



# **LUC Regional Planning Commission**

# **RTPO Public Participation Plan**

**OCTOBER 2020**

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This report was prepared in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration, the Ohio Department of Transportation and the local governments of Logan, Union, and Champaign Counties.

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The contents of this Plan reflect the views of the Logan-Union-Champaign Regional Planning Commission, which is responsible for the facts and the accuracy of the data presented herein. The contents do not necessarily reflect the official view and policies of the Ohio Department of Transportation or the U.S. Department of Transportation. This Plan does not constitute a standard, specification or regulation.

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## **Section 1 - Introduction**

### **Background**

The Commission was formed primarily as a result of the announcement by Governor Rhodes and The Ohio State University Officials that the Transportation Research Center of Ohio would be located straddling the Logan and Union County Line. This 8100-acre facility was touted to be the world's largest automotive research center. Several studies indicated that a lot of growth and development would take place around the TRC, which would result in an influx of people, business, and industry. Therefore, local officials felt that a Planning Commission should be formed to start planning for the orderly development of the three counties.

The Commission elected Eugene Amrine from Marysville as its first president. The Commission met at the Masonic Temple in North Lewisburg on a monthly basis during 1967 and 1968. The Ohio Department of Development, Division of Planning, under the direction of Paul Baldrige and Patric Meeker contracted with L-U-C as the consultant to develop the first Comprehensive Plan for the three counties. This effort took two years to complete.

The first office for the Commission was located in a former residence along US Route 33 on the site of the TRC. Carmen Scott of Bellefontaine was hired as the recording secretary in April 1968 to take minutes of the monthly meetings. In November 1968 the Commission decided to hire a full-time director and Carmen was selected from eight applicants for the position. The monthly meetings were then moved to the Masonic Temple in East Liberty. In 1970 the office was moved into the west half of the East Liberty Restaurant Building. It remained there until August 1972, when it moved into the former Knights of Pythias building in East Liberty. In 2017, the office moved to the James A. Rhodes Conference Center at TRC. During the early 1970's, the Commission met on a quarterly basis at various locations throughout the three counties. In the mid-1970's, the Commission began having annual meetings at the Ohio Hi-Point Joint Vocational School. Between 2003 and 2016, the Commission's annual meeting rotated between the three counties, and it is now held at the Conference Center.

The membership in the Commission is determined by the by-laws. Participating villages, cities, and counties are permitted to have a certain number of representatives. The first village to become a member was North Lewisburg in March 1967, followed by St. Paris, Quincy, DeGraff, and Richwood. In 1986 other municipalities began to join. The first township to join the Commission was Liberty Township, Union County in September 1967. Over the years all 43 townships have become members. As a result, there are 95 people representing the various political subdivisions on the Regional Planning Commission. An Executive Committee

consisting of 24 people is elected from the general membership at the Annual Meeting. This committee meets monthly and is the decision and policy making group for the Commission.

The Commission is charged under Ohio Law with certain responsibilities. Among them are the review and approval of subdivisions located in the unincorporated areas and the review and recommendation to township zoning commissions concerning zoning amendments. The Commission also acts as an Area-Wide Clearinghouse for applicants who request federal and state assistance for selected projects. Assistance is rendered to township and municipal zoning and planning commissions regarding zoning and subdivision development.

The Commission and several of its members have been actively involved in the attraction of new business and industry to the area and in the improvement of US Route 33, 68 and other infrastructure improvements. The Commission is funded by the villages, cities, and townships of the three counties and by the three counties themselves on a per capita basis.

### **Organization of the Regional Planning Commission**

The Regional Planning Commission is composed of one member from each of the three boards of county commissioners and the county engineers of each county. In addition, six county "members-at-large" are appointed by the boards of county commissioners, two from each county. Nine "citizen members-at-large" are appointed by the boards of county commissioners, three from each county. Municipalities of city status have two representatives and an alternate. Participating villages have one representative and an alternate. Participating townships have one representative.

The LUC Office has moved from the center of East Liberty back to TRC. Currently, there are three counties, four cities, 17 incorporated villages and 39 townships listed as members of the commission.

The Executive Committee is presently comprised of the president, first and second vice-presidents, secretary, treasurer and twenty-four other people who were elected from the entire membership at the annual meeting. Ex-officio members without voting privileges include the District Deputy Directors of the Ohio Department of Transportation's Districts Six and Seven and any chairman of a Study Committee who is not an elected member of the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee is the policy and decision-making body, but their actions are always subject to review by the entire commission at any annual or special meeting.

The Executive Committee meets the second Thursday of each month at 1:15 pm in the LUC office at TRC. Representatives from any of the member municipalities or townships are always welcome to attend any or all meetings and participate in any discussion. They are, however, not permitted to vote as a member of the Executive Committee unless they are a duly elected member thereof. Minutes of all Executive Committee meetings are available to all members.

The Annual Meeting of the entire membership is held the third Thursday of November in the evening. The annual dinner typically consists of a dinner prior to the business portion of the meeting. All representatives are encouraged to attend this meeting and participate in any discussion and vote on any issue.

In July 2013, the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) initiated a Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) two-year pilot program with five multi-county planning organizations including LUC. The RTPO planning area covers only Logan and Champaign Counties even though this RTPO is identified as (LUC). This pilot program provided LUC with funding to conduct regional transportation planning in coordination with local stakeholders, Ohio Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO's), and ODOT. Federal transportation guidance encourages RTPO's to enhance rural area local governments' participation in "the planning, coordination, and implementation of statewide strategic long-range transportation plans and transportation improvement programs."

The initial focus of the RTPO planning program was to establish the first ever long range multi-modal transportation plans for these regions, develop transportation databases, and become knowledgeable about local government transportation funding programs. On January 27, 2016, Governor John Kasich formally designated LUC as an Ohio RTPO. This designation formalizes the program that started as a pilot and will help spur better and more informed transportation decision making in Ohio.

## **Overview**

This Public Participation Process is intended to provide guidance for the RTPO planning area for public involvement activities to be conducted by LUC and contains the goals, objectives, strategies, and techniques used by LUC for public involvement on all plans and programs. This plan will also address all Federal and State requirements.

LUC will provide timely information about transportation plans, programs, and projects to citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transit, and other interested parties. LUC will also provide these parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on these transportation plans, programs, and projects.

LUC will provide reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of the Long Range Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program, and other appropriate transportation plans, programs, and projects through open public meetings and the LUC website.

LUC will give adequate public notice of public participation activities and allow time for public review and comment on all transportation plans, programs, and projects. Public notice will be conducted through announcements on the LUC website, media press releases, newspaper advertisements, the LUC annual update, and monthly LUC Policy Board meetings.

LUC will respond, when applicable, to all public input. Written comments received on all planning studies during development, including the Long Range Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program, will be documented in the final planning study.

LUC will solicit the needs of those underserved by existing transportation systems, including but not limited to the transportation disadvantaged, minorities and low-income households as part of the LUC Environmental Justice Plan.

## **Section 2 - Goal, Objectives, & Strategies**

### **Public Participation Goal**

To provide the public with detailed information on transportation planning services and project development in a timely manner.

### **Objective 1. Actively engage the public in the transportation planning process**

#### **Strategies**

- Maintain an up-to-date database of contacts, including public and private entities, to provide that all interested parties have reasonable opportunities to comment on the transportation planning process and products. These entities should include all resource agencies, as specified by current legislation, including but not limited to local and state land use management, natural resource, and historic preservation agencies.
- Provide timely and information about transportation plans, programs, and projects to citizens, affected public agencies, and other interested parties. These entities should include all resource agencies, as specified by current legislation, including

but not limited to local and state land use management, natural resource, and historic preservation agencies.

- Employ visualization techniques to depict transportation plans including charts, graphs, and maps.

## **Objective 2. Keep the public informed of current transportation related activities**

### **Strategies**

- Provide general plan or project specific information during normal business hours and after hours at the request of the public with reasonable notice.
- Maintain an internet website complete with contact information, all transportation plans, work products, and Policy Board meeting agendas and minutes.

## **Objective 3. Encourage participation in the transportation planning process**

### **Strategies**

- Identify target audiences for each planning study or project including residents, business, and property owners, and those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems such as low-income, minority, elderly, and disabled populations.
- Hold public meetings at a site and time convenient to potentially affected citizens whenever feasible.
- Incorporate Environmental Justice and Title VI policy and procedures into all transportation planning activities by making a meaningful effort to involve protected populations in the transportation planning process.

## **Objective 4. Continuously improve public participation**

### **Strategies**

- Continuously evaluate public involvement techniques used to encourage public participation in the transportation planning process
- Review the Public Participation Plan every three (3) years in terms of its effectiveness in assuring that the transportation planning process provides full and open access to all.

## **Section 3 - Tools & Activities**

There are many tools and activities that can be used to accomplish this public participation goal and objectives. This section describes the tools and activities that LUC will use to encourage public participation.

### **LUC Public Information Contact List**

LUC will compile and maintain a public information contact list that contains local stakeholders' contact information to use when distributing material for public participation. The master list will be reviewed continuously and updated when the information changes or new contacts are to be added. Per current legislation, the parties on this master list may include, but is not limited to, citizens, local government officials and staff, public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transit, and other interested parties. Public agencies should include all resource agencies, as specified by current legislation, including but not limited to local and state land use management, natural resource, and historic preservation agencies.

### **LUC Website**

LUC currently maintains a website at [www.LUCplanning.com](http://www.LUCplanning.com). "The mission of the Logan-Union-Champaign Regional Planning Commission is to promote planned growth, encourage sustainable development, preserve our land resources, and to improve the quality of life in the region by providing guidance, support, information, planning and education services to the citizen's and all government member agencies."

### **LUC Annual Update**

LUC hosts an annual meeting and reports on previous year activities as part of the meeting. The RTPO's activities from the previous year will be part of that reporting.

### **Newspaper Advertisements**

LUC may place newspaper advertisements in the appropriate newspaper or publication, as announcements of public meetings that are not regularly scheduled. The newspaper advertisements should be concise and in language that is easy for the general public to understand. Advertising media may be selected based on maximum circulation and/or message distribution among residents in a project area. An example of a newspaper advertisement can be found in Appendix A.

### **News Releases**

LUC may distribute news releases to local media (newspaper and radio) as announcements of public meetings that are not regularly scheduled. News releases may also be distributed for announcements on other transportation planning or program

decisions or publications. An example of a news release and a list of media contacts can be found in Appendix B.

### **Direct Mail Notification**

LUC will mail announcements of public meetings that are not regularly scheduled and/or other announcements on transportation planning or program publications directly to the LUC Public Information Contact List including all resource agencies, as specified by current legislation. Additionally, in the course of a specific planning study, residents and business owners near the study area may also be notified of public meetings and developments associated with the study on an as needed basis.

### **Surveys**

LUC will distribute surveys to solicit opinion from the public on various transportation related topics on an as needed basis. The questions on the survey should be direct and concise in order to obtain a clear picture on public opinion. Surveys are used for a very specific input, so distribution of the survey will vary.

### **Comment Forms**

LUC will make comment forms available at all public meetings to solicit input on the subject transportation plan or study. The comment forms can be general or specific depending on the nature of the anticipated response. Comment forms will contain LUC contact information for returning the form and the date by which the form is due to be received by LUC. An example of a comment form can be found in Appendix C.

### **Public Meetings**

LUC will hold public meetings to distribute information on transportation plans, programs, and projects. The type of public meeting will vary depending on the nature of the information that is to be conveyed. Meetings should be attended by as many LUC staff members as feasible to ensure that all participants have a chance to speak with someone regarding the subject plan, program, or project.

Meetings should be held, whenever feasible, at a site that is a central location to the citizens that are most affected by the subject plan, program, or project. This central location should also be within an Environmental Justice area if feasible. Meetings should be held in an ADA accessible venue and, whenever feasible, in an area close to a transit route. All meeting notifications should include language indicating that other special accommodations can be arranged by contacting the LUC staff. Meeting times should be set for the most convenient time of the day to maximize attendance.

Meeting notices and material should be presented in clear and understandable language. Visualization techniques should be used at every meeting to help convey the subject material. Visualization techniques include maps of the study area, proposed project area, or conceptual alternatives, graphs, and tables such as alternative matrices,

project rosters, and budgets, and pictures of existing conditions or conceptual drawings on studies or projects.

The public meeting format will vary depending on the nature of the meeting. The types of meetings are:

- Open Houses – general and open meetings with no (or short) presentations given. Open Houses provide the most interaction with the public as staff can communicate the subject material on a one-on-one basis. Open Houses should be held for approximately 2 hours to maximize public participation. Open houses will include a short period of time for attendees to address all participants as needed.
- Workshops – meetings that have a hands-on component. Attendees participate in the development of the plan or project through their input. Workshops should have a defined start time and an organized program schedule.
- Public Forums – meetings that begin with a short presentation outlining the plan or project and then allow for attendees to address all participants. Public Forums should have a defined start time and should last as long as each attendees comment will allow. In the interest of time, individuals may be required to sign-in and may be called in the order in which they sign in. Time limits may be set in the interest of time.
- Public Hearings – formal meetings that are used to fulfill Federal, State, or local requirements. Public Hearings consist mostly of a presentation of the plan or project and allow for public comment after the presentation. Public Hearings should have a defined start time and all proceedings, including public comments, should be transcribed for the record. In the interest of time, individuals may be required to sign-in and may be called in the order in which they sign in. Time limits may be set in the interest of time.
- Online/Web Based – meetings that will be held online, for times when in-person public meetings cannot be accommodated. The structure for these meetings should follow available USDOT and ODOT guidance.

## **Section 4 - Procedures**

### **Long Range Plan**

A total of four (4) public meetings are to be held: 2 held after the project list, one to be held in Logan County, and the other meeting in Champaign County and 2 held before adoption again one to be held in Logan County, and the other Champaign County. All public meetings should be advertised through notice in the local newspaper, at least one week prior to the event. A press release notification of the meetings should be released one week prior to the event.

Comments regarding the draft project list and draft plan will be accepted from the date of the appropriate public meeting through two weeks after the meeting is held.

The LUC website should be updated with the development schedule and all draft documents during the development of the plan. Printed copies of all draft documents should be available during normal business hours at LUC during the development of the plan. Interested parties may call or write to LUC Regional Planning Commission and hardcopies will be made available in accordance with LUC's Record Retention Policy.

Amendments to the Long Range Plan will be posted to the LUC website for public review and comment one week prior to adoption by the LUC Policy Board. Comments received on the proposed amendments during the public comment period will be delivered to the LUC Policy Board for review prior to adoption.

### **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

A total of 2 (two) public meetings are to be held: One meeting during the development of the project list and one meeting to be after the development of the draft TIP but before adoption.

All public meetings should be advertised through notice in the local newspaper, at least one week prior to the event. A press release notification of the meetings should be released one week prior to the event.

Comments regarding the draft project list and draft TIP will be accepted from the date the draft is published on our website for two weeks or through the Statewide TIP public comment period, whichever is later.

The LUC website should be updated with the development schedule and all draft documents during the development of the TIP. Printed copies of all draft documents should be available during normal business hours at LUC during the development of the TIP. Interested parties may call or write to LUC Regional Planning Commission and hardcopies will be made available in accordance with LUC's Record Retention Policy.

Amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program will be posted to the LUC website for public review and comment one week prior to adoption by the LUC Policy Board. Comments received on the proposed amendments during the public comment period will be delivered to the LUC Policy Board for review prior to adoption.

### **Public Participation Plan**

Two (2) public meetings are to be held after the development of the draft plan but before LUC adoption with one meeting to be held in Logan County and one meeting to be held in Champaign County.

The public meeting should be advertised through retail ads in the local newspaper, at least one week prior to the event. A press release for the meeting should be released one week prior to the event.

A 45 day public comment period will begin with notification of the availability of the draft plan. Comments regarding the draft plan will be accepted during this public comment period.

The LUC website should be updated with the development schedule and the draft document during the development of the plan. Printed copies of the draft document should be available during normal business hours at LUC during the development of the plan. Interested parties may call or write to LUC staff to have printed copies delivered to them.

### **Title VI Program**

One public meeting is to be held after the development of the draft plan but before LUC adoption.

The public meeting should be advertised through notice in the local newspaper, at least one week prior to the event. A press release for the meeting should be released one week prior to the event.

A 45 day public comment period will begin with notification of the availability of the draft plan. Comments regarding the draft plan will be accepted during this public comment period.

The LUC website should be updated with the development schedule and the draft document during the development of the plan. Printed copies of the draft document should be available during normal business hours at LUC during the development of the plan. Interested parties may call or write to LUC Regional Planning Commission and hardcopies will be made available in accordance with LUC's Record Retention Policy.

**APPENDIX A – NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENT**

# Notice of Public Meeting

*(Type of Meeting)*

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Reason/Topic \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Time \_\_\_\_\_  
Location \_\_\_\_\_

*(Description of Project or Plan)*

**Individuals in need of specific accommodations  
should contact LUC Regional Planning  
Commission at 937-666-3431**



**APPENDIX B – NEWS RELEASE EXAMPLE**



Logan-Union-Champaign  
regional planning commission

Director: Bradley J. Bodenmiller

**NEWS RELEASE**

FOR RELEASE  
(Date)

**Contact:** (Name)  
(Title)  
LUC Regional Planning Commission  
(937) 666-3431

\*\*\*\*\*

CHAMPAIGN & LOGAN COUNTIES, Ohio –

(General Explanation)

(Detailed Description)

Individuals in need of specific accommodations should contact LUC Regional Planning Commission at least 24 hours prior to the event by calling (937) 666-3431.

\*\*\*\*\*

10820 St. Rt. 347, PO Box 219  
East Liberty, Ohio 43319  
• Phone: 937-666-3431 •

• Email: [luc-rpc@lucplanning.com](mailto:luc-rpc@lucplanning.com) • Web: [www.lucplanning.com](http://www.lucplanning.com)

## APPENDIX C – NEWS RELEASE MEDIA CONTACTS

Bellefontaine Examiner (County-wide newspaper; published Monday-Saturday)  
127 E Chillicothe Avenue Bellefontaine, OH 43311 | (937) 592-3060  
Press Releases: [news@examiner.org](mailto:news@examiner.org)  
Legal Ads: [classifieds@examiner.org](mailto:classifieds@examiner.org)

Urbana Daily Citizen (County-wide newspaper; published daily except Sundays and Mondays)  
1637 East US Highway 36, Suite 10 Urbana, OH 43078 | (937) 652-1331  
Press Releases: [bburns@aimmediamidwest.com](mailto:bburns@aimmediamidwest.com) (Brenda Burns, Editor)  
Legal Ads: [cherring@aimmediamidwest.com](mailto:cherring@aimmediamidwest.com)

Peak of Ohio (Logan) & The Bull (Champaign) (Local radio stations)  
1501 County Road 235 Bellefontaine, OH 43311 | (937) 592-1045 | [btipple@wpko.com](mailto:btipple@wpko.com)  
124 South Main Street Urbana, OH 43078 | (937) 592-1045 | [btipple@wpko.com](mailto:btipple@wpko.com)

**APPENDIX D – PUBLIC COMMENT FORM**

**COMMENT FORM**

(Name of Project or Plan)

(Type of Meeting)

(Date)

Please record any comments or questions you have regarding the candidate local projects for the (Name of Project or Plan) in the space below. You may either give to attendant or mail it to LUC Regional Planning Commission Office no later than (Comment Due Date).


Name & Address \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to:  
LUC Regional Planning Commission  
P.O. Box 219  
East Liberty, OH 43319  
Attn: Public Comment

*Thank you for your participation!*

## APPENDIX E – LUC POLICY BOARD ADOPTION RESOLUTION



Logan-Union-Champaign  
regional planning commission

A RESOLUTION  
OF THE LOGAN-UNION-CHAMPAIGN-REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION ADOPTING THE  
2020 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN FOR LOGAN AND CHAMPAIGN COUNTIES

**WHEREAS**, the Logan-Union-Champaign Regional Planning Commission (LUC) is designated as the Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) for Logan and Champaign Counties by the Governor of the State of Ohio, acting through the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), and in cooperation with locally elected officials in the area pursuant to an Agreement between ODOT and LUC; and

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with CFR 450.316, LUC is required to develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing affected parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan planning process; and

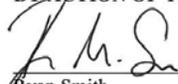
**WHEREAS**, the 2020 Public Participation Plan contains the guidance for public involvement activities to be conducted by LUC and contains goals, objectives, strategies, and techniques to be used to solicit public participation on all plans and programs; and

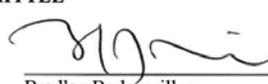
**WHEREAS**, the Public Participation Plan should be reviewed every three years in terms of its effectiveness in assuring that the transportation planning process provides full and open access to all.

**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED:**

That the members of the LUC Executive Committee hereby adopt the 2020 Public Participation Plan for the RTPO planning area.

**BY ACTION OF THE LUC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Ryan Smith  
President, LUC Executive Committee

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Bradley Bodenmiller  
Secretary, LUC Executive Committee

10-8-2020  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date