

TCRPC  
TRI-COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION



*Planning for People in the Greater Lansing Region Since 1956*

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

Tri-County Regional Planning  
Commission

Serving Clinton, Eaton and Ingham  
Counties, Michigan

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**Publicly Reviewed and Adopted by the Commission  
July 2015**

Tri-County Regional Planning Commission  
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[www.mitcrpc.org](http://www.mitcrpc.org)



## Executive Summary

This Public Participation Plan document provides an overview of the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission's public participation processes, with a specific focus on transportation that complies with federal and state of Michigan requirements and satisfies the Capital Area Transportation Authority's public participation requirements for the Program of Projects that recipients of Section 5307 funds must meet. The Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC), also referred to as the Commission, is a voluntary organization of local governments and agencies serving Michigan's Capital region, the Lansing three county area. TCRPC was organized to foster cooperative resolutions to problems and develop policies and plans that offer the greatest benefit to citizens of the tri-county area while maximizing the efficient use of its resources. The TCRPC brings together all of the region's governments to solve regional challenges, to prepare or coordinate development plans and to aid implementation of agreed upon plans and services using processes defined in this Public Participation Plan. The TCRPC is the designated Lansing Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) responsible for transportation planning in Clinton Eaton, and Ingham Counties.

The tri-county region includes all municipalities within Clinton, Eaton and Ingham Counties including the largest cities of Lansing and East Lansing in mid-Michigan. TCRPC works closely with its partners and clients, the local, state and federal agencies. TCRPC supports local planning using technical data and intergovernmental resources. In collaboration with local municipalities, TCRPC is responsible for developing and adopting region-wide plans and policies for community and economic development, water and air quality, land use, and transportation. The TCRPC secures the region eligibility for state and federally approved transportation projects. TCRPC funding comes from federal and state grants, contracts, and membership fees from its member municipalities.

It is important to TCRPC to ensure local governments and agencies, state and federal partners, and the public are aware of our planning activities. TCRPC is committed to engaging the public in the planning, development, and implementation of Metropolitan Planning. This Public Participation Plan provides an outline of those activities, including details specific to transportation planning. This Plan does not preclude additional public involvement or engagement efforts not explicitly described here. TCRPC's Public Participation Plan identifies very specific elements, which apply to each transportation plan and/or transportation improvement program. The Plan also applies to the involvement in planning in other TCRPC program areas.

TCRPC is committed to providing multiple opportunities and methods for participation and always provides a high level of outreach to target participation by different groups using different means and methods. TCRPC's nationally recognized best practices in public participation are broad, varied, ongoing, continuous, cumulative and flexible. We develop and adapt customized approaches to public outreach and participation. This Plan includes some examples. The commission reviews and updates this Plan regularly. TCRPC is proactive in public involvement. TCRPC supports early and continuing involvement in regional planning. TCRPC provides full notice, full public access, and encourages diverse and extensive public involvement in our planning efforts.

This Public Participation Plan is an expanded revision of the February 2007 and August 2014 document, *Tri-County Regional Planning Commission Metropolitan Transportation Public Participation Plan*.




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## Introduction

The Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) is committed to providing information to citizens regarding its plans and other issues that affect the tri-county mid-Michigan region. TCRPC follows a proactive public involvement process providing complete information, timely public notice and full public access to key decisions. TCRPC supports early and continuing involvement of the public in developing plans in accordance with federal regulations per 23CFR450.316 (a) (1). This document summarizes TCRPC's public participation activities for metropolitan planning. It is our Public Participation Plan as required by law. The public participation process outlined in this document also satisfies the Capital Area Transportation Authority's public participation requirements for the Program of Projects that recipients of Section 5307 funds must meet.



**Tri-County Regional Planning Commission serves Clinton, Eaton, Ingham Counties in Michigan**

TCRPC has public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times, and makes information publicly available in formats that are accessible on the agency website. TCRPC uses social media and email marketing to target larger audiences. Actions summarized in this section and throughout this Plan do not preclude additional public involvement or engagement efforts not explicitly listed in this document. The Commission may choose to supplement efforts outlined below with additional public participation activities. These supplemental activities may include newsletters, annual reports, surveys, public service announcements, focus groups or other techniques. TCRPC has used all of these techniques in our planning efforts.

This Public Participation Plan contains the guidelines and expectations for public participation during planning activities and processes conducted by the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission. In particular, this Plan outlines the procedures, tools, and expectations for outreach and education on transportation issues. It also includes the strategies and an array of techniques that we will consistently use to engage the public in the TCRPC's transportation, land use, environmental, and economic development planning processes. The intended outcome is to define a give-and-take process that is both engaging to the public and informed by public input, creating an environment that fosters a two-way exchange.

Each plan update cycle builds on earlier efforts and applies or adapts tested techniques in this document to the plan or program under consideration. However, it is always proactive, always provides full notice, always provides full public access, always supports early and continuing involvement, always provides multiple opportunities and methods for participation and always provides a high level of outreach to target participation by different groups in different ways and methods. The TCRPC reviews this Plan annually in February as it considers its Commission Policies and Procedures. The Commission makes updates and revisions to the Plan with full and public review.



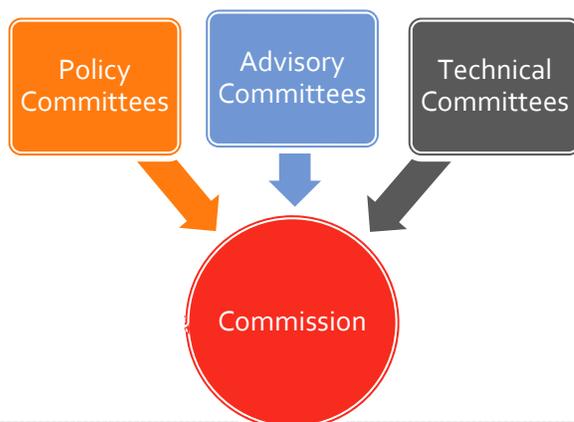
## Opportunities for Public Involvement

The Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) is committed to clear, easy and transparent public processes that invite, encourage, and accept public participation in planning anytime, anyway. TCRPC offers opportunity for public involvement that is meaningful and organized. We provide an environment that encourages convenient and comfortable participation. TCRPC considers the needs of accessibility, scheduling, location, format and language of informational materials. Opportunities are structured to allow informed, constructive exchanges with clear definition of the information being presented, to ensure that all are able, invited and encouraged to participate.

All meetings of the Commission and its various advisory committees or task forces are open to the public in accord with the "Open Meetings Act," Act 267 of 1976 as amended. TCRPC gives public notice of meetings and opportunities for public comment are available at any meeting of the Commission or its advisory committees in accord with provisions in the Commission's Operating Policies and Bylaws or of the advisory committees.

The Commission uses a variety of advisory committees in formulating consensus on plans and programs. Advisory committees do not make any final decisions, but rather only make advisory recommendations to the Commission. Regular advisory committee meetings provide additional opportunities for public participation in the planning process. The Commission has total responsibility to the community concerning regional planning matters it develops.

Persons wishing to address the Commission may do so under the "Public Comment" portion of the agenda. Interested parties are encouraged to contact the TCRPC office, check the website at [www.mitrpc.org](http://www.mitrpc.org), request the published meeting schedules, or ask to be placed on the advisory committee mailing lists in order to stay informed of any schedule variations or location changes.



## OUTLINE OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES

### ▲ ACTIVITIES

- Advisory committee structure
- Commission meetings
- Open meetings/opportunities for comment
- Other governmental meetings
- Public forums/workshops
- Public information meetings and leadership briefings
- Legal or other published notices
- Press releases/other media activities
- Newsletters
- Annual reports
- Surveys
- Mail list
- Public announcements
- News releases
- Website Maintenance
- Social media – Facebook, Twitter
- Online portal
- Email marketing
- Interactive electronic forms
- Distribution of meeting schedules, meeting notices and documents
- Electronically available public information
- Visualization
- Formal public comment periods/hearings
- Toll free hotline
- Outreach activities
- Response to comments
- Environmental Justice & Title VI
- Consultation
- Summary of minimum plan and TIP participation techniques
- Other items
- Plan and program amendments
- Periodic review
- Language assistance
- ADA Reasonable accommodation



## Outreach Techniques and Strategies

### CONTACTS

TCRPC has a very comprehensive strategy for public outreach and engagement. TCRPC maintains a database of over 7,000 contacts including community leaders, non-profit organizations, state, local and county governmental agents and officials, non-profit and community based organizations, and many more. The list is used to send meeting invitations, press releases, newsletters, surveys, requests-for-proposals, general announcements, and informative reports. It is used to convene workshops and business meetings, share community and partner events, encourage, and educate. This contact list helps TCRPC successfully reach out to public and private sector and non-profit stakeholders, and to municipal partners. TCRPC uses email, mass email blasts, U.S. post letters, postcards, personal phone calls, and posts flyers in public places and gives presentations to local municipal and community organization meetings.

TCRPC maintains an active process of seeking out organizations and individuals considered "traditionally underserved" by existing transportation systems, including but not limited to those with accessibility issues as well as minority, low income, elderly, youth communities and neighborhoods or groups. TCRPC activities include contact with advocacy organizations representing the interests of these groups, addition of these organizations to TCRPC's mail list, inviting participation, requesting endorsements, sharing opportunities, and other activities. Along with other actions contained in this Public Participation Plan, TCRPC assures consideration of the needs of these groups in the planning process.

The TCRPC assures the invitation and involvement of our community through the actions and procedures described throughout this Public Participation Plan and similar actions. We are committed to welcoming and facilitating involvement in our community's regional planning. We seek and encourage participation from local, state and federal environmental conservation or natural resource and permit agencies. We integrate transportation agency employees, private and public human services providers of transportation, historic preservation agencies, and other segments of the community affected by transportation into our planning. We seek people concerned with or involved in transportation plans, programs and projects, traffic, ridesharing, parking, transportation safety and enforcement agencies, airport and port or toll authorities, commuter rail operators, users of public transportation, freight interests, state and local economic development/land use agencies and appropriate city.

TCRPC also coordinates its public involvement activities with local and statewide public involvement processes whenever feasible. Sharing and coordinating enhances public consideration of issues, plans and programs and can reduce redundancies and costs.



neighborhood





## INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC

TCRPC uses various forms of print and electronic media to enhance early and often public participation opportunities, such as the world wide web or other electronic means. Published meeting schedules, minutes and agendas are posted on TCRPC's website for all Commission and advisory committee meetings, are mailed and are posted on a publically accessible bulletin board. We maintain a static map library and related images, graphics and other visualization examples on TCRPC's website to describe metropolitan transportation improvement programs and plans. They are available in print upon request by anyone and in languages other than English. Oral translation of information is also available with seven days advance notice.

Currently, the website [www.mitcrpc.org](http://www.mitcrpc.org) includes a variety of links to other sites for areas within our region. In addition to the current information posted and available on the website, TCRPC intends to implement and expand some more advanced web based systems. These will include interactive mapping, advanced visualization techniques, interactive review and hyper-markup/comments on public documents, an expanded mapping and image library, socioeconomic forecasts and other demographic data, performance measure monitoring data, on-line project applications and plan amendment requests, online environmental or natural resource assessment information, an advanced regional traffic data interface and other applications.

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

TCRPC staff is available and provides presentations to local community groups, local governmental bodies, or other organizations. Examples include civic groups, professional organizations, youth or student groups, and others. Organizations or other groups interested in obtaining presentations concerning various facets or products of the metropolitan planning process should contact TCRPC staff to arrange for an outreach activity.

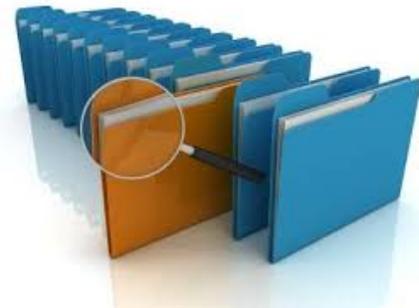


TCRPC staff also directly solicits individual or organizational input in formulating plans. In addition to sharing and facilitating discussions in the array of technical and advisory committees facilitated here, TCRPC staff frequently consults with or directly solicit input on numerous issues from a wide variety of

stakeholder organizations or other interested parties as appropriate. TCRPC will continue to use these and other types of outreach activities as appropriate throughout the metropolitan planning process.

TCRPC utilizes many types of public engagement strategies for its meetings, workshops and events. From a simple email invitation, to an engaging public voting poll activity, we lead the region in our outreach success stories. TCRPC

## PUBLIC INFORMATION



The TCRPC follows policies and procedures set forth in the Commission's Title VI Non-Discrimination Plan and the Limited English Proficiency Plan to assure that services, programs, and activities of TCRPC are offered, conducted, and administered fairly, without regard to any civil right status; and, that persons with limited English proficiency are recognized as part of the population served by TCRPC. TCRPC will provide reasonable language accommodations at public meetings that include oral translation or sign language interpreters upon request.



regularly uses “Turning Point” polling software with “clickers” to allow meeting attendees to vote on planning topics in real-time. TCRPC also provides paper response cards for non-electronic reporting and uses many other proven techniques to solicit and use input from our partners and the public.

## NEW OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

TCRPC embarked on a new project that is based on widespread and comprehensive public engagement with the support of a 2011 United States Department of Housing and Urban Development Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant. The Mid-Michigan Program for Greater Sustainability (MMPGS) strives to spread awareness and interest in the sustainable development of the Capital Region. MMPGS is a regional initiative with more than 40 municipalities and organizations working together to involve Ingham, Clinton, and Eaton counties in our effort to revitalize mid-Michigan and guide our region towards a more sustainable future.

TCRPC and its MMPGS are integrating planning efforts to use community members’ ideas to guide primary projects in housing energy efficiency environmental protection, green infrastructure and active transportation. From an online portal for community members to share ideas to promoting a green infrastructure system, our projects are laying the foundation for sustainable community plans.



MindMixer’s online engagement tools connect organizations with community members who might not otherwise get involved. Our site helps residents of Mid-Michigan’s Ingham, Eaton, and Clinton counties and other interested parties voice their opinions with a diverse community committed to planning a more sustainable future for our region. Anyone can access the MMPGS MindMixer online portal through the primary TCRPC website [www.mitcrpc.org](http://www.mitcrpc.org) or [www.midmichigansustainability.org](http://www.midmichigansustainability.org). The new online portal is a very important piece of our public engagement strategy. The portal is an idea-sharing page. It’s ‘MindMixer’ allows anyone to pose topics and questions related to sustainability for our region. People of all ages, incomes and abilities can answer it. The portal is even accessible through Google Translate for those persons who are limited in their ability to understand or speak English. Mapping, planning, housing, health effects, energy usage, quality of place and transportation options are just a few of the topics under discussion on the idea-sharing page. The portal includes current information about regional events and activities that support sustainability concepts. The remaining portions of the portal are for sharing local and county planning documents, regional planning project information, meeting notices and agendas and minutes, workshop notices, funding opportunities and much more. With HUD funding, TCRPC also holds a





Community Reinvestment Fund for mini-grants to non-profit and community based organizations. This Fund facilitates short-term projects that demonstrate approaches that result in increasing diverse participation in the planning processes by underserved populations in our region. The Fund is an unprecedented public engagement tool, and offers us tremendous opportunities to develop and implement new, innovative and effective involvement techniques.

TCRPC's public engagement strategies are both simple and complex. We strive to engage those people who are not often at planning meetings or workshops and we aim to keep them returning to participate in regional planning through our events and project activities and through our website. By embracing diversity and shaping our outreach efforts to the changing needs of our stakeholders, TCRPC provides a good sustainable engagement record of accomplishment.

### PRESS RELEASES MEDIA & DISTRIBUTION OF NOTICES

TCRPC also uses legal notices and other formal published notices to afford early notice of involvement opportunities. TCRPC also uses press releases to stimulate community interest and early involvement opportunities. Press releases are typically distributed to a media list containing local or statewide print, radio and TV broadcast organizations.

Use press briefings are also on occasion to provide journalists with background or other information concerning transportation planning activities. TCRPC staff and the Executive Director are also frequent "first points of contact" by local media representatives regarding transportation or other regional issues. These interviews, and our excellent working relationships with local journalists, frequently result in feature news articles, television or radio interviews or public information show appearances. TCRPC will continue to use these approaches throughout the metropolitan transportation planning process.

Social media, web-based tools, and other interactive technologies for engaging the public are the most common and most rapidly advancing innovations in transportation planning. TCRPC uses newsletters, web posts, social media, direct mail, email blasts and ads in newspapers at various points to notify the public of participation opportunities. Documents are available on the TCRPC website and in the TCRPC library for public review during regular business hours at least 28 days prior to TCRPC consideration. Documents are distributed to all local libraries for public access. They are provided to area transportation agency personnel for sharing. TCRPC places legal advertisements according to state laws. Also, notice of the public review period and adoption schedule are posted on the TCRPC website for a week to 28 days.





## SUBMITTING PUBLIC COMMENTS

Written comments are received during meetings or through social media. TCRPC staff will respond by email or mail. The TCRPC accepts in-person comments at all TCRPC Board meetings, at committee meetings, as well as by phone during the business day and/or at regional meetings and events. TCRPC records and documents comments related to draft documents for public review. We maintain those comments on file in the office and it is available for review by anyone interested. Comments may be summarized in Plan drafts and supporting documents.



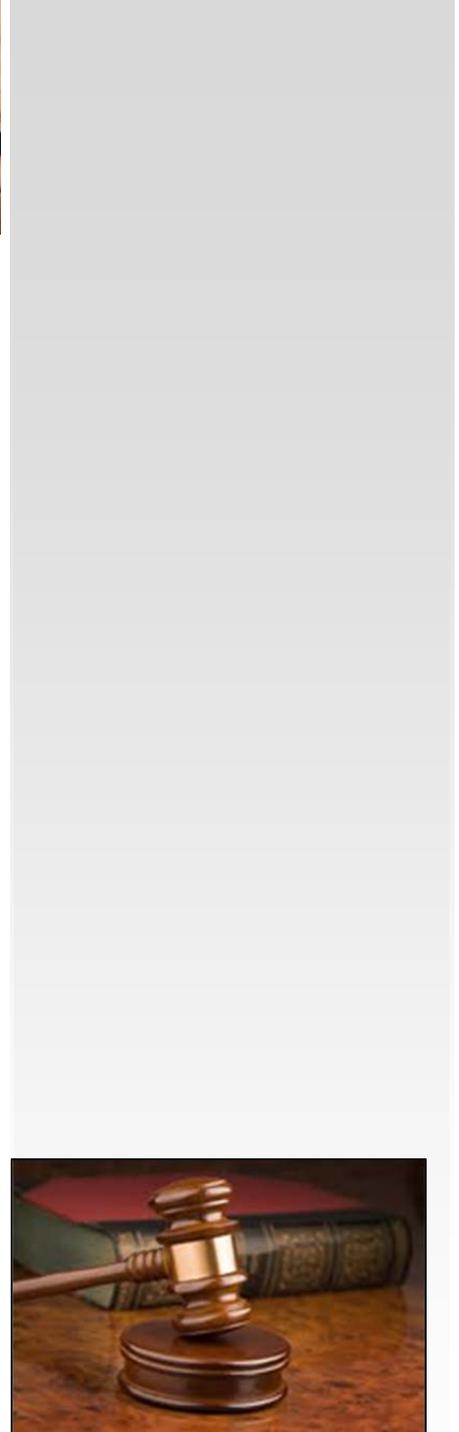
The Commission committees review documents, plans and amendments prior to Commission action. The public is welcome and may comment during those meetings. TCRPC's meeting schedule is set at the beginning of each calendar year. It is also posted and available from the office, on the website, or upon request in other formats. All public notices, draft documents, adopted documents and meeting schedules are posted on the website, mailed or emailed, and available at the TCRPC office.

The TCRPC regularly evaluates the effectiveness of public involvement opportunities by reviewing the number, type, and content of public comment responses to any plans or documents. With each public process, the TCRPC considers the number and source of comments as well as the type of responses/comments received. Through this review, we can address related issues. For example, repetitions of a similar question can indicate a need to address that topic in outreach materials. A lack of response from a particular audience will cause us to consider other techniques or tools to address them.

## COMMISSION MEETINGS/PUBLIC ACCESS

The Commission, which typically meets monthly, is composed of 19 Commissioners representing the members including representatives from the City of Lansing, Ingham County, Eaton County, Clinton County, transportation agencies and policy boards, the region's three transit agencies, and a representative of the Michigan Department of Transportation. The region's largest population municipalities, City of East Lansing, Delta Charter Township, and Meridian Charter Township, have representative seats on the Commission through their respective counties. The Commission is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Lansing Metropolitan Area, which encompasses all of Clinton, Eaton and Ingham Counties and the entire Lansing Urbanized Area.

All meetings of the Commission, its committees, advisory and work groups are open to the public and are held at convenient and accessible locations and times in the region. The TCRPC adopts a schedule of meetings annually





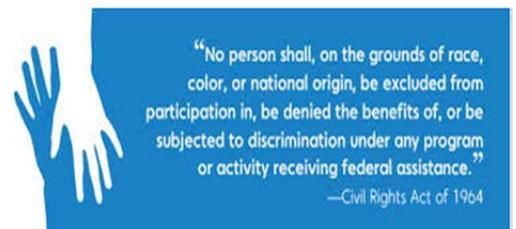
in public session and then posts and shares it throughout the region. The full Commission typically meets at 7:00 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of each month at the TCRPC offices at 3135 Pine Tree Road, Suite 2C in Lansing, MI. Meeting schedules and locations may vary due to holidays, meeting room conflicts or special circumstances. The Commission's Chairperson or committee and work group chairpersons may cancel meetings if there are no action items scheduled. Interested parties are encouraged to contact the TCRPC office, check the TCRPC website, request the published annual meeting schedule or ask to be placed on the Commission's mailing list in order to be kept informed of any schedule or location changes.

The TCRPC office is easy to find, centrally located in the region on the southeast edge of Lansing city, and accessible. It is served by the Capital Area Regional Transportation Authority's bus Route 7, which has a stop in front of the office entrance. In addition, bus routes 46, 48, and 20 offer connecting services with a stop at the intersection of Jolly and Pine Tree Roads, an easy .64 miles walk from the office. The office is on a single floor with ground level entrances accessible parking, curb cuts, sidewalks with ramps, and all appropriate access options. Bus routes, schedules, and on-demand or paratransit service are available at [www.cata.org](http://www.cata.org).

The TCRPC's primary transportation advisory committees meet at the TCRPC offices monthly and occasionally schedule their meetings to be held at other public buildings in the region- such as the Ingham County Human Services Building, 5303 S. Cedar Street in Lansing. The Capital Area Transportation Study (CARTS) is our Transportation Technical Advisory Committee. They currently hold their meetings at 9:30 a.m. on the first Tuesday of the month. The Transportation Review Committee is the Commission's Policy Advisory Committee. The TRC currently holds its monthly meetings at 4:00 p.m. on the second Wednesday of the month, also at the TCRPC offices.

While these committees make only advisory recommendations to the Commission, their regular committee meetings provide additional opportunities for public participation in the planning process. Because they meet at days and times other than the Commission, they extend opportunities for public participation that accommodate shift workers, young parents, the elderly, or other groups who may have conflicts with attending evening Commission meetings.

The TCRPC follows policies and procedures set forth in the Commission's Title VI Non-Discrimination Plan and the Limited English Proficiency Plan to assure that TCRPC's services, programs, and activities are offered, conducted, and administered fairly, without regard to any civil right status; and, that persons with limited English proficiency are recognized as part of the population served by TCRPC. TCRPC will provide reasonable language accommodations at public meetings that include oral translation or sign language interpreters upon request.





## OTHER GOVERNMENTAL MEETINGS

TCRPC maintains a close working relationship with all transportation agencies in the mid-Michigan region. Local governmental members and the tri-county region's transportation agencies also hold frequent public meetings related to their work. They provide opportunity for public comment at the local governmental or agency level within their respective charters. Local governmental plans and transportation improvement projects constitute the basis for the metropolitan transportation planning process. In addition, since these organizations are all represented on TCRPC's committees or the Commission, their meetings offer another option for community involvement. Public involvement opportunities available directly through other local governments and agencies offer additional points of contact for anyone interested in the metropolitan planning process.

## PUBLIC FORUMS INFORMATION MEETINGS AND LEADERSHIP BRIEFINGS

The Commission frequently offers open public forums and workshops that allow citizens, public interest groups, local governmental agencies and others to participate directly in developing transportation plans.

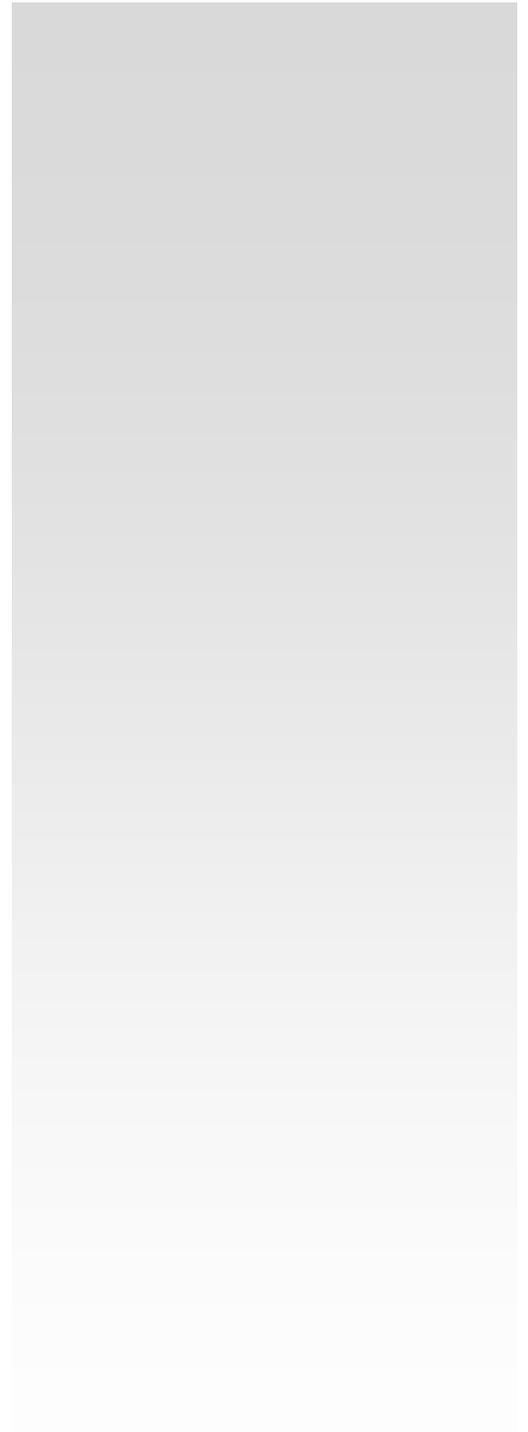
These public forums include a variety of strategies to encourage broad participation. TCRPC uses techniques to invite and encourage participation including direct mailing by U.S. Post and/or email. TCRPC sends out meeting announcements, press briefings, public postings, newsworthy stories and events coverage, announcements at other community meetings, targeted and personalized invitations to key stakeholders/groups, and other techniques that include broadcast emails, faxes of notices, posting materials on local list serves, blogs, and social media sites, websites and similar electronic means.

TCRPC uses a variety of formats in public forums. One typical format involves a modified nominal group process designed to facilitate dialogue and reach consensus using small group discussions. TCRPC often offers participants the opportunity to express their preferences by voting on issues and priorities with anonymous keypad polling. Participants may be invited to write comments, draw on maps and plans, or rewrite prioritized project lists. We have used posters of themes and principles, and indicated preferences with sticky dots or game pieces. The Commission and its staff adjust techniques and processes to meet the needs of hearing or vision impaired participants.





TCRPC has had broad success in using these public involvement and facilitation techniques to obtain input and consensus on a variety of transportation and other planning issues. TCRPC will continue to use these techniques and other types of public participation events to increase dialogue and input from the general public, targeted audiences, and elected and appointed officials, and will evaluate their success following use so that the techniques can be adjusted or changed as appropriate to continue meeting goals of getting public participation in decision making.





# Transportation Public Participation

Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process

## Transportation Public Participation

### WHAT IS A METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO)?

For the Lansing Michigan urbanized areas of Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham Counties, The TCRPC is the region's MPO. A Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is a transportation policy-making body made up of representatives from local government and transportation agencies with authority and responsibility in metropolitan planning areas with an urbanized area (UA) population greater than 50,000. MPOs were created in order to ensure that existing and future expenditures for transportation projects and programs were based on a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive (3-C) planning process. Federal funding for transportation projects and programs are channeled through the MPO.

### TYPICAL FUNCTIONS

TCRPC fulfills the five core functions of an MPO:

**Establish a setting:** Establish and manage a fair and impartial setting for effective regional decision making in the metropolitan area. This is the Commission meetings and office in your region.

**Identify and evaluate alternative transportation improvement options:** Use data and planning methods to generate and evaluate alternatives. Planning studies and evaluations are included in the Unified Planning Work Program or UPWP.

**Prepare and maintain a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP):** Develop and update a long-range transportation plan for the metropolitan area covering a planning horizon of at least twenty years that fosters (1) mobility and access for people and goods, (2) efficient system performance and preservation, and (3) good quality of life. TCRPC is updating the Regional Long Range Transportation Plan in 2014 in compliance with state and federal requirements. The updated Plan will have a 2040 horizon.

**Develop a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):** Develop a short-range (four-year) program of transportation improvements based on the long-range transportation plan; the TIP should be designed to achieve the area's goals, using spending, regulating, operating, management, and financial tools. TCRPC and its partners maintain and

### Important to Note:

Projects must be listed in the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in order to receive state and federal funding.





update the TIP monthly during committee meetings and the full commission adopts amendments regularly.

**Involve the public:** Involve the general public and other affected constituencies in the four essential functions listed above. The MPO is required by federal regulations to carry out metropolitan transportation planning in cooperation with the state and with operators of publicly owned transit services. The Tri-County Commission approves the metropolitan transportation plan. Both the Governor and the MPO-TCRPC, through the MDOT, approve the TIP.

Like most MPOs, TCRPC does not take the lead in implementing transportation projects, but provides an overall coordination role in planning and programming funds for projects and operations. TCRPC involves local transportation providers in the planning process by including transit agencies, state and local highway departments, airport authorities, maritime operators, rail-freight operators, Amtrak, port operators, private providers of public transportation, and others within the MPO region.

## TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PURPOSES

In metropolitan areas, the transportation plan is the statement of the ways the region plans to invest in the transportation system. Per federal regulations, the TCRPC plan “includes both long-range and short-range program strategies/actions that lead to the development of an integrated intermodal transportation system that facilitates the efficient movement of people and goods.”

In the TIP, The TCRPC identifies the transportation projects and strategies undertake over the next four years. The TIP is the region’s way of allocating its limited transportation resources among the various capital and operating needs of the area, based on a clear set of short-term transportation priorities. The Tri-County Regional TIP:

- Covers four-year period of investment and is updated every four years;
- Is realistic in terms of available funding or “fiscally constrained;”
- Conforms with air quality requirements;
- Is approved by the TCRPC Commission and the state of Michigan, and;
- Is incorporated directly, without change, into the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

The purpose of transportation planning is to identify broad goals to meet transportation needs. The multimodal strategies for achieving these goals can and should address current and future community land use, economic development, environment (natural, human, and



cultural), traffic demand, public safety, health, and social needs.

TCRPC has linked its LRTP to the region's land use plan, *Regional Growth: Choices for our Future*, and considers a full range of modal choices and investment options. Its goals are specific enough to guide the development of the plan but flexible enough to respond to changing conditions and implementation priorities.

Because transportation needs typically outweigh expected revenues, it is important to prioritize the needs identified during the transportation planning process. Given the often overwhelming number of potential improvements, it is important that the planning process has an agreed upon approach to project prioritization. To set priorities successfully, the TCRPC follows these guidelines:

- Establishing formal prioritization ranking criteria and applying it consistently.
- Applying the prioritization criteria to all transportation programs and projects.
- Making efforts to use the same prioritization criteria as those used to develop the State-wide plan.
- Prioritizing ranking criteria that consider as many factors as possible in determining program priorities (system, multimodal, environmental, social, and economic factors).

Our transportation plan must be realistic and fundable. Financial analyses of specific projects that implement the transportation plan help ensure that it is realistic. TCRPC maintains an "Illustrative list", of projects. The Illustrative list includes projects from across the region that are being considered or proposed for possible future implementation. They do not have funding committed and may be thin on engineering details, but including them in the regional long term vision puts them up for regional discussion and consideration. Including a project in the Illustrative List recognizes that the project is planned by its implementing agency (municipality) and that it may be eligible for federal or state funds. Federal transportation laws (MAP-21) require that the region (TCRPC) balance transportation projects with financial constraint. The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) document is that balanced project list. Maintaining an Illustrative List of projects can provide the region with a forward look at possible future additions to the TIP.

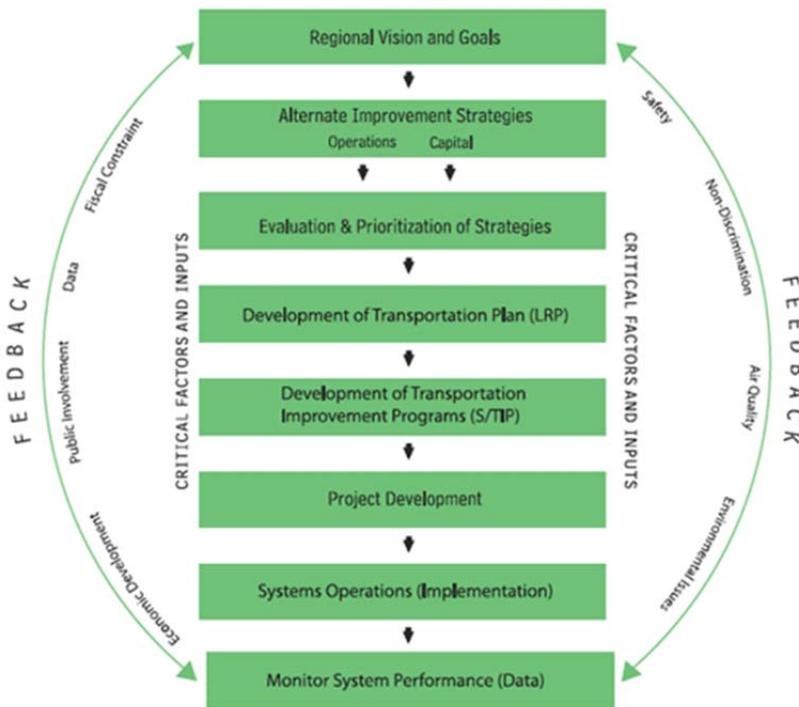


Image from FHWA shows the Metropolitan Area Transportation Planning Process, starting with regional visions and goals.

## Federal Requirements

Public participation is integral to good transportation policies, programs and projects. Without meaningful public involvement, there is a risk of making poor decisions or decisions that have unintended negative consequences. Meaningful public participation is central to good decision-making. As the MPO, TCRPC is responsible for actively involving all affected parties in an open, cooperative and collaborative process that provides meaningful opportunities to influence transportation decisions. This public participation process also satisfies the Capital Area Transportation Authority's public participation requirements for the Program of Projects that recipients of Section 5307 funds must meet.

Per state and federal requirements, TCRPC provides transportation projects and strategies that:

- Support economic vitality, especially enabling global competitiveness, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and anticipated growth and economic development patterns;
- Increase safety and security for motorized and non-motorized users;
- Increase accessibility and mobility options, and enhance integration and connectivity of the transportation system,



- across and between modes, for people and freight;
- Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, while minimizing transportation-related fuel consumption, air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions;
- Promote efficient transportation system management and operation; and
- Preserve the existing transportation system.

The TCRPC Public Participation Plan defines a process that provides reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process in accordance with federal regulations contained in 23CFR450.316(a)(1). Through its Regional Long Range Transportation Plan development, TCRPC has established performance standards that include:

- Adequate public notice of opportunities to get involved;
- Early and continuous opportunities to review and comment on key decisions;
- Reasonable public availability of technical and other information;
- Collaborative input on alternatives; evaluation criteria, and mitigation needs; and
- Open public meetings and access to the decision-making process prior to closure.
- Explicit consideration and response to public input.

As a recipient of federal funds, the TCRPC also conforms to Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations. The TCRPC assesses the potential effects of its plans on minority and low income populations and strives to avoid disproportionate impacts. Furthermore, the TCRPC proactively reaches out to disadvantaged and underserved populations and seeks to overcome barriers that may prevent them from participating in the transportation planning process.

In addition to the Public Participation Plan and a Limited English Proficiency Plan (available at [www.mitrpc.org](http://www.mitrpc.org)), TCRPC is required by federal law to develop and adopt a Regional Long Range Transportation Plan, a Transportation Improvement Program and a Unified Planning Work Program.

The current transportation law, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act (MAP-21), continues and builds upon provisions of previous transportation acts. It emphasizes public participation in the transportation planning and programming process. It calls for early and continuing opportunities for the public to be involved in the identification of social, economic and environmental impacts, and any impacts associated with the relocation of individuals, groups or

#### TCRPC MEETS THE SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS OF MAP-21

- TCRPC involves constituents
- Involves interested parties in the participation plan
- Employs visualization techniques to the extent practicable, utilizing electronic formats such as the web
- Provides opportunities for public involvement in developing and amending Regional Long Range Transportation Plans and (LRTP) Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs)



institutions.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) implemented the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 issued requirements for public input during the project development process.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) encourages involvement of people with disabilities in the development of transportation and para-transit plans and services. TCRPC complies with all ADA requirements in its employment practices and in maintaining access to public meetings.

The Presidential Executive Order on Environmental Justice for minority and low income populations calls for metropolitan planning organizations such as TCRPC, to address or avoid disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs. This applies to the planning of transportation improvements and priorities.

Executive order 13166 on Limited English Proficiency extends the provisions of environmental justice to non-English speaking populations. Based on Census data relative to our service area, TCRPC makes a reasonable effort to engage Spanish speaking and other LEP populations in our region who may need language translation, in the planning process. With seven-day advance notice, TCRPC will provide reasonable language accommodation at public meetings.

TCRPC responds to and implements the public involvement and program planning management activities to meet all federal, state, and local requirements with a true commitment to full and meaningful public involvement. TCRPC has a long history of far exceeding minimum federal requirements regarding the engagement and encouragement of public participation in all of its programs.

## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public Involvement is a fundamental component of effective transportation planning, project development, and implementation. TCRPC uses Public input to more fully understand and assess potential impacts from possible transportation projects. Early and continuing public involvement allows transportation organizations to be aware of potential issues, problems and impacts, to discuss them more comprehensively, and to determine how to address such concerns. Transportation planning provides a framework for the community to make decisions about its transportation system. The Regional Long

### SPECIFIC NEPA REQUIREMENTS

- Publishing notices and providing opportunity for public hearings to obtain input about transportation projects. Although TCRPC neither owns or maintains infrastructure and is thus not an "implementing agency," our process is fully supportive of and encourages early implementation of these techniques.

### SPECIFIC ADA REQUIREMENTS

- Ensures equal employment opportunities
- Equal access to the TCRPC office and other venues for its public meetings
- Provide accommodation for communications with people who have hearing, vision or speech disabilities

### SPECIFIC ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE REQUIREMENTS

- Procedures shall be established, or expanded as necessary, to provide meaningful opportunities for public involvement by members of minority and low-income populations during the planning, and development of programs, policies and activities."
- Identify and address potential social and community impacts of potential projects or activities.



Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is a tool for community members, and the plan identifies long and short-term needs that may be large or small investments.

The Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) is committed to providing information to citizens regarding its transportation plans and issues that affect the tri-county mid-Michigan region. TCRPC follows a proactive public involvement process providing complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and supports early and continuing involvement of the public in developing plans. TCRPC has public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times, makes information publicly available in formats that are accessible on the agency website and uses social media and email marketing to target larger audiences.

TCRPC has nationally recognized best practices in public participation are broad, varied, ongoing, continuous, cumulative and flexible. Each update to the Plan builds on earlier efforts and applies or adapts tested techniques in this document. TCRPC is committed to providing multiple opportunities and methods for participation and always provides a high level of outreach to target participation by different. TCRPC is proactive, provides full notice, full public access, supports early and continuing involvement, and all of these guidelines were followed by TCRPC staff throughout the development of the 2040 Regional Long Range Transportation Plan, the 2014-17 Transportation Improvement Program, the United Work Program, and the updated Public Participation Plan.

TCRPC maintains a regular meeting schedule that is widely distributed and published on agency's website. Meeting agendas and notices of public opportunities are distributed to member agencies, the public or targeted audiences, libraries, the media, interested parties, and posted in-house and on the TCRPC website.

## PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Public involvement is an opportunity to capture our community's values and perceived needs, establish consensus, and identify issues and concerns. Prior to adopting plans or programs, TCRPC provides citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, private providers of transportation, other affected employee representatives, and other interested parties with a

### Tri-County Regional Planning Commission Recognized for Best Practices

TCRPC's nationally recognized best practices in public participation are broad, varied, ongoing, continuous, cumulative and flexible. The MPO develops and adapts a customized approach from the menu of participation examples provided in this plan and tailors them to each plan or project development cycle. From the Regional Long Range Transportation Plan to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), the TCRPC is committed to applying a variety of effective techniques to encourage and facilitate public involvement in the planning processes of our regional community.



reasonable opportunity to comment on the plan. Our consultation with these planning partners is equally as important. Consultation between planning partners is an opportunity to confer on needs of the larger community, to compare and coordinate planning approaches, and to communicate about a regional vision for the transportation system that crosses over multiple jurisdictions.

### REQUIRED PUBLIC REVIEW

TCRPC is obligated and will ensure reasonable time for public review and comment at key decision points on major documents and plans. These include, but are not limited to, the Public Participation Plan (PPP), Regional Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Unified Planning Work Program (WP). The following table highlights the public review time requirements for the TCRPC. Our practice is to meet or exceed these minimum requirements. All plans are published and posted on TCRPC's website and distributed to the committees and Commission electronically and/or by U.S. Post as required.

Plan or Program	Min. Review Period
Public Participation Plan (PPP)	45 days
LRTP Adoption	28 days
LRTP Amendment	28 days
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)	28 days
TIP Priorities	28 days
TIP Amendments	7-21 days
Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)	28 days

### ADVISORY AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEES

All meetings of the Commission and its various advisory committees or task forces are open to the public. Opportunities for public comment are available at any meeting of the Commission or its advisory committees in accord with the Commission's operating policies and the bylaws and the Committee's bylaws.



The Capital Area Regional Transportation Study (CARTS) Technical Advisory Committee includes representatives of affected governmental agencies and local governments. The CARTS committee meets monthly, reviews all major products of the transportation planning process and makes recommendations to the Commission. The CARTS Committee convenes subcommittees and task forces to formulate recommendations on specific technical topics. Examples include the Public Transit Subcommittee, the Surface Transportation Program (STP) Subcommittee, the Long Range Plan Task Force, and the Non-Motorized Task Force.

The Public Transit Subcommittee membership includes major public transportation providers in the region, affected local governments, private transportation providers and others. This subcommittee meets on an as needed basis and reviews public mass transit related documents or issues.

The STP Subcommittee also meets on an as needed basis, typically during preparation of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), for reviewing and making project selection recommendations to CARTS on all projects to be funded with Surface Transportation Program funds region-wide. Membership includes representation of affected local governments, transportation agencies, and others. A separate Task Force of this subcommittee, the Rural Transportation Economic Development Fund (TEDF) Task Force, makes recommendations on certain rural STP and all TEDF "Category D" projects. Membership of this task force is specified in the CARTS bylaws and is consistent with state law requirements.

The Long Range Plan Task Force consists of representatives of transportation implementing agencies, affected governmental units, stakeholder groups and others. This Task Force meets on an as needed basis to guide development of the Regional Long Range Transportation Plan elements and products.

Other subcommittees and Task Forces, such as the Non-Motorized Task Force, are created by CARTS on an as needed basis to review work on special studies or specific activities.

The Transportation Review Committee, a subcommittee of the full Commission, is composed of Commission representatives from affected local governments and transportation implementing agencies. The Transportation Review Committee typically meets monthly to consider and make recommendations on transportation topics from a

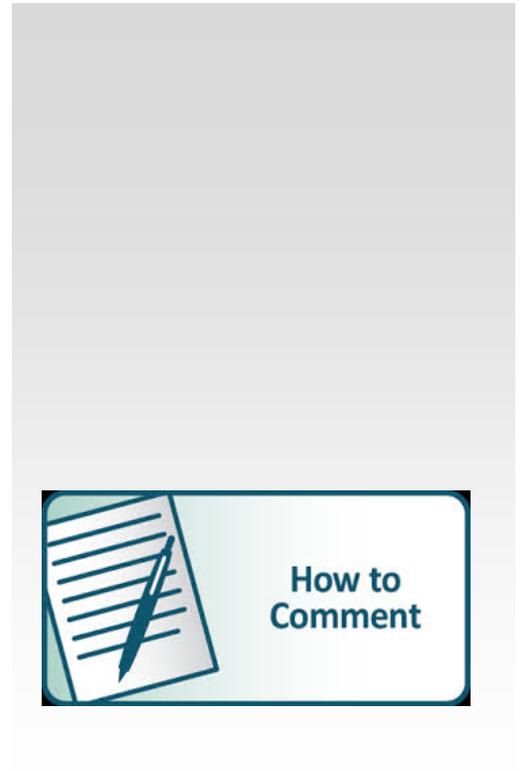


policy perspective. They often consider recommendations from CARTS but formulate their own recommendations for the full Commission.

It is important to note that advisory committees do not make any final decisions. They only make recommendations to the full commission. However, regular advisory committee meetings provide additional opportunities for public participation in the planning process.

All meetings of the Commission and its various advisory committees or task forces are open to the public. Opportunities for public comment are available at any meeting of the Commission or its advisory committees in accord with provisions in the Commission's operating policies and the bylaws for these respective advisory committees. The public may submit comments in writing at any point in this process.

Visit TCRPC's website [www.mitcrpc.org](http://www.mitcrpc.org) or send email to [reception@mitcrpc.org](mailto:reception@mitcrpc.org), call us at 1-517-393-0342 or toll free at 1-800-619-6675, or submit comments in person or in writing to 3135 Pine Tree Rd, Suite 2C, Lansing MI 48911. Business hours are weekdays 8:00 a.m. – 12 noon and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.



## TECHNIQUES APPLIED FOR PLANS AND PROGRAMS

Customized participation approach developed	Early published notice	Advisory committees
Open meetings/comment periods	Other government meetings	Press release/media advisory
Direct mailings – notice of availability (also electronically)	Distribution of meeting schedules, notices and documents	Formal comment periods
Visualization	Toll free hotline	Environmental Justice/Title VI
Location mapping	Targeted outreach	Distribution to libraries
Responses to comments	Consultation	Community partnerships and presentations



## Public Participation Checklist

√ **All meetings are open to the public and opportunities are provided for public comment following the Open Meetings and Freedom of Information Acts.**

√ **Interested individuals or organizations are offered meeting notices, agendas and materials in advance of the meeting.**

√ Mail lists are maintained to distribute meeting information accordingly and so interested groups may be identified and tracked.

√ Meeting notices and schedules are posted on the TCRPC website, mailed and distributed via email.

√ Meeting notices are posted provided to the media to encourage public participation.

√ Legal notices or other public notices are published and posted in advance to offer opportunities for public participation.

√ Public meetings are held at convenient times and locations and are accessible by multiple modes of transportation.

√ TCRPC maintains an online calendar of meeting schedules and key public involvement activities to notify and encourage public participation.

√ TCRPC maintains accuracy of the agency's database of contacts to permit notifying all stakeholders and interested parties of meeting opportunities.

√ Opportunities are available for the public to participate by email, written comments, votes, dialogue, survey or feedback forms, or other techniques.

√ Meeting minutes, summaries and reports are maintained and made available to the public.

√ Responses to public input or comments are prepared and documented in a timely manner.

√ TCRPC has a tracking system in place that adds interested citizens, stakeholders and others to mail and distribution lists as appropriate for future communications.

√ Public documents are distributed and made available for review 28 days in advance of action in accord with the Commission's policy, which includes posting documents/plans on the agency website.

√ Special effort is made to provide documents and other material in formats conducive to review by anyone with a disability as needed.

√ Visualization techniques are used to describe transportation plans and improvement programs.

√ Community outreach techniques are used to obtain input and encourage participation early and often in the planning process.

√ Community outreach activities and public participation techniques address public involvement by those traditionally underserved groups, stakeholders and citizens, including low income populations, minority populations, the elderly, and persons with disabilities as necessary to address requirements of Title VI.

√ TCRPC efforts are coordinated with MDOT's public involvement activities, plans, programs and projects.

**TRI-COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION  
TRANSPORTATION MEETING SCHEDULE JANUARY THRU DECEMBER 2016**

*All meetings are held at 3135 Pine Tree Rd, Suite 2C, Lansing MI 48911*

TCRPC adopts a schedule of meetings annually. It is posted at our office, on our website [www.mitrpc.org](http://www.mitrpc.org), inserted into this document each year, and available upon request.

***Capital Area Regional Transportation Study (CARTS)  
Technical Committee***

*\*This is an advisory committee of technical staff who report to the TRC\*  
They meet the first Tuesday of most months at 9:30 a.m.*

1/15/2016*	2/2/2016	3/1/2016	4/5/2016
TIP Project Selection			
5/3/2016	6/7/2016	7/5/2016	8/2/2016
9/6/2016	10/4/2016	11/1/2016	12/6/2016

***Transportation Review Committee (TRC)***

*\*This is a policy committee made up of Commissioners who report to the full Commission\*  
They meet the second Wednesday of most months at 4:00 p.m.*

1/13/2016	2/10/2016	3/9/2016	4/13/2016
5/11/2016	6/8/2016	7/13/2016	8/10/2016
9/14/2016	10/12/2016	11/9/2016	12/7/2016

***Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) Full Commission Meeting***

*\*This is the body that takes final action\*  
They meet the fourth Wednesday of most months at 7:00 p.m.*

	2/24/2016	3/23/2016	4/27/2016
5/25/2016	6/22/2016	7/27/2016	8/24/2016
9/28/2016	10/26/2016	11/17/2016*	12/15/2016*

***Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA) Board Meetings***

*Meetings are held the third Wednesday of each month at 4:00 p.m.  
at the CATA Administrative Office located at 4615 Tranter Street Lansing Michigan.*

1/20/16	2/17/2016	3/23/2016*	4/20/2016
5/18/2016	6/15/2016	7/20/2016	8/17/2016
9/21/2016	TBD	TBD	TBD

*\*Change from regular schedule or the regular starting time.*