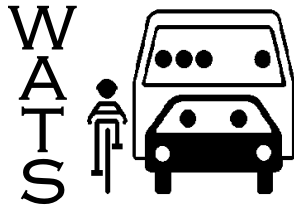


Public Participation Plan for Washtenaw County



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Introduction

The Public Participation Plan (PPP) for Washtenaw County is designed to establish methods of involving the County's citizens in the development of various transportation projects and plans. The PPP will provide citizens of Washtenaw County with reasonable access to public participation information. The goal of the plan is to provide residents of Washtenaw County with a variety of ways to offer significant discussion of ideas between the public and transportation decision-makers.

ISTEA 1991 Requirements

The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) recognizes that transportation investment decisions have far reaching effects and thus it requires that metropolitan and statewide transportation decisions consider a wide array of factors including land use impacts and "the overall social, economic, energy, and environmental effects of transportation decisions" (23U.S.C. 134(f) and 135 (c)). Public input is essential in considering transportation projects due to the far reaching effects of many transportation projects.

ISTEA states that prior to adopting transportation plans and/or programs, the agency "shall provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, private providers of transportation, other affected employee representatives , and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment" (23U.S.C. 134 and 135).

Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users

Since ISTEA 1991, it was required that Metropolitan Planning Organizations develop and utilize a public involvement process that supports early and continued public involvement in developing Long Range Plans and Transportation Improvement Programs. The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for User (SAFETEA-LU) expanded the ISTEA 1991 provisions to include a public participation plan for all Metropolitan Planning Organizations.

The Transportation and Public Involvement Process

The Washtenaw Area Transportation Study (WATS) is an inter-governmental agency responsible for transportation planning in Washtenaw County. The agency is mandated by Federal law to provide a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning process, which guides the expenditure of state and federal transportation funds in Washtenaw County. The WATS process includes a comprehensive public involvement process. WATS annually establishes project priorities for consideration by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) when programming transportation funds. In addition, WATS continually monitors the current condition of the county's

transportation system, including roads, bicycle and pedestrian paths, bridges, and public transit.

Long Range Plan

The Washtenaw Area Transportation Study is responsible for developing the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRP) for Washtenaw County. The LRP identifies transportation projects that will be needed to support projected growth through a minimum of 25 years, currently 2030. The LRP is not a funding plan, but is financially constrained. In addition to funded projects there is a list of projects where more than \$1 billion dollars have been identified that could not be funded within the estimates of available funding.

Developing the LRP is a cooperative process that involves local communities and transportation agencies of Washtenaw County. When developing the LRP for Washtenaw County, WATS provides the public with numerous opportunities to comment on the plan. Public Meetings are held throughout the County at various locations including those served by public transit and those that are wheelchair accessible. LRP public meeting are held at various times of the day, providing the public ample opportunities to comment on the LRP. Prior to the public meetings, notebooks containing deficiency maps, maps of proposed improvements, lists of proposed improvements, charts of funded and unfunded improvements and comment forms are provided to every community, public library and transportation agency in the County.

The entire 2030 LRP for Washtenaw County can be found on the WATS website, www.miwats.org. The 2030 LRP includes a detailed analysis of the transportation planning projects for Washtenaw County.

Long Range Plan Public Participation

The Washtenaw County LRP can be amended once a year. WATS posts all LRP amendments on the WATS website, www.miwats.org, for a 45-day public review period. WATS also posts a public notice for public comment on amendments at the Washtenaw County Services Building. The public is welcomed to come to the WATS office, during regular office hours, to review and comment on LRP amendments, within the 45-days public review period.

Notice of LRP meetings will be posted on the WATS website, in the WATS newsletter and in local newspaper. LRP meeting notices will be posted at least 2 weeks in advance.

Transportation Improvement Program

The Washtenaw Area Transportation Study is also responsible for developing a fiscally constrained Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for Washtenaw County. The TIP lists all capital improvement projects programmed for a four year period. All transportation projects using federal or state funding must be listed in TIP. Projects that

are listed in the Washtenaw County TIP must also be listed in the Washtenaw County LRP.

TIP Public Participation

The Washtenaw County TIP can be amended three times a year. All amendments to the TIP are posted for a 30-day public review period on the WATS website. WATS also posts a public notice for public comment on amendments at the Washtenaw County Services Building. The public is welcomed to review and comment on the Washtenaw County TIP amendments at the WATS office during regular office hours, within the 30-day review period.

The WATS website is continually updated to reflect amendments to the TIP. WATS posts a map that displays the location of TIP projects and environmental justice areas. The environmental justice analysis for the current TIP can be found on the WATS website.

Committee Meetings

WATS holds monthly Technical and Policy Committee meetings, every 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month, at the WATS office. Technical and Policy Committee meetings are open to the public and time is allowed for public comment. Agendas for the Technical and Policy Committee meetings can be found on the WATS website a week prior to the meeting date.

Environmental Justice

In 1994 a Presidential Executive Order directed every Federal agency to identify and address the effects of all programs, policies, and activities on "minority populations and low-income populations." The U. S. Department of Transportation's environmental justice initiatives accomplish this goal by involving the potentially affected public in developing transportation projects that fit within environmental justice populations without sacrificing safety or mobility of the community.

WATS is responsible for completing an environmental justice analysis on all transportation plans and programs for the county. Environmental justice (EJ) identifies five protected populations and requires that the impacts of transportation improvements be documented and evaluated to ensure that all populations are impacted fairly. These protected populations include people from low income, racial, and ethnic minority populations.

Using the U.S. Census Bureau's 2000 data, WATS worked to evaluate compliance with environmental justice (Title VI) by locating significant concentrations of environmental

justice populations. Significant concentrations of EJ populations are defined as those areas that exceed the county average percentile.

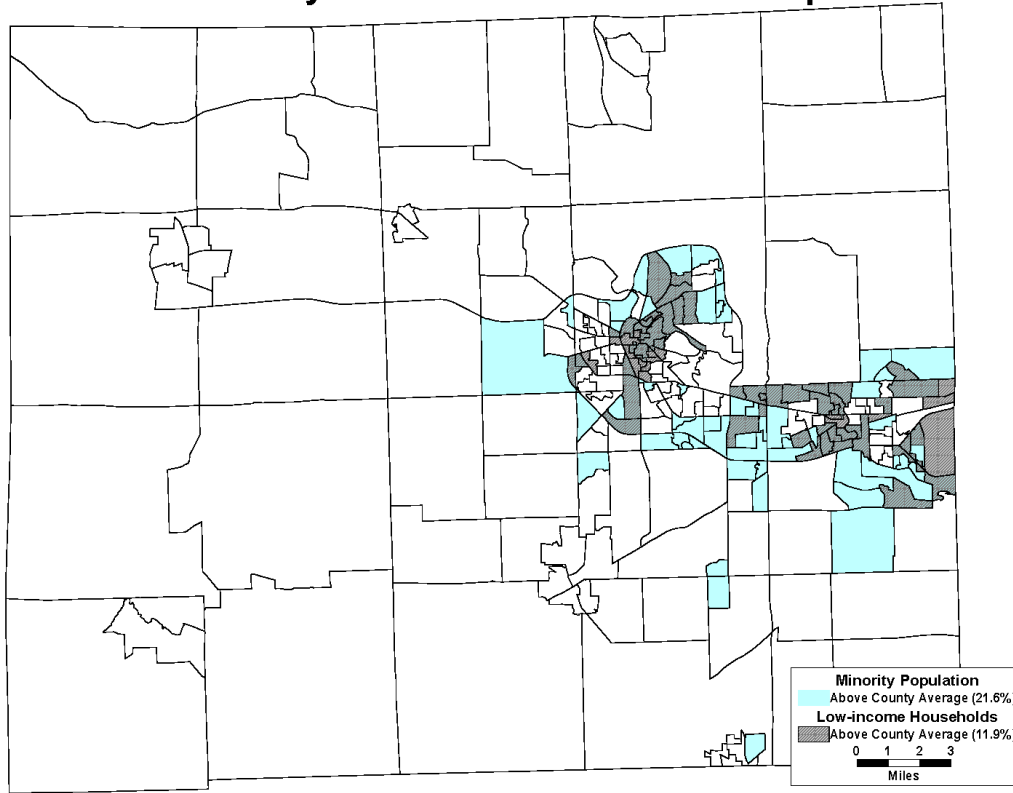
Table 1 provides a list of percentages that have been applied in Washtenaw County. The Southeast Michigan Region percentages have been provided for reference. Map 1 shows the location of EJ protected populations within Washtenaw County.

Table 1
Environmental Justice Average Percent of Protected Populations

Category	2000 County Percent for Washtenaw County	2000 Percent Southeast Michigan Regional for
Low-income Households	11.9%	12.6%
African American Persons	12.5%	21.8%
Hispanic Persons (or any race)	2.7%	2.8%
Asian American Persons	5.9%	2.6%
Native American Persons	0.3%	0.3%
Other Protected Populations	0.2%	1.1%
All Protected Persons	21.6%	29.4%

Map 1

Washtenaw County Environmental Justice Populations



Public Involvement Techniques

WATS constantly seeks public participation on many of the services that the agency conducts. There are many different techniques that WATS uses in order to reach the vast range of citizens within Washtenaw County. Citizen involvement in the transportation planning process allows local agencies to make informed decisions on transportation projects within Washtenaw County.

Website

The WATS website (www.miwats.org) is continually updated to keep the public informed of WATS activities. All projects that WATS conducts, which seek public participation, can be found on the website. Surveys and comment forms regarding particular activities may be submitted online. The WATS website lists all public participation meeting locations that are conducted within Washtenaw County. The website also lists major public participation meetings that are located outside of Washtenaw County.

Visitors to the WATS website may request more information on an activity or project via email. WATS staff responds to all requests and public comments in a timely manner.

Newsletter

WATS produces a free quarterly newsletter, *The Vehicle*, which updates the public on WATS activities and on upcoming public participation meetings. *The Vehicle* is received by over 300 residents of Washtenaw County. Any person that would like to be added to the WATS mailing list may do so by contacting the WATS office.

Meetings

All meetings that WATS conducts, that are open to the public, are listed on the WATS website. WATS allows adequate time for public participation at the WATS monthly meetings.

Participation Opportunities

WATS conducts many transportation planning services for Washtenaw County, such as studies, reports, and plans. For each transportation planning service that WATS conducts for the county, WATS holds public participation meetings in order to keep the public informed on the developing transportation network of Washtenaw County.

Public Participation Outreach

The Washtenaw Transportation Study continually takes projects, studies, reports, and plans to the public for review and comment. Public participation locations include libraries, Village and City Halls, and hospitals. WATS makes every effort to accommodate all stakeholders when seeking public participation. WATS will meet civic groups, municipal representatives, minority groups, and other interest group at a location and time that of the groups choosing.

Surveys and Public Comment

WATS designs, distributes, and analyzes data from surveys on projects that are significant in Washtenaw County. Surveys have been administered for the Western Washtenaw Regional Coordination Transit Study, Non-motorized Plan for Washtenaw County, and the Youth Mobility project. At many of the public participation meetings, WATS offers residents of Washtenaw County the opportunity to fill out a survey on a particular project. Current surveys are available on the WATS website and can be submitted via email or in person at the WATS office.

WATS distributes public comment forms in order to obtain comments and to understand a particular area of concern about a project. WATS used public comment forms on the Western Washtenaw Regional Coordination Transit Study, Non-motorized Plan for Washtenaw County and the 2030 Long Range Plan. Public comment forms are available at public meets and on the WATS website. Comments may be submitted online or in person at the WATS office.

Brochures

WATS has produced eight brochures that cover many aspects of the transportation planning process. The brochures included, Planning of a Federally Funded Transportation Project, Transportation Funding Opportunities, Transit Funding Opportunities, Alternative Transportation Funding Opportunities, A Bicyclist Guide for Rights, Rules and Safety, A Motorist Guide for Rights, Rules and Safety, A Pedestrian Guide for Rights, Rules and Safety and a brochure that explains the Washtenaw Area Transportation Study. WATS provides the brochures at all public meeting and are posted on the website.