



# Public Participation Plan

For Transportation Decision Making

**Plan approved - August 2018**

Public comment period July 9, 2018 - August 27, 2018



Macatawa Area Coordinating Council  
[www.the-macc.org](http://www.the-macc.org)

# CONTACT

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# The Public Participation Plan For Transportation Decision Making at the Macatawa Area Coordinating Council

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Holland/Zeeland urbanized area was established in 1991 by the U.S. Census Bureau with the completion of the 1990 census. Census estimates illustrate that the urbanized area population grew from 62,418 in 1990, to 91,795 in 2000, and to 99,941 by the year 2010. Under the guidance of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1990 (ISTEA), the Michigan Department of Transportation began working with local elected officials to establish a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the urbanized area.

In 1992, the Macatawa Area Coordinating Council (MACC) was designated as the MPO for the Holland/Zeeland Area. A Metropolitan Area Boundary (MAB) was established which included the Cities of Holland and Zeeland and the Townships of Zeeland, Holland, Park, Laketown and Fillmore. The MAB was expanded to include Port Sheldon and Olive Townships as a result of the 2000 census. The MACC addresses a number of area-wide issues related to transportation and other considerations that affect development within the region. This document outlines the procedures the MACC will use when undertaking transportation planning initiatives.

Since the enactment of the ISTEA, MPOs have been required to develop and utilize a proactive public involvement process that provides complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and supports early and continuing involvement of the public in developing metropolitan transportation plans and transportation improvement programs (TIPs). The *Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU)* expanded the public involvement provisions by requiring MPOs to develop and adopt participation plans. Current legislation, *Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (MAP-21)* and *The Fast Act*, have maintained these provisions.

SAFETEA-LU, while retaining the previous public involvement characteristics noted above, has placed additional emphasis on extensive stakeholder participation, specific requirements to:

- Hold public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times
- Employ visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs
- Make public information available in electronically accessible formats and means (such as online) as appropriate to afford reasonable opportunity for consideration of the information

## II. MEETINGS

All regularly scheduled meetings of the MACC Policy and Technical Committees (TECH) are open to the public and are held at sites that comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations. Meeting notifications are sent to local newspaper reporters and several members of the public also receive notification of Policy Committee meetings. A list of regularly scheduled Policy and Technical Committee meeting dates, times, and locations will be posted in the MACC office and distributed to each member unit of government for posting. This listing will also be posted on the MACC's website. Time is allotted at Technical

and Policy Committee meetings for any person wishing to address committee members. Online viewing of the Policy Committee meetings is available on the internet, through Vimeo ([vimeo.com/themacc](http://vimeo.com/themacc)). Meeting minutes for both Policy and TECH will be posted to the MACC's website ([www.the-macc.org](http://www.the-macc.org)) once they are approved by the committee.

- MACC Technical Committee meetings typically occur the second Monday of the month from 10:00 a.m.—11:30 a.m. Meetings take place at the MACC office at 301 Douglas Avenue, Holland, MI 49424.

- MACC Policy meetings typically occur on the fourth Monday of the month from 12:00 p.m.—1:30 p.m. Meeting locations change monthly.

Special meetings, such as Public Information Meetings, are held at locations that comply with ADA regulations and during times that allow multiple stakeholders to attend. Efforts will be made to reach out to low-income, minority populations, those with disabilities, and others that have traditionally been underserved in the transportation planning process.

Individuals needing special accommodations to participate in meetings or individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) should contact the MACC at least four working days prior to the scheduled meeting. Please let us know if any documents are needed in an alternate format.

Check the MACC's calendar to get the most up-to-date meeting information at [www.the-macc.org](http://www.the-macc.org). Interested citizens may have their name added to meeting mailing lists. Contact Carolyn Ulstad at [culstad@the-macc.org](mailto:culstad@the-macc.org) or 616-395-2688 to be added to a list or for further meeting information.

### III. OUTREACH

The MACC strives to implement the emphasis in SAFETEA-LU related to stakeholder participation. It will work to encourage the involvement of persons who have been traditionally underserved, as well as to meet the requirements of Executive Order 12898 related to Environmental Justice. The December 2011 document, *Environmental Justice Emerging Trends and Best Practices Guidebook*, and *Going the Distance Together – Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) for Better Transportation* (April 2012), are also used as guides to improve public participation.

The MACC, through written communication or phone, endeavors to notify the groups listed below when a particular agenda item directly impacts an organization or the clientele they represent, a major planning project is initiated, such as the update of the Long Range Transportation Plan, or at the request of any MACC Policy Committee member.

#### Stakeholder organizations that represent the interests of:

The elderly

The disabled

Nonmotorized transportation users

Minority populations

Low-income populations

Affected Tribal governments in Ottawa and Allegan Counties

MACC will notify the following types of organizations located in the MACC area:

Conventional and unconventional transit providers  
Representatives of public transportation employees  
Affected public agencies  
Private providers of transportation  
Law enforcement agencies and fire departments  
Freight shippers and providers of freight transportation services  
Railroad companies  
Environmental organizations  
Major employers  
Local Chamber of Commerce  
Tourism offices  
Interested citizens  
Human service agencies  
Schools

#### IV. INFORMATION DISTRIBUTION AND REVIEW

The MACC recognizes that for the public to participate in transportation decision making, they must understand the transportation system's problems, processes, and potential solutions. Information must be provided in a timely manner, be easily understandable, and be reasonably accessible.

The MACC has planning resources that citizens can access and review. MACC's most up-to-date planning documents, meeting minutes, and maps can be found online at [www.the-macc.org](http://www.the-macc.org). Previous plans and other resources can be made available upon request. The MACC receives extensive news coverage and MACC Staff meets with local media representatives from the Holland Sentinel and Grand Rapids Press to inform them of major planning initiatives and elicit their support in publicizing them.

The MACC has an online presence which includes social media. Local public libraries have computers available for public use so access to the internet will not necessitate personal ownership of a computer. Meeting schedules and minutes, planning studies, the MACC's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), annual reports, newsletters, and other applicable documents are posted to the MACC's website ([www.the-macc.org](http://www.the-macc.org)).

Social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, are used to inform the community of regional transportation planning issues and to solicit input. MACC Staff seek opportunities to work with local radio stations, WHTC and 1290 The Pledge, to reach the greater listening audience and inform the public of opportunities to get involved and make comments during the planning process.

As noted earlier, the Policy Committee meetings are recorded and viewable online. The Herrick District Library and the Howard Miller Public Library also receive copies of many documents published by the MACC. In addition, MACC Staff participate in public forums and conduct presentations at events hosted by numerous civic, religious, and public organizations.

## V. SIGNIFICANT PLANNING INITIATIVES

Significant planning initiatives include, but are not limited to, updating the Long Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program, corridor studies, subarea plans, transportation demand management studies and transit plan implementation activities. When describing a significant planning initiative to the public the MACC employs one or more of the following visualization aids: interactive computer applications, GIS-produced maps, aerial photos and/or computer simulation.

In an effort to demonstrate that community concerns are valued, MACC Staff identifies barriers to participation and devises outreach strategies to address these barriers. Various avenues are considered when seeking public involvement in these initiatives including, but not limited to, public informational meetings, surveys, mailings, and notices. In an effort to reach populations traditionally underserved, special emphasis is made to inform such populations through non-English language notices and public service announcements as well as placement of notices in senior citizens' centers and other agencies which provide services to populations that have been traditionally underserved by the existing transportation system.

## VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

While some plans, studies, or other activities have specified public comment periods, the MACC welcomes the public to comment at any time with issues or concerns regarding the transportation system within the MACC planning area (see Appendix A for planning area map).

Comments can be submitted to the MACC by:

Mail: 301 Douglas Ave, Holland, MI 49424

Email: [info@the-macc.org](mailto:info@the-macc.org)

Phone: (616)-395-2688

Fax: (616) 395-9411

Facebook: Send Message, [www.facebook.com/MIGreenCommute/](http://www.facebook.com/MIGreenCommute/)

If contact information is provided, MACC staff confirms with the sender that their comment has been received within one week. If a comment is made regarding a specific project or location, staff forwards the comment on to the appropriate responsible entity. Staff then documents public comments received on plans, studies, or other activities and summarizes and forwards comments to the Policy Committee prior to any formal action to adopt or approve a plan or study.

The MACC website includes planning updates and explains how public comments will be addressed in the planning process. A copy of all comments is filed and available for public review. Comments that request a formal response are answered

The public is invited to officially comment on this plan prior to final adoption by the Policy Committee on August 27, 2018. At a minimum, a 45 day public review phase is required, beginning on July 9, 2018 at the MACC's Technical meeting and concluding on August 27, 2018, at the Policy meeting. A review of this public participation plan is periodically undertaken by the Technical and Policy Committees. Major revisions necessitate undertaking various measures as described in section V.

## VII. EVALUATING EFFECTIVENESS

The Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, and the Michigan Department of Transportation require the MACC to evaluate the effectiveness of public involvement activities. The MACC continually works toward improving the public involvement process and uses various methods to evaluate the effectiveness of its outreach strategies.

The below table shows metrics that can include, but are not limited to; tracking website hits, social media interest, and comments received.

Public Participation Tools	Evaluation Criteria	Suggested Performance Goal(s)	Method to Meet Goals
MACC Website	Number of hits	Minimum (20) hits/month , 5% increase in total hits per year	Provide all plans and documents on the website. Publish website URL on all agency documents
Press Releases	Calls, emails, etc.	Submit press releases at major plan development stages to media outlets in the Holland/ Zeeland area	Keep media outlets engaged and updated. Encourage them to attend public meetings
Social Media	Number of “friends”, “followers”, views, comments, etc.	Annual increase of (15) “friends” or “Followers”	Provide information, access to surveys, announcements on social media platforms
Public Meetings	Calls, emails, meeting attendance, etc.	Overall yearly increase in attendance	Schedule meeting times that will be convenient for various stakeholders; greater outreach to affected populations
MACC Electronic Newsletter	Number of subscribes and unsubscribes	Annual increase of (20) subscribers	Post about a variety of engaging & relevant topics
Email Announcements	Emails, number of persons reached	Minimum of 10% of meeting attendees/ survey respondents indicated that they received email	Advertise the availability of email list and encourage the public to sign up for notifications.
Direct Mailings (Environmental Justice)	Calls, emails, etc. Number of persons reached	Minimum of 5% of meeting attendees/survey respondents indicated that they received mailing	Use the most recent parcel layer information available for mailings

# Exhibits & Appendix



## Exhibit A: Public Participation Plan (PPP) Procedures

Milestone	Procedure	Public Notification Date	Length of Public Comment (Minimum)
Draft Public Participation Plan (PPP) developed and presented to both the Technical and Policy Committees	<p>Once the draft Public Participation Plan has been developed, it is presented at a Technical Committee meeting and the following Policy Committee meeting. The minimum 45 day comment period starts the same day as the scheduled Technical meeting. The public will be notified of this in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Meeting notice on MACC website</li> <li>▪ Via email or direct mailing to those on the Technical Committee mailing list</li> </ul>	Six (6) days prior to Technical Committee meeting.	Minimum of forty-five (45) days. The comment period ends if the plan is approved by the Policy Committee (approximately 1.5 months after the comment period begins)
Public Participation Plan approval	<p>After all comments have been considered and the 45 days public comment period has concluded, the document is brought to the Policy Committee for approval. The public will have an additional opportunity to comment on the document at the Policy meeting, and is notified of this meeting in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Meeting notice on MACC website</li> <li>▪ Via email or direct mailing to those on the Policy Committee mailing list</li> </ul>	Six (6) days prior to the scheduled Policy Committee meeting.	N/A
Public comments or concerns	The public is always welcome to make comments to staff regarding any of the MACC's plans or any transportation related issue.	N/A	N/A; Any time

## Exhibit B: Participation Process- 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

Milestone	Procedure	LRTP Month	Public Notification Date	Length of Public Comment (Minimum)
MACC stakeholder list review and update	Review and update stakeholder mailing list as necessary. Use list to contact stakeholders informing them of the initiative and how they can participate.	Month 1	N/A	N/A; Public involvement is continuous throughout development process.
Public Survey	When a new LRTP cycle starts, a survey that asks broad questions concerning the transportation system is published in local newspapers and posted to the MACC's Web site and social media. It is intended that comments from this survey serve as input into the development of network solutions. The survey is also directly mailed to stakeholders.	Month 2-3	Notification of the survey goes out Six (6) days prior to Technical Committee meeting.	Once the survey is "live" the public has a minimum of forty-five (45) days to participate in the survey.
Review environmental justice analysis area	Meet with staff from appropriate agencies to confirm accuracy of environmental justice area. Update as necessary. Discuss strategies for gaining input from their constituencies.	Month 3-4	Six (6) days prior to Technical Committee meeting.	Minimum fourteen (14) days.
Public open house	A select package of network solutions will be developed once transportation system deficiencies and potential solutions to those deficiencies have been selected and tested. A public open house describing the deficiencies and potential solutions is held and the public invited to comment on network solutions.	Month 5-7	Six (6) days prior to Technical Committee meeting.	N/A; Public involvement is continuous throughout development process.

## Exhibit B: Participation Process- 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

Milestone	Procedure	LRTP Month	Public Notification Date	Length of Public Comment (Minimum)
Consultation with other agencies/organizations impacted by transportation plan	Consult with federal, state and local agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities affected by transportation. This may include, but is not limited to, agencies responsible for economic growth, environmental protection, airport operations, freight movement, natural resources and historic preservation.	Month 5-7	N/A	N/A; Public involvement is continuous throughout development process. Updates are given at committee meetings.
Air quality conformity/ environmental justice public comment period	Public comment on air quality and environmental justice analysis.	Month 17-22	Six (6) days prior to Technical Committee meeting.	Minimum fourteen (14) days.
LRTP public hearing	This is the formal public hearing on the draft LRP. Newspaper notices will be placed announcing this meeting.	Month 18	Minimum seven (7) days prior to the public hearing	Minimum fourteen (14) days.
Postings on MACC's website	As the plan is being developed, various documents are posted on the MACC's Web page. These postings will also invite the public to comment on what they see.	Throughout entire process	N/A	N/A; Public involvement is continuous throughout development process. Updates will be given at committee meetings.
Input at MACC Policy & Technical Committee meetings	All MACC regularly scheduled Technical and Policy Committee meetings have time reserved for public comments.	Throughout entire process	Six (6) days prior to Technical or Policy Committee meetings.	During Public Comment agenda item.

## Exhibit C: Participation Process- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Milestone	Procedure	TIP Month	Public Notification Date	Length of Public Comment (Minimum)
MACC stakeholder list review and update	Review and update stakeholder mailing list as necessary. Use list to contact stakeholders informing them of the initiative and how they can participate.	Month 1	N/A	N/A; Public involvement is continuous throughout development process.
Review environmental justice analysis area	Meet with staff from appropriate agencies to confirm accuracy of environmental justice area. Update as necessary. Discuss strategies for gaining input from their constituencies.	Month 3-4	Six (6) days prior to Technical Committee meeting.	Minimum fourteen (14) days.
Public review of preliminary project list	A preliminary project list is released for public review and comment. This list includes projects within MDOT General Program Accounts (GPA).	Month 5	Six (6) days prior to Technical Committee meeting.	Minimum fourteen (14) days.
Consultation with other agencies/organizations impacted by TIP	Consult with federal, state and local agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities affected by transportation. This may include, but is not limited to, agencies responsible for economic growth, environmental protection, airport operations, freight movement, natural resources and historic preservation.	Month 5	N/A	N/A; Public involvement is continuous throughout development process. Updates are given at committee meetings.
Air quality conformity and environmental justice public comment period	Public comment on air quality and environmental justice analyses.	Month 6	Six (6) days prior to Technical Committee meeting.	Minimum fourteen (14) days.
TIP public hearing	This is the formal public hearing on the draft TIP. Newspaper notices are placed announcing this meeting as well as noticed posted to the MACC's website	Month 7	Minimum seven (7) days prior to the public hearing	Minimum fourteen (14) days.

## Exhibit C: Participation Process- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Milestone	Procedure	TIP Month	Public Notification Date	Length of Public Comment (Minimum)
Postings on MACC website	As the TIP is being developed, various documents are posted on the <b>MACC's Web page</b> . <b>These postings</b> will also invite the public to comment on what they see.	Throughout entire process	N/A	N/A; Public involvement is continuous throughout development process. Updates are given at committee meetings.
Input at MACC Policy & Technical Committee meetings	All MACC regularly scheduled Technical and Policy Committee meetings have time reserved for public comments.	Throughout entire process	Six (6) days prior to both Technical and Policy Committee meetings.	During Public Comment agenda item.

## Exhibit D: Participation Process- Planning/Corridor Study

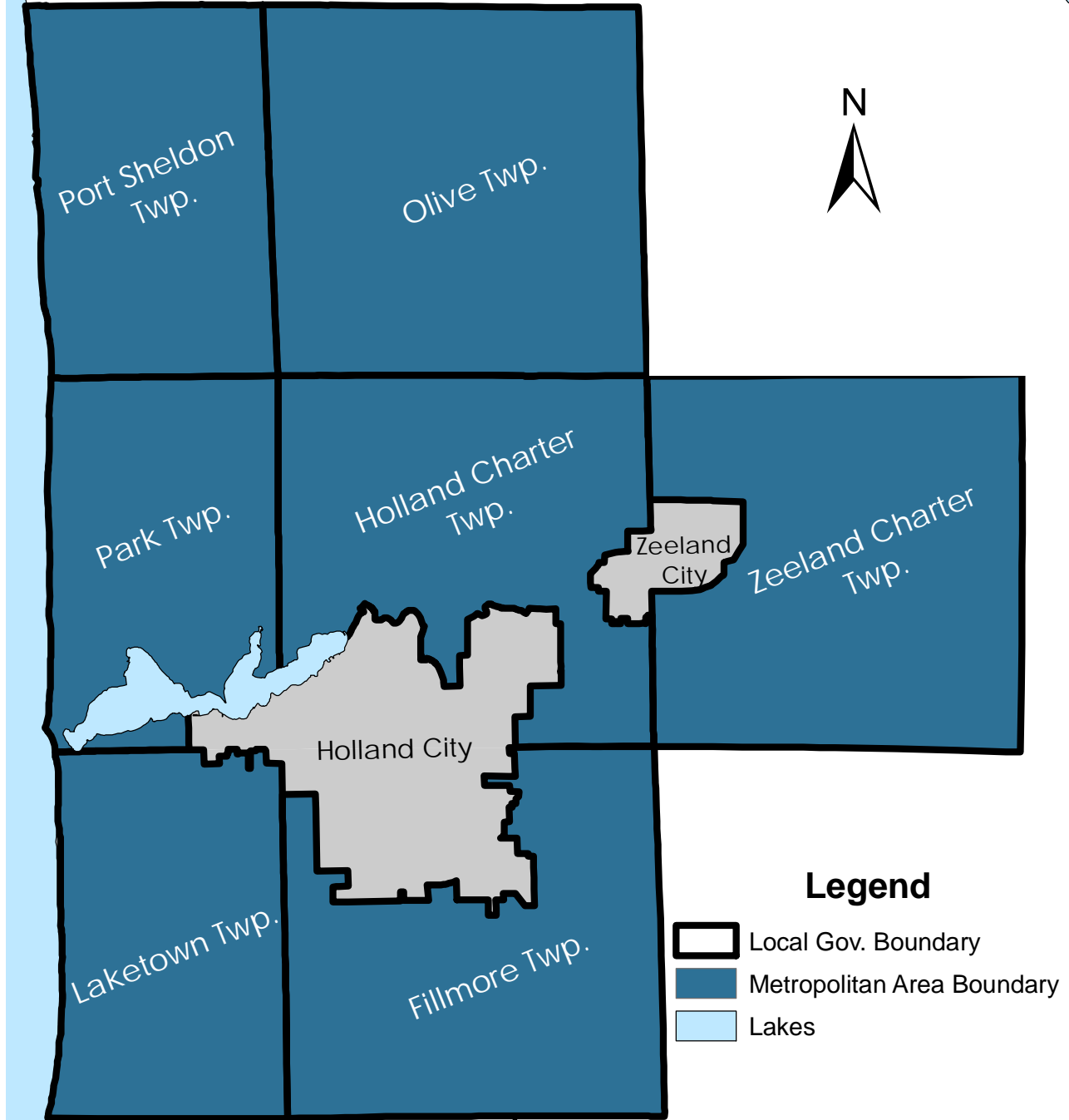
Milestone	Procedure	Planning Month	Public Notification Date	Length of Public Comment (Minimum)
MACC stakeholder list review and update	Review and update stakeholder mailing list as necessary. Use list to contact stakeholders informing them of the initiative and how they can participate.	Month 1	N/A	N/A; Public involvement is continuous throughout development process.
Public review of project's early phases	Provide an opportunity for public review and comment on the early/preliminary phases of the study. May involve public meetings, surveys, interviews, etc.	Month 2-3	Six (6) days prior to Technical Committee meeting.	A minimum of thirty (30) days. Public comment is welcome throughout the planning process.
Consultation with other agencies/organizations impacted by study	Consult with federal, state and local agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities affected by transportation. This may include, but is not limited to, agencies responsible for economic growth, environmental protection, airport operations, freight movement, natural resources and historic preservation.	Month 7-8	N/A	N/A; Consultations will be scheduled. Overall public involvement is continuous throughout process. Updates are given at committee meetings.
Public review of study's preliminary findings/conclusions	Provide an opportunity for public review and comment on the preliminary findings/conclusions of the study.	Month 7-9	Six (6) days prior to Technical Committee meeting.	Minimum fourteen (14) days.
Postings on MACC's website	As the plan is being developed, various documents are posted on the MACC's Web page. These postings will also invite the public to comment on what they see.	Throughout entire process	N/A	N/A; Public involvement is continuous throughout development process. Updates are given at committee meetings.
Input at MACC Policy & Technical Committee meetings	All MACC regularly scheduled Technical and Policy Committee meetings have time reserved for public comments.	Throughout entire process	Six (6) days prior to Technical and Policy Committee meetings.	During Public Comment agenda item.

## Exhibit E: Unified Work Program (UWP) Procedures

Milestone	Procedure	Public Notification Date	Length of Public Comment (Minimum)
<p>Draft Unified Work Program (UWP) developed and presented to both the Technical and Policy Committees</p>	<p>Once the draft UWP has been developed, it is presented at a Technical Committee meeting and the following Policy Committee meeting. The public will be notified of the draft document in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Meeting notice on MACC website</li> <li>▪ Via email or direct mailing to those on the Technical &amp; Policy mailing lists</li> </ul>	<p>Six (6) days prior to Technical Committee meeting.</p>	<p>Minimum of 7 days, beginning on the date of the Technical Committee meeting and ending at the Policy Committee meeting. The comment period length will vary depending on the amount of time between the two meetings.</p>
<p>UWP Amendments. It can be necessary to amend the UWP due to changes to the work program.</p>	<p>Staff will bring UWP amendments to the Policy Committee for approval. The public will have an additional opportunity to comment on the UWP at the Policy meeting. Notification of this meeting include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Meeting notice on MACC website</li> <li>▪ Via email or direct mailing to those on the Policy Committee mailing list</li> </ul>	<p>Six (6) days prior to the scheduled Policy Committee meeting.</p>	<p>A minimum of six (6) days, prior to the date of the Policy Committee meeting.</p>

# Appendix A

## Macatawa Area Coordinating Council's MPO Area



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Miles