

**DELAWARE-MUNCIE METROPOLITAN PLAN COMMISSION
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN
2023**

Public engagement, providing input into an area's policies and plans, is a necessary part of developing plans. A successful implementation of policies, procedures and plans should reflect the local needs and preferences. A well-informed public with a sense of ownership and satisfaction in plans prepared for them leads toward a consensus that can move an area forward. The Delaware Muncie Metropolitan Plan Commission (DMMPC) welcomes public involvement and efforts of local citizens to participate in the transportation planning process.

The DMMPC, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Muncie Urbanized Area, has developed a proactive public participation process in order to maximize community involvement in the transportation planning process. The process will involve citizens, freight shippers, airport authorities, transportation-related agencies (traffic/safety/enforcement), and the appropriate county, city and town officials. The process has been expanded to include new interested parties at the federal, state and local level so that those involved in matters such as wildlife habitat, land use, natural resources, conservation, historic preservation, non-emergency transportation, and regulatory actions have the opportunity to participate. The process has also been augmented to include appropriate consultations as a result of operating as an Air Quality Maintenance Area. The process is set up to include notices of document development, opportunities for input, presentation of draft plans at various public meetings and public hearings, public meetings to further develop draft plans, public notice of approval meetings for final plan documents, and submittal of the plan to the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT). The public comments received will be presented along with, and as a part of, the plans when they are considered at transportation subcommittee meetings and considered in final form by the Transportation Policy Committee.

The Public Participation Plan and process for the Muncie MPO is set forth in the following components.

Section I. General Policy Statement.

It is the policy of the DMMPC/Muncie MPO to allow access and input at all times from the general and transportation public on any transportation related plan or program. It is the policy of the DMMPC to assist the State of Indiana in achieving public participation as required by law for the State TIP and Transportation Plan and other components of transportation planning as set forth in the various federal transportation acts by utilizing our local database, committee structures, and procedures. It is the policy of the DMMPC to carry out the Public Participation Plan and the transportation planning process, including matters relating to Transportation Conformity, in consultation with all interested parties.

Section II. Public Participation Methodology

A. Database Development

1. General Public: A listing of neighborhood organizations shall be maintained as provided by the organizations and/or the Office of Community Development. A listing of individual citizens wishing notification shall be maintained as compiled from requests by such citizens. These listings will be kept on file at the DMMPC Office.

2. **Transportation Public:** A listing of affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, private providers of transportation and other interested parties, including elected officials, shall be maintained and kept on file at the DMMPC Office. Contacts on this listing shall be in addition to Committee members representing transportation interests. Other interested parties could include, but not limited to, Air Quality consulting partners (EPA, IDEM, FHWA, FTA, INDOT, MCCOG), Army Corps of Engineers, Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, the State Historic Preservation Officer, transit users, pedestrian & bicycle facility users, the disabled, and the Chamber of Commerce.

B. Transportation Committees

1. **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC):** An existing committee representing local government, private industry, transportation interest groups (i.e. airport, transit, freight) and others with technical expertise needed to provide input into the transportation planning process. Action from this committee provides the 1st step in a 3-step local approval process for Transportation Plans and Transportation Improvement Programs.
2. **Transportation Policy Committee (TPC):** An existing committee representing implementing agencies and decision makers whose input is needed to formulate policy for transportation planning.
3. **Delaware-Muncie Metropolitan Plan Commission (DMMPC):** An existing commission whose composition is prescribed by state law, representing citizens and elected officials of Muncie and Delaware County, Indiana, which has been designated as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Muncie Urbanized Area. This is the final step in the local approval for Transportation Plans and Transportation Improvement Programs.
4. **Ad-Hoc/Special Task Force Committees:** An existing forum for creating a project specific committee to provide input for the local approval process. The membership would vary and would be geared toward the task at hand.

C. Notification Mediums

1. **Web Site:** The DMMPC/MPO developed a Delaware County internet web site (www.co.delaware.in.us) which will be enhanced and expanded. The web site will contain information related to planning efforts including transportation planning documents and the dates and times for meetings for the local input and approval process. Links will be added (if requested) to other websites that serve the transportation public such as the Muncie Indiana Transit System site and the Cardinal Greenway site.
2. **Newspapers:** There is 1 newspaper of general circulation (as defined by law) for the Muncie, Delaware County, and east central Indiana communities - The Star Press. It publishes upcoming meetings as a regular feature and will list meetings from the transportation planning process.
3. **Public Posting:** The DMMPC/MPO Office is located in the Delaware County Building, which contains local governmental offices for Delaware County, Indiana. Notices and information dealing with transportation will be posted on the public bulletin board at the DMMPC/MPO Office.
4. **Legal Notices:** Legal notices, with date, time, place and subject matter information for Plan Commission meetings concerning Transportation Plans or TIP's, will be published in The Star Press, being a newspaper of general circulation and authorized to publish legal notices for the Muncie/Delaware County area. Notices will be published no later than 3 days prior to the

event/meeting.

5. Individual Mailings: Notices will be mailed/mailed to individuals, by request and per the notification databases, specifying the dates and times for committee and Plan Commission meetings where Transportation Plans or TIP's are to be considered.

D. Annual Update Activities

1. Database Updates: The General Public and Transportation Public listings are updated on an annual basis in December/January of each year through contact with other governmental agencies and by research of various inventories and resources (web searches, city directory, Hill-Donnelly Cross Reference Directory, etc.).
2. Meeting Schedules: Annual meeting schedules for each committee are prepared in December of each year.
3. Minority, Low-Income, and Traditionally Underserved Involvement Effort: In December/January of each year, an extra effort will be made to identify the minority, low-income, and traditionally underserved portions of Delaware County citizens using the most up to date census data and GIS technology; and to design strategies to involve them in the transportation planning process. That effort will continue to include providing information on meetings, the TIP and Transportation Plan documents in the Muncie Times and to applicable neighborhood associations.

Section III. Public Participation Procedures

A. TIP's and Transportation Plans

1. Distribution of Annual Meeting Schedules: Annual meeting schedules for all committees and the DMMPC will be forwarded to all members and all persons listed in the database at the beginning of the calendar year using the various notification mediums listed herein. Schedules are also posted in the Plan Commission Office at the Delaware County Building and on the Web Site. This component is aimed at early consultation and continuing involvement.
2. Requests for Public Input: Requests will be distributed near the beginning of the process through the Web Site, individual mailings, public postings and the newspaper. The content of the requests will identify the document and specify the meetings and/or presentations that will be used to gather input. Public input may be presented at the meetings, in written or verbal form, or at the MPO Office in written form at any time. This component is aimed at ensuring early consultation for the TIP and Transportation Plan documents.
3. Notice of Public Meetings & Presentations: A specific notice will be forwarded to all members and persons in the General Public and Transportation Public database at least 10 days prior to the presentations and the series of meetings at which the Transportation Plan or TIP will be under consideration.
4. Notice of Public Hearing: A notice of public hearing will be published in The Star Press for the DMMPC meeting at which the Transportation Plan or TIP will be presented for final consideration. This meeting may also be used as an additional opportunity for public comment if the final documents differ significantly from the version that was made available for public comment (as set forth in Item 3) and raises new material issues which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen.
5. Public Involvement Documentation: Public input and comment will be on record in the Plan

Commission Office and will be included in the TIP and Transportation Plan documents. Where significant comments are received, a summary, analysis and report on the disposition of comments will be included in the documents.

6. Legislative Process: When a component of the Transportation Plan is a part of the Delaware-Muncie Comprehensive Plan of the DMMPC, the public hearing process will be extended to include action by the legislative body (Board of Commissioners, City Council) with all of the normal notification required by law for a public hearing.

B. Major Amendments for Non-Exempt Projects

The standard process for major amendments adding non-exempt projects to the Transportation Plan and/or the TIP, requiring air quality conformity determinations, shall be the same as presented above in Section III-A (2-5).

C. Minor Amendments

Transportation Plan and/or TIP amendments adding an exempt project shall be accomplished through the TAC and the Policy Committee public meetings. Emergency exempt Transportation Plan and/or TIP project amendments may be faxed, emailed or hand delivered to Committee members for approval and documentation.

D. Administrative Amendments

Transportation Plan and/or TIP amendments involving changes to existing projects shall be accomplished through approval by the TAC and the TPC members, which may be obtained by fax, email or hand delivery.

E. General Guidelines for Public Events/Participation

1. During development of Transportation Plan updates, the DMMPC/MPO will provide at least one open house presentation extending into evening hours to maximize attendance, at an accessible location.
2. Public meetings will be held at locations accessible to users of wheelchairs. Interpreters or other auxiliary aids will be arranged if requested 10 days in advance.
3. Public access to meetings, during pandemic social distancing constraints, will be by phone and/or a video conferencing option.
4. Information and final documents will be made available on the DMMPC/MPO website and will be available at the Plan Commission Office, especially for people who lack internet access.
5. GIS technology and other visualization techniques will be used during public meetings and events, and in Transportation Plan and TIP documents.
6. Information involving both major and minor amendments will be forwarded to the DMMPC/MPO air quality partners for consultation.

Section IV. Evaluation of Public Involvement Process

The Public Participation Plan will be evaluated at the end of each year to determine its effectiveness in

assuring that the process provides full and open access to all. The strategies to encourage participation from citizens from minority, low-income and traditionally under-served portions of the population will be adjusted as needed to best assure their access to the process. If a lack of input is deemed the result of flaws within the public participation process, an amendment will be prepared and processed to upgrade the Public Participation Plan so it will provide public comment and involvement.

Section V. Participation Plan Amendment Process

1. Notice: Notice of any proposed amendment to this Public Participation Plan shall be given by the methods set forth in Section 3 with the notice to include specific information that written comments on the amendment may be filed in the DMMPC/MPO Office for 45 days from the date of the notice.
2. Approval Process: Any proposed amendment to this Plan will go through the 3-step local approval process (TAC, ADMIN, and DMMPC).

Section VI. Definitions/Abbreviations

1. DMMPC: The Delaware-Muncie Metropolitan Plan Commission.
2. EPA: The Environmental Protection Agency.
3. Exempt Project: A project that does not add capacity to the surface transportation network.
4. FHWA: The Federal Highway Administration
5. FTA: The Federal Transit Administration
6. GIS: Geographic Information System
7. IDEM: The Indiana Department of Environmental Management.
8. INDOT: The Indiana Department of Transportation
9. MCOG: The Madison County Council of Governments, the Anderson Metropolitan Planning Organization.
10. MPO: Metropolitan Planning Organization, the agency charged with carrying out federal requirements for transportation planning.
11. Non-Exempt Project: An improvement project that adds capacity to the surface transportation network.
12. SAFETEA-LU: The federal authorization act known as the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users.
13. TAC: Technical Advisory Committee.
14. TPC: Technical Advisory Committee.
15. TIP: Transportation Improvement Program.
16. TP: Transportation Plan.

Section VII. Effective Date

The Public Participation Plan set forth herein will be in full force and effect from the day after the date of approval by the Delaware Muncie Metropolitan Plan Commission (DMMPC) onward until such time as the Plan is amended again by the DMMPC.

Approved September 20, 2023
Effective September 21, 2023