhood meetings, newspaper and talk-radio venues, etc.	The MPO will facilitate at least one open house per TIP/STIP cycle, as identified by ODOT. The MPO will continue to maintain an office with technical staff, open telecommunications, and website access to facilitate public involvement.	MPO Internal Committee Structure, MPO Staff, LACRTA, ODOT, and Community Stakeholders.
	The MPO will provide opportunities for anyone who chooses to become involved in the maintenance, improvement, and/or further development of the region's transportation system by affording opportunities to participate in meaningful ways throughout the planning process. Non-traditional avenues of participation will be provided such as: placard distribution announcing public meetings at grocery and discount stores; laundromats; senior citizen facilities; deputy registrars' offices, schools and colleges, etc. As much as possible, visualization techniques will be utilized to promote ease of understanding regarding complex information, such as: maps, simple graphs, effective use of space and color, photographs, computer generated graphics, etc.	The MPO will distribute placards announcing public meetings utilizing various visualization techniques at three (3) grocery stores, three (3) laundromats, three (3) schools/colleges, and two (2) senior citizen centers. (5.1.2)	MPO Staff, Community Stakeholders, and the General Public.
The MPO will present information utilizing various means that will reach individuals with a disability.	The MPO will address all areas of transportation concerns raised by the general public and develop/utilize suitable presentation techniques.	When necessary and with requests made 21 days in advance, the MPO will provide large-font, Braille, or audio recordings of material presented. The MPO will work with local stakeholders to define the extent of the needs in the community and the availability of Braille as well as language translator services, in compliance with limited English proficiency (LEP) requirements, within the confines of federal Safe Harbor provisions.	Local Governments, MPO Internal Committee Structure, MPO Staff, LACRTA, ODOT, Community Stakeholders, and the General Public.
	In order to facilitate a planning process that is more inclusive, the MPO will increase its efforts to identify and educate those service providers who can be reasonably expected to advocate on behalf of and report back to the disabled community on the extent of federal aid program projects, programs, and services available within Allen County.	The MPO will work to strengthen its internal committee structure to better represent the needs of the transportationally disadvantaged. The MPO will visit and solicit feedback from two advocacy group(s) biennially in order to establish a better understanding of the needs within the disabled community.	Project Sponsors, MPO Internal Committee Structure, MPO Staff, Local Governments, LACRTA, and Community Stakeholders.
	To comply with ADA mandates to provide "equal opportunity in employment, transportation, telecommunications, and places of public accommodations for individuals with disabilities" the MPO will facilitate a planning process that is more inclusive and increase its efforts to identify and accommodate those with a disability.	The MPO will track the services required to ensure agency sensitivity and promote increased public participation by the disabled community.	MPO Internal Committee Structure, MPO Staff, LACRTA, ODOT, Community Stakeholders, and the General Public.
The MPO will present information in a manner that will be readily and easily understood by the general public.	The MPO will strive to simplify terms and scenarios to present facts in the most efficient and easily understood manner. The MPO will utilize visualization techniques including PowerPoint presentations, graphics, maps, illustrations, etc., in order to ensure the information is received and comprehended. The MPO will readily answer questions that may arise and/or provide clarification of information.	The MPO will develop summary sheets of local planning documents and current transportation programs, and services. The MPO will post and distribute such information to the Agency website. Written/verbal requests for explanations/clarification will be honored.	Project Sponsors, MPO Internal Committee Structure, MPO Staff, ACRTA, ODOT, Community Stakeholders, and the General Public.

To adequately serve the community and fully address the planning process, the LACRPC identified target populations, initiated tests for disproportionate impacts, and developed a public involvement process designed to engage the low income and minority neighborhoods. As part of its ongoing planning activities, the MPO employed GIS applications to facilitate demographic analyses at the regional and neighborhood levels. Analyses identified the concentrations of minorities, low income, the elderly, the disabled population as well as those without access to vehicles. The MPO initiated a structured planning program with various neighborhood organizations to facilitate and strengthen the planning process in sub-areas of the region. Activities were coordinated with, and undertaken in conjunction with, the LACRTA, Board of Directors. The MPO and LACRTA recognized model limitations and data constraints. The agencies utilized technical support from ODOT and the ODOD, Office of Strategic Research (OSR) to identify and manipulate data necessary for the EJ analysis. In addition, the MPO and LACRTA recognized the need to review and adapt the public involvement process to ensure target populations continue to be engaged in the transportation decision making process.

4.3 Public Participation Mechanisms

To support public involvement procedures the MPO expects that in the course of developing any single program, project, or service one or more mechanisms will be utilized as tools in the public involvement process. Each of the various tools will be reviewed to assess their effectiveness to inform the public or encourage the public to comment, attend a meeting, or in some other way participate in the decision or issue at hand. The following listing presents a summary of the individual tools that may be used by the MPO in furthering the goals of the PPP.

4.3.1 Website

The MPO's website (www.lacrpc.com) is the Agency's principal means of communicating with the general public. The website allows 24-hour 7-day a week access to the Agency's meeting schedules, notices, and materials, including meeting minutes, as well as draft and final plans. The website shall make available to internet users, as available, the LRTP, TIP, UPWP, PPP, and Air Quality Conformity Analysis (AQCA), and Transit Development Plan (TDP) as well as agency newsletters, summary reports, and transportation surveys. MPO staff member contact information, committee member rosters are also posted to the Agency website. This is an ongoing and continually developing tool; staff continues to expand this site for ease of use and topical coverage.

4.3.2 Visualization Techniques

As much as possible, the LACRPC will use maps, graphs, illustrations, charts, photographs, and/or interactive tools to engage the public. Visual techniques may be more effective for some than paragraphs or written documentation. The MPO will, as is fiscally feasible, continue to develop and integrate visualization in conjunction with other tools in order to convey specific information about transportation related programs, projects, and services.

4.3.3 Summary Sheets

Summary sheets will be developed by the MPO to explain in non-technical jargon summaries of the LRTP, TIP, AQCA, and UPWP. These summary sheets will provide current relevant information and be maintained on an ongoing basis. Summary sheets will be made available during the required formal public involvement process and be posted to the website.

4.3.4 Public Service Announcements

The MPO may prepare transportation-related public service announcements (PSAs), formatted for television or radio, as an effective mechanism to address certain specific issues, locations and/or populations. As a service to the public, the MPO may work with the local media to procure and produce positive messages.

4.3.5 Placard

Placard postings may prove to be an effective, low cost mechanism to support public involvement in the transportationally disadvantaged and underserved communities. Placards, small lightweight paperboard, can be printed in any language and size relatively quickly and inexpensively. Placards can be placed in social/human service agencies, at meeting locations, and on public transit vehicles to support notification of public involvement events.

4.3.6 Open Houses

The MPO will host/facilitate open houses, when necessary, to promote informal discussion of transportation-related programs, projects, or services. Open house events are open to the general public and MPO/local project sponsors use various public involvement mechanisms to promote discussion and elicit comment from the community. Open houses are usually held in conjunction with the TIP/STIP development process.

4.3.7 Newsletter

The MPO produces a newsletter on a quarterly basis in an attempt to inform the general public and stakeholders of important events and opportunities for participation. Newsletters are sent to standing and advisory committee members, elected officials, local transit and paratransit service providers, neighborhood associations and social/human service organizations. Interested members of the general public also receive the newsletter simply by requesting to be added to the mailing list. General copies are distributed to the Lima Public Library and administrative offices throughout Allen County. Newsletter mailing lists are updated on a quarterly basis.

4.3.8 Press Releases

Succinct announcements of major MPO events shall be prepared and released to the local electronic and written media outlets. Announcements shall target meeting purpose, objectives, and the opportunities for public participation.

4.3.9 Media Events

In an attempt to solicit more public acceptance and recognition of traffic and transportation-related issues, MPO staff will solicit and support increased media attention on specific issues/events. Media events will be carefully planned and provide the media the opportunity to interview key industry/community leaders engaged in the transportation planning process.

4.3.10 Information Booths

The MPO may choose to use informational booths at local events in order to increase public awareness of transportation-related issues and solicit public comment on specific projects, programs, or services. Information booths allow the public informal, discreet, and in-depth questioning opportunities. MPO staff using such a mechanism shall be well versed and supported with an array of tools to support the public outreach and educational activity.

4.3.11 Fact Sheets

Fact sheets may be developed by the MPO, and/or local project sponsor, to address a single project, program, or service. The fact sheets are intended to provide the reader with essential subject matter to further public understanding of a single topic. Fact sheets will be used to provide participants with background for discussion and comment.

4.3.12 Meetings

Efforts are made to schedule meetings with neighborhood associations, member political subdivisions, internal and advisory committees as well as other groups as appropriate at convenient times and locations. Committee meetings are cited in the agency newsletter and on the agency website. Requests will be made to *The Lima News* to publish scheduled committee meetings; although, publication is not guaranteed. Agendas are also sent to committee members and interested stakeholders.

4.3.13 Public Meeting

The TCC, as a public body, is sometimes required to hold public meetings. The purpose of a public meeting is to obtain public input on decisions regarding matters of plan adoption, amendment, and other key funding decisions. Public meetings are conducted whenever the MPO is reviewing policies, program, or services that affect a wide range of citizens. Traditional/social media will be used to advertise public meetings as required.

4.3.14 Comment Period

Formal public comment periods are initiated for review of the MPO's draft transportation plans, TIP, AQCR, PPP, UPWP, and summary reports. All comment periods are 21 days. Required legal notices for MPO and LACRTA documents are posted in *The Lima News* newspaper. Additional posting/advertising may be purchased. All comments received are retained.

4.3.15 Comment Forms

Simple, 1-page forms will be used to solicit public perception and attitudes about various transportation-related subjects. The form should be designed to include guided comments (direct questions to which the LACRPC seeks comments) and open-ended questions that encourage respondents to describe resident concerns.

4.3.16 Alternative Accessible Formats

Braille, large-font, and audio formats will be made available by the MPO for purposes of inclusiveness; advance notification of 21 days is required. The LACRPC will work to provide LEP persons in the community with appropriate translation services, in compliance with limited English proficiency (LEP) requirements, within the confines of federal Safe Harbor provisions.

4.4 Public Involvement Process & Implementation Guidelines

In order to comply with the legislation locally, specific project/program proposals are reviewed and coordinated within the local clearinghouse intergovernmental review process as established by the MPO's internal committee structure. To address potential issues and concerns, affected parties and segments of the community are identified early in the process. Such issues/affected parties are refined by community stakeholders, internal committees, and the local citizenry as project development continues to progress. Citizen input is to be solicited on any proposed project, and/or changes in services or service levels through public meetings. Traditional written and electronic media, as well as social media, newsletters, and/or public notices advertising

the availability of draft documents pertaining to such issues will be used to inform the affected public.

The PPP recognizes that the MPO has, as two of its major responsibilities, the development and publication of the LRTP and the TIP. These documents, although supported by other strategic reports, plans, and/or programs, come under special scrutiny as they are more fiscally constrained and comprehensive in their nature and scope. However, there are actually four (4) core work products that the MPO is responsible for producing and maintaining public involvement procedure schedules. Those core products and the public participation and implementation guidelines for each are discussed below. The public involvement opportunities for other MPO plans, programs, and services financed with Federal-Aid Highway Program monies are also considered and reviewed.

4.4.1 Long Range Transportation Plan

The LRTP, sometimes referred to as the Transportation Plan, is updated every four years. The document is a long-range (20 years) plan that contains the region's goals and policies, funding forecasts, strategies, and projected demands on the transportation system projects and project recommendations. Advisory committees discuss the plan updates over several meetings. The MPO facilitates a 21-day comment period and public meeting. Comments received will be responded to, and included in, the final document. The draft LRTP and supporting documentation is posted on the website. Public meetings are advertised in the newspaper, on the Agency website, and by mailing to individuals or organizations on transportation mailing lists. Staff conducts outreach, including community presentations. A record of comments received is kept on file with responses, reported to committees, and incorporated into the final plan.

Periodically, state or local officials request that the approved Plan be modified, or that a project recommendation be added or dropped. Such requests shall be processed through a 21-day public comment period. A record of comments received is kept on file with responses, reported to committees, and incorporated into the amended plan.

4.4.2 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The TIP is adopted every two (2) years. The TIP is the short-range (4-year) listing of financially constrained projects to be undertaken by local project sponsors within the MPO planning area. Projects in the TIP are incorporated into the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Public participation during the TIP/STIP development process is the same as, and conducted concurrently with, the STIP. The MPO hosts an open house session and a 21-day comment period. A record of comments received is kept on file with responses, reported to committees, and incorporated into the draft TIP.

The draft TIP and supporting documentation is made available to all committee members and is posted to the Agency website. The TIP/STIP open house is advertised in the newspaper, on the web, and mailings to individuals or organizations on media and stakeholders lists. Staff also conducts outreach, including community presentations.

Periodically, State or local officials request that the approved Plan be modified, or that a project recommendation be added or dropped. Such requests shall be processed through a 21-day public comment period. A record of comments

received is kept on file with responses, reported to committees, and incorporated into the amended plan.

4.4.2.1 Air Quality Conformity Determination

The MPO is required to show through the AQCD that both the Transportation Plan and the TIP conform to Federal Clean Air Act Amendments standards. The determination process is technical in nature, but the findings are subject to public review, during the activities described above for the Transportation Plan and TIP. A record of comments received will be kept on file with responses, reported to committees, posted on the website, and incorporated into the final document. The TCC will adopt the final report after a 21-day comment period.

4.4.3 Unified Planning Work Program

The UPWP, often referred to as the Work Program, is produced annually. The Work Program lists the various planning surveillance activities, programs, and plans the MPO will undertake during the fiscal year. All standing committees identify and discuss local needs and work toward prioritizing planning tasks. Committee meeting notices are sent to *The Lima News*, although publication is not guaranteed as well as posted on the Agency website. Staff conducts additional consultation with agencies and interested parties as necessary. The TCC (the MPO Policy Committee) adopts the final draft UPWP and submits it to a 21-day public comment period. Summary sheets and other information may be produced by staff as necessary. A record of comments is kept on file with responses, reported to committees, and may be incorporated into the final work program document.

4.4.4 Other Programs, Plans & Services

The MPO recognizes that many of its on-going planning, surveillance, and modeling activities affect the community, its businesses, and local citizenry. The MPO commits to keep such activities in the public light and to keep local stakeholders apprised of on-going and current activities through the use of the media, newsletters, committee meetings, and the agency website. Should local concerns generate MPO activities that develop new programs, plans, and/or services, the MPO will respond with the same public involvement process, including review and comment periods as previously identified. Potential changes affecting the delivery, service, or fares of public transportation will also generate requisite public awareness/education processes, public meeting(s), and required comment period. Such activities will be coordinated with the ACRTA and ODOT.

4.5 Public Participation Plan & Evaluation

The Public Participation Plan (PPP) will be maintained to meet federal requirements for public involvement in metropolitan planning. Federal planning guidelines require a periodic review of the effectiveness of the public involvement process. Therefore, the MPO will periodically review its PPP to assess participatory rates, improve its effectiveness as well as evaluate available tools and procedures. Plan effectiveness will review the performance measures of each goal identified in Section 4.1 to assess the success of the planning process and evaluate the usefulness of each objective/measure.

The MPO will periodically review aspects of the PPP, to assess its process, activities, and timelines as well as ensure that the Plan provides a reasonable, manageable process; a process that is sensible, dependable, and able to be implemented. Such assessments/revisions will be reviewed by the MPO's internal committee structure. Such revisions shall be processed through a 21-day public comment period. A record of

comments received is kept on file with responses, reported to committees, and incorporated into the amended plan.

4.6 Summary

The MPO has reviewed and considered the federal PPP requirements and has adopted the PPP to meet same. The process developed by the PPP and employed by the MPO is intended to serve those affected populations and stakeholders in the community, including local governments. Changes and revisions to the PPP will be made, as necessary, in order to ensure that the MPO maintains an effective process of informing and involving the public.

SECTION 5 SUMMARY & ACTION PLAN

5.1 Summary

Federal regulation, taken collectively, calls for a transportation system that supports a just distribution of benefits across racial and socioeconomic lines; a system that is as friendly to commerce and the disadvantaged residing within a community as it is to the natural environment. Federally financed infrastructure must support mobility, economic development, and global competition, while furthering increased quality of life for the entire community. Such improvements must be well planned to further long-term community sustainability while protecting the future.

Federal legislation guiding the current transportation planning process, includes six (6) primary pieces of legislation: FAST Act (2015), MAP-21 (2012), SAFETEA-LU (2005), TEA-21 (1998), ISTEA (1991), and CAAA (1990). However, a legislative labyrinth develops when these are combined with other legislation such as, Executive Order 12898 (1994), the ADA (1990), and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act (1964).

Federal law requires new strategies to include programs, policies, planning, and public participation processes/enforcement related to human health or the environment, as these affect minority and low-income populations. Recent transportation bills amplified the provisions of the CAAA, the ADA, Executive Order 12898, and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Legislative efforts demand greater public participation as well as related research and data collection. In general, any project/program for which Federal funds will be used must not discriminate against minority or low-income populations. MPOs are required to identify and address disproportionate effects of federally funded projects, programs, and services.

The MPO is responsible for the local development and implementation of the PPP. As the MPO, the LACRPC is an inclusive voluntary association of delegates from State and local governments, as well as, other organizations interested in understanding and addressing the needs of the community. It is a forum for discussion and decision-making about issues relating to community building.

To comply with federal rules, a local PPP must be developed and implemented so that all federally funded projects provide “meaningful access” to transportation decision-making to all affected and interested people. Such stakeholders include, but are not limited to - those who use public transportation, pedestrian walkways and bicycle facilities; representatives of public transportation employees, private providers of transportation, and freight shippers, as well as, disabled, minority, and low income populations.

5.2 Action Plan

The LACRPC commits to five (5) goals to provide the public with opportunities to participate in the decision-making process and to shape the region’s transportation system. Residents will be provided with timely notice of all transportation issue events, as well as, identifying and involving underserved residents and by using non-traditional involvement techniques to help meet residents’ diverse needs.

The PPP is intended to provide methods, strategies, and desired outcomes for public involvement and participation. The Plan stipulates outreach to a broadly defined audience of affected parties, and expects interested parties to respond to (1) full public

access to information and decisions, (2) timely public notices, and (3) early and continuing public involvement in plan and services development.

The MPO will utilize many tools to accomplish a reinvigorated public involvement process, to include; increased use of the agency website, social media, visualization techniques, summary/fact sheets, PSAs, placard placement, newsletter distribution, increased media access, information booths at public events, public meetings, MPO committee meetings, comment forms/periods, and alternative formats for challenged populations.

A series of performance measures have been established to quantify effectiveness of the PPP. Such measures were developed to complement each stated goal and associated objectives. Using these performance measures to quantify the status of goal attainment, the PPP will be subjected to ongoing, as well as, periodic reviews, and maintained to meet Federal requirements for public involvement in metropolitan planning. Table 7 depicts the ongoing task matrix for accomplishment of the MPO's PPP goals, policies, and objectives.

GOAL	POLICY	OBJECTIVE	TABLE 7 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN: A TIMELINE OF EVENTS Biennial PPP Assessment		FY	FY
1	1	1a	Document identification and mapping of committee members by home and work address against EJ, Title VI and ADA issues assessing representativeness of interests/concerns.			
1	1	1b	Database documentation regarding identification of committee member demographics against EJ, Title VI, and ADA issues to assess representativeness of interests/concerns.			
1	1	1c	Document identification, inclusion, and participation of FAST Act mandated stakeholders.			
1	2	1a	Document posting on LACRPC website of TIP survey, level-of-service (LOS) analyses, crash summary reports, and corridor studies to increase public awareness of problems.			
1	2	1b	Document number/type of venues of staff interaction promoting/increasing public awareness.			
1	2	1c	Document one (1) open house, and attendance at six (6) neighborhood meetings within PPP cycle to recognize and promote problem recognition and prioritization.			
1	3	1a	Document alternative transportation solutions proposed at sub-area and corridor levels using model and transit alternatives.			
1	3	1b	Document alternative design options identified and potential effectiveness of each alternative.			
1	3	1c	Document air conformity determinations and track for each alternative.			
1	3	2a	Document development of program packet detailing project timeline, meeting dates, public awareness activities, media relations, and promotional events.			
1	3	2b	Monitor and document timelines of all sponsor projects.			
1	3	2c	Monitor all public information & participatory events.			
1	4	1b	Post all documents to agency website in compliance with project timelines and assess the number of hits/comments for each.			
1	4	1c	Collect any/all comments pertaining to posted documents in their entirety for committee review and consideration.			
1	4	1d	Post newsletter to website and monitor the number of hits and comments received regarding same.			
1	4	1e	Monitor and update all stakeholder listings for mailings and track return rates for each mailing to ensure credibility and maintain stakeholder participation.			
2	1	1b	Assess core documents as to whether they adequately address stated objectives and rationale.			
2	1	1c	Assess effectiveness of "3C" process implementation with respect to newsletter articles/distribution.			
2	1	1d	Conduct a meeting within TIP/STIP cycle with each local political subdivision, to ensure understanding of local issues and agency responsibilities.			
2	1	1e	Document and track use/interest of agency website monthly.			
2	1	1f	Develop and track distribution of summary sheets and core MPO documents, including the LRTP, TIP, PPP, and UPWP.			
2	1	1h	Media coverage of all projects/reports shall be solicited to promote public awareness and tracked to assess effectiveness of public relations campaign.			
2	1	1i	Media coverage for transportation planning, engineering, and services will utilize electronic, written medium, as well as social media targeting at least one topic/activity/project per month.			
2	1	1j	Market saturation will be evaluated with respect to all news mediums and outlets – tabulating frequency of exposure and number of impressions.			

Key: ∞ Ongoing □ Not Completed ⚙ Working on ☑ Completed

GOAL	POLICY	OBJECTIVE	TABLE 7 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN: A TIMELINE OF EVENTS (Continued) Biennial PPP Assessment		FY	FY
2	2	2a	Federally mandated stakeholders shall be identified and tracked as to notification and participation.			
2	2	2b	Assess document availability via the Agency's website; identify/assess alternative outlets to increase public access to Agency and transportation-related information.			
2	2	2c	Identify and assess potential visualization techniques, including computer software applications to improve relations with non-traditional stakeholders			
2	3	1a	Assess staff/agency accessibility to the public in terms of hours and documents against other similar sized MPOs in Ohio.			
2	3	1b	Develop procedures to ensure public access to Agency documents and materials at the Lima Public Library; identify similar alternative sites where public access can be guaranteed.			
2	3	1c	Document site accessibility as per public transportation, alternative transportation modes, and ADA standards utilizing checklist.			
2	3	1d	Ensure that each public event location utilized for Agency outreach meets minimum ADA accessibility standards.			
2	3	1e	Assess the need with local stakeholders for translators, Braille, or large font documents; if necessary, identify sources for such services.			
2	3	1f	Develop acronym table and glossary to help the public understand the terms utilized in planning documents.			
3	1	1a	Within PPP cycle, survey MPO committees assessing the effectiveness of meeting notification and public participation process.			
3	1	1b	Develop survey instrument to assess the effectiveness of meeting notification and public participation process after each public meeting.			
3	1	1c	Evaluate rates of return for meeting notifications (not to exceed 2%) and MPO newsletters (not to exceed 10%) mailed by U. S. Postal Service.			
3	1	1d	Evaluate participatory rates to measure participation by federally mandated stakeholders.			
3	1	1e	Biennial evaluation of PPP shall be conducted.			
3	1	2a	Document press releases sent for each public involvement event regarding federal aid projects, plans, and/or programs.			
3	1	2b	Document all media interviews of major MPO products, as well as, tabulation of listenership/viewership/circulation.			
3	1	2c	Document number of PSAs developed as well as utilization of such with respective rate of listenership/viewership/circulation.			
3	1	3a	Document biennially updated list of sites/locations used for postings serving non-traditional and/or under-served populations.			
3	1	3b	Within PPP cycle, assess for effectiveness posting sites by mapping geographic locations and proximity to target populations.			
3	2	1a	Document posting to MPO website annual listing of MPO committee meeting dates, times, and locations.			
3	2	1b	Evaluate meeting/cancellation notification by U. S. Postal Service with respect to timeliness – return rates not to exceed 2%.			
3	2	1c	Document MPO committee meeting notifications printed weekly in <i>The Lima News</i> .			
3	2	1d	Document quarterly release of MPO newsletter containing MPO committee meeting dates, times, and locations – return rates not to exceed 2%.			
3	3	1a	Document legal notices as required regarding TIP, STIP and LRTP in local newspapers regarding document availability as well as public meeting dates.			

Key: ∞ Ongoing ☐ Not Completed ⚠ Working on ☑ Completed

GOAL	POLICY	OBJECTIVE	TABLE 7 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN: A TIMELINE OF EVENTS (Continued) Biennial PPP Assessment		FY	FY
3	3	1c	Document minimum 21-day surface mail and 13-day email notification of mandated stakeholders prior to public meeting date(s), time(s), and location.			
3	3	1d	Document public meeting notification on MPO webpage.			
3	3	1e	Document public meeting notification press release(s) as sent to all local media, both written and electronic.			
3	3	1f	Document 21-day public involvement process timeline for all MPO products.			
4	1	1a	Annually, document and forward to local project sponsors, identification of entities serving the transportationally disadvantaged, to include: minority, elderly and mobility limited as well as those below poverty levels and without vehicles.			
4	1	1b	Annually, document and forward to local project sponsors, identification of representatives of public transportation employees and users, private transportation providers, freight shippers, users of pedestrian walkways & bicycle facilities and the disabled.			
4	1	1c	Annually, document and forward to local project sponsors, identification of entities responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation.			
4	1	1d	Document establishment, and regular maintenance, of stakeholder database.			
4	1	2a	Document geographic mapping and corresponding database of high density populations with respect to FAST Act stakeholders – ADA, Title VI, and EJ.			
4	1	2b	Document the sharing of Title VI and EJ database/map identification with project sponsors			
4	1	2c	Document identification of placard posting locations as well as assessment of effectiveness for access by ADA, Title VI, and EJ populations			
4	1	2d	Within PPP cycle, document placard posting site assessment of geographic and demographic effectiveness.			
4	1	2e	Document review of public meeting sites for disabled services such as: access, public transportation services, and architectural barriers.			
4	2	1a	Document MPO efforts to strengthen internal committee structure to better represent the transportationally disadvantaged and respective advocates.			
4	2	1b	Document MPO efforts regarding quarterly address to one transportationally disadvantaged neighborhood.			
5	1	1a	Document facilitation of one (1) MPO open house event within TIP/STIP cycle.			
5	1	1b	Document MPO office hours and staff available for public inquiry as well as telecommunication and website access.			
5	1	1c	Document efforts of MPO to encourage public participation at non-traditional venues.			
5	1	2	Document distribution of placard public meeting advertising at three (3) grocery/discount stores, three (3) Laundromats, three (3) schools/colleges, two (2) senior citizen centers and the Lima Public Library.			
5	2	1	Document the demand/conversion/timeliness of major MPO products to large font, Braille, audio, or provision of translator, upon request.			
5	2	2	Document MPO work to visit and solicit feedback from two (2) advocacy groups for the disabled per biennium.			
5	3	1a	Document development of summary sheets of local planning documents and project fact sheets.			
5	3	1b	Document posting of summary and project fact sheets to the MPO website.			

Key: ∞ Ongoing ☐ Not Completed ⚠ Working on ☑ Completed

Lima-Allen County Regional Planning Commission

Policy Statement Supporting Adoption of Public Participation Plan Pursuant to the Metropolitan Planning Regulations specified in Section 23 U.S.C. 134.

The Lima-Allen County Regional Planning Commission is charged with the authority and responsibilities of a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) by order of the Governor of the State of Ohio. And as the MPO for Allen County Ohio, the agency is required to undertake and maintain 3C planning, including continuing, cooperative, and communication processes. The MPO's goal is to place the people first in all its local transportation planning endeavors. Consistent with this goal, it is the policy of the MPO to support proactive public involvement at all stages of planning and project development. To develop effective public involvement processes that are custom-tailored to local conditions, the MPO will work with Federal, State and local stakeholders, including citizens, elected officials, affected public agencies, freight shippers and providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, as well as representatives of employees and users of public transportation, users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, in addition to the disabled, minority, and low income populations, and other interested parties. The performance standards for these proactive public involvement processes include early and continuous 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 the decision making process prior to closure.

To achieve these objectives, the Lima-Allen County Regional Planning Commission as the MPO commits to:

- Promote 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.
- Promote the shared obligation of the public and decision makers to define goals and objectives for the 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.
- Ensure that the public is actively involved in the development of public involvement procedures themselves in ways that go beyond commenting on drafts.
- Encourage local units of government and transportation service providers to seek to identify and involve the affected and interested public, including those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems and facilities.
- Evaluate public involvement processes and procedures to assess their success at meeting the performance requirements specified in the appropriate regulations during Long Range Transportation Plan certification reviews, metropolitan planning and conformity findings, transportation improvement program (TIP) approvals and project oversight.

ADOPTED this 26th DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 2019

Brion Rhodes, Chair, Transportation Coordinating Committee, MPO
Lima-Allen County Regional Planning Commission

Attest: Thomas M. Mazur, Executive Director
Lima-Allen County Regional Planning Commission