



WAUSAU METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
WAUSAU, WISCONSIN AREA

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# PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

FOR ITS

TRANSPORTATION PLANS  
AND PROGRAMS

2020

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MARATHON COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION  
October 2020

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U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Transit Administration



## **WAUSAU METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO)**

### MARATHON COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

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Brian Grefe, Manager	Central Wisconsin Airport
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Scott Turner, Street & Parks Superintendent	Town of Rib Mountain
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James Kuehn	WisDOT – Bureau of Planning
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# Wausau Area Metropolitan Planning Commission

## Public Participation Plan

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Documents, meeting minutes and agendas, and other information may be obtained on our website at:

[www.WausauMPO.org](http://www.WausauMPO.org)

Si se necesita informacion en otro idioma de contacto (715) 261-6000.

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# PURPOSE & NEED

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## PURPOSE FOR UPDATE

Since 1991, federal regulations have required continuous, cooperative, and coordinated urban transportation planning for urban areas with populations in excess of 50,000 in order for those areas to receive federal transportation funding. One of the central requirements is an all-inclusive decision-making process requiring metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) 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 public involvement in developing metropolitan long range transportation plans (LRTPs) and transportation improvement programs (TIPs).

In addition, MPOs are required to develop and utilize “participation plans” that are developed in consultation with an expanded list of “interested parties.” Here, the role of the public in the public participation plan (PPP) process is expanded to include involvement in the development of the PPP — not just the review of the PPP after it has been drafted. In 2007, the Wausau Area Metropolitan Planning Commission (Wausau MPO) adopted a Public Participation Plan developed according to the federal requirements, with full participation of the public thru the public involvement plan identified in the document and the MPO Technical Advisory Committee.

This update of the Wausau MPO Public Participation Plan refines and clarifies the Wausau MPO’s public processes in light of our experiences since 2014 and an increased use of websites, social media, and now more than ever the use of virtual meetings and information dissemination.

## FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

Beginning with the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991, metropolitan planning organizations (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 MTPs (metropolitan transportation plans) and TIPs (transportation improvement programs).”

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) of 2005 and the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act (MAP-21) of 2012 expanded on the provisions to require extensive stakeholder participation above and beyond public involvement. The public participation plan provision expressed in the current

Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act signed into law in 2015 is codified in Title 23 Part 450 of the Code of Federal Regulations (23 CFR 450) and in 49 CFR 613. Section 450.316, Interested Parties, Participation, and Consultation, requires MPOs to develop a participation plan in consultation with all interested parties and describe explicit procedures, strategies, and desired outcomes for:

- Providing adequate public notice;
- Providing timely notice and reasonable access to information;
- Employing visualization techniques to describe plans and programs;
- Making public information available in electronically accessible formats;
- Holding public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;
- Demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input;
- Seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems;
- Providing an additional opportunity for public comment if the final metropolitan transportation plan (MTP) or transportation improvement program (TIP) differs significantly from the version made available for public comment;
- Coordinating with statewide processes; and,
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the participation plan.

## NEED FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public participation in the transportation planning process allows the public the opportunity to voice concerns and offer suggestions about transportation-related issues, while it also helps to educate the public about the technical aspects of transportation planning. Also, transportation professionals and decision-makers are afforded the opportunity to see sides of an issue that may be missed when considering a project from a purely technical or political point of view.

Meaningful dialog among technical professionals, local decision makers, and general stakeholders is the key to achieving consensus, which is desired before moving a project forward. Other benefits of public participation include:

- Fostering a sense of community and ownership;
- Identifying issues and concerns that matter most to the citizenry;
- Fostering trust in our decision-makers;
- Promoting accountability;
- Encouraging cooperation and compromise;
- Preventing and/or mitigating future conflicts;
- Transparency; and
- Reasonable access to information.

# PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

The Wausau MPO strives for an all-inclusive public process consistent with the provisions of Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Title 23 Code of Federal Regulations Part 450 (23 CFR 450) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 49 CFR 613 as retained and amended by MAP-21. While retaining the requirement authorized by ISTEA that “MPOs 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 LRTPs and TIPs”, SAFETEA-LU expanded those provisions to require “extensive stakeholder participation above and beyond public involvement.”

The following policy statements to “ensure early and continuing involvement of the public in developing plans and TIPs” were derived from existing language in 23 CFR 450 and 49 CFR 613.

## Coordination and Consultation -

- Consult with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the planning area that are affected by transportation in the development of LRTPs and TIPs, including Indian Tribal governments and Federal Land Management agencies, if applicable.
- Coordinate with the public involvement and consultation processes for statewide transportation planning.

## Accessibility and Information -

- Hold public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times.
- Make public information available in electronically-accessible format.
- Provide reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of plans and programs.
- Employ visualization techniques to describe LRTPs and TIPs.

## Timeliness –

- Provide timely information about transportation issues and processes to all concerned stakeholders, including affected public agencies, private providers of transportation, and other interested parties and segments of the community affected by transportation plans, programs, and projects.
- Provide adequate public notice of public involvement activities and time for public review and comment.

## Public Comment -

- Demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input received during the development of the LRTP and TIP.
- Provide a comment period of at least 45 day.

- Provide an additional opportunity for public comment if the final LRTP or TIP differs significantly from the version that was initially made available for comment.
- Include as part of the final plan or program a report or summary on the disposition of significant written or oral comments received on draft plans and programs.

#### Social (includes Environmental) Justice -

- Seek out and consider the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, including low-income and minority households, persons with disabilities, and the elderly.

#### Evaluation -

- Review the effectiveness of the public participation plan so as to ensure a full and open participation process.

#### Updates & Amendments -

- The public participation process outlined in the PPP will be evaluated and amended at least every five years. An amendment to the PPP may also occur if a federal or state regulation regarding public participation or environmental justice has been created or modified. In all cases, the public will be invited to provide comment. Inclusive Public participation is encouraged throughout the update process at the Wausau MPO and technical committee meetings, through comments received at the Wausau MPO office, and at outreach events.

# STAKEHOLDERS

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In response to the Federal provisions that MPOs develop their public participation plans “in consultation with an expanded list of ‘interested parties’,” the Wausau MPO has identified the following stakeholder groups as important participants in the public participation process for MPO plans and programs:

## MINORITY, LOW-INCOME, AND LIMITED ENGLISH POPULATIONS

Environmental Justice, as defined in Environmental Justice and Transportation Investment Policy, is “a public policy goal of assuring that adverse human health or environmental effects of government activities do not fall disproportionately upon minority or low-income populations.” In February 1994, President Clinton signed Executive Order (EO) 12898, making Environmental Justice a public policy. The U.S. Department of Transportation developed its own order to address environmental justice in June 1995 and issued its final order in 1997 (updated in 2012). This order requires all projects subject to federal funding to consider explicitly minority and low-income populations.

A disproportionately high and adverse effect, as defined by the United States Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) EO 5610.2, is an adverse effect that:

- Is predominately borne by a minority population and/or a low-income population; or
- Will be suffered by the minority population and/or low-income population and is appreciably more severe or greater in magnitude than the adverse effect that will be suffered by the non-minority population and/or non-low-income population.

The environmental justice methodology used by the Wausau MPO to identify areas of possible disproportional impact is explained in the Transportation Improvement Program.

An environmental justice analysis is always conducted and included in the transit development plan (TDP), TIP, and MTP. To improve the opportunity for representative sample sizes, tracts are analyzed instead of smaller levels of geography. Tracts whose lower bound of the percentage of the variable in question is greater than the higher bound of the percentage for the planning area will be identified as areas that could experience disproportionately high and adverse effects of a transportation project. This ensures that the margins of error are considered in all comparisons. This methodology also applies to identifying areas of need for new or expanded services (i.e. transit service).

The following definitions are consistent with *FTA Circular 4702.1B Title VI Requirements*.

### MINORITY POPULATION

*Minority* refers to a person who identifies with being American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, or Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.

Tracts identified as having a “high” percentage of minority persons are tracts whose percent minority minus the margin of error (MOE) is greater than the percent minority plus the MOE of the planning area.

## LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT (LEP)

President Clinton signed Executive Order 13166, Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency, in August 2000. This order requires that any agency that receives federal funds to establish a means of including Limited English Proficiency (LEP) persons in the planning process. The Attorney General for Civil Rights subsequently issued the guidance document, Enforcement of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964—National Origin Discrimination Against Persons with Limited English Proficiency [Department of Justice (DOJ) LEP Guidance], to assist agencies in “taking reasonable steps to ensure ‘meaningful’ access to the information and services they provide.”

Limited-English proficient refers to people for whom English is not their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English. It includes people who reported to the U.S. Census that they speak English less than very well, not well, or not at all. Tracts identified as having a “high” percentage of LEP persons are tracts whose percent LEP minus the margin of error (MOE) is greater than the percent LEP plus the MOE of the planning area.

According to the DOJ LEP Guidance, “reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access” depend on a number of factors. The Wausau MPO used the four-factor LEP analysis which considers the following:

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons in the Wausau Planning Area who may be served by the Wausau MPO.
2. The frequency with which LEP persons come in contact with Wausau MPO programs or services.
3. The nature and importance of programs or services provided by the Wausau MPO to the LEP population.
4. The interpretation services available to the Wausau MPO and overall cost to provide LEP assistance. A summary of the results of the four-factor analysis is in the following section.

The process for assessing meaningful access is outlined in the Limited-English Proficiency Plan in the [Title VI plan](#) posted on the [Wausau MPO website](#).

Anyone in need of interpretive services may contact the Wausau MPO office at 715-261-6043 or at [WausauMPO.org](http://WausauMPO.org).

## LOW-INCOME POPULATIONS

For planning purposes, the Wausau MPO uses the following definitions of low-income:

- Low-income person as defined by U.S. DOT Order 561.2(a): A person whose median household income is at or below the Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines.
- “Eligible low-income individual”: An individual whose family income is at or below 150 percent of the poverty line.

Organizations representing these populations are included in Wausau MPO contact lists.

## ELDERLY & DISABLED POPULATIONS

### ELDERLY POPULATIONS

For planning purposes, the Wausau MPO defines “elderly” as:

- Persons 60 years of age and older (persons eligible for Marathon County elderly and disabled transportation services (85.21 Program)) and may apply to minorities and low-income populations.

Areas where the number of elderly population has been determined to be significantly greater than the planning area average will be identified as areas of potential disproportionate impact.

### DISABLED POPULATIONS

For transportation planning purposes, the “disabled” population includes persons defined by the U.S. Census as having sensory, physical, mental, self-care, and employment disabilities.

Elderly and disabled populations are mapped thematically by area and by location of elderly and disabled facilities (i.e. assisted-living facilities, senior centers). As with minority and low-income populations, mapping locations helps identify areas of need and illustrates the relationship between proposed improvements (i.e. transit, roadway) and elderly and disabled populations.

Organizations representing the elderly, disabled and veterans groups are included in Wausau MPO contact lists, with some represented on Wausau MPO or Marathon County committees.

## TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS

These stakeholders include public and private agencies representing transit (fixed-route, shared-ride, paratransit, intracity) and freight (rail, truck, air) interests. Organizations representing these interests are included in Wausau MPO contact lists, with some represented on Wausau MPO or Marathon County committees.

The Transportation Coordinating Committee (TCC), for example, has members who represent transit agencies (i.e. Metro Ride – Wausau Area Transit System and North Central Health Care), as well as rider advocacy groups, while the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) has members who represent the communities themselves and other community interests.

A rather extensive contact list of transit interests is maintained by Wausau MPO staff for public notice and public involvement purposes.

## FEDERAL, STATE, REGIONAL, & LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

In order to comply with Federal and State regulations and to be consistent with the planning processes of State and local entities, Wausau MPO staff regularly consult with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) and State offices of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) through mid-year reviews and committee meetings, and by e-mail and phone as work products are drafted and reviewed. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is represented on the TAC as an ex officio or non-voting member (as is FHWA).

Other agencies involved in the process, but not necessarily on a regular basis include:

- Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Regional and local municipal agencies are represented on the Wausau MPO Commission and on its subcommittees.

The Wausau Metropolitan Area includes areas of land within the ceded territory of the Onieda Nation, but no reservations lands.

## SPECIAL INTERESTS

Special-interest groups invited into the process include, but are not limited to:

- Local neighborhood and environmental organizations
- Wausau Area Chamber of Commerce
- Marathon County Development Corporation (MCDEVCO)
- School districts
- Bicycle & pedestrian advocates
- Public & Mental Health organizations
- Veterans

These groups offer differing opinions on the need for and scope of transportation services and facilities in the region.

## INTERESTED PUBLIC

Contact lists of “interested-public” are maintained for the Wausau MPO Commission and the Bicycle and Pedestrian sub-Committee. Anyone interested in being added to the mailing list of any of the Wausau MPO committees may do so at [www.WausauMPO.org](http://www.WausauMPO.org) or by contacting the Wausau MPO staff office at 715-261-6000.

# MPO COMMISSION and COMMITTEES

## MARATHON COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION (MCMPC)

### WORK ELEMENTS

The Marathon County Metropolitan Planning Commission (Wausau MPO) is the policy-making agency and the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the greater Wausau, Wisconsin metropolitan planning area (MPA). As the MPO, the MCMPC, assisted by a three person staff, is responsible for the development, amendment (if needed), and update of a:

- Metropolitan Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)—a long-range (20-yr) plan updated every five years.
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)—a short-range (4-yr) program of transportation improvement projects updated at least every four years, which the Wausau MPO amends annually.
- Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)—a short-range (1-yr) scope of work for the one-person Wausau MPO staff, amended annually.
- Public Participation Plan (PPP).

### MEMBERSHIP

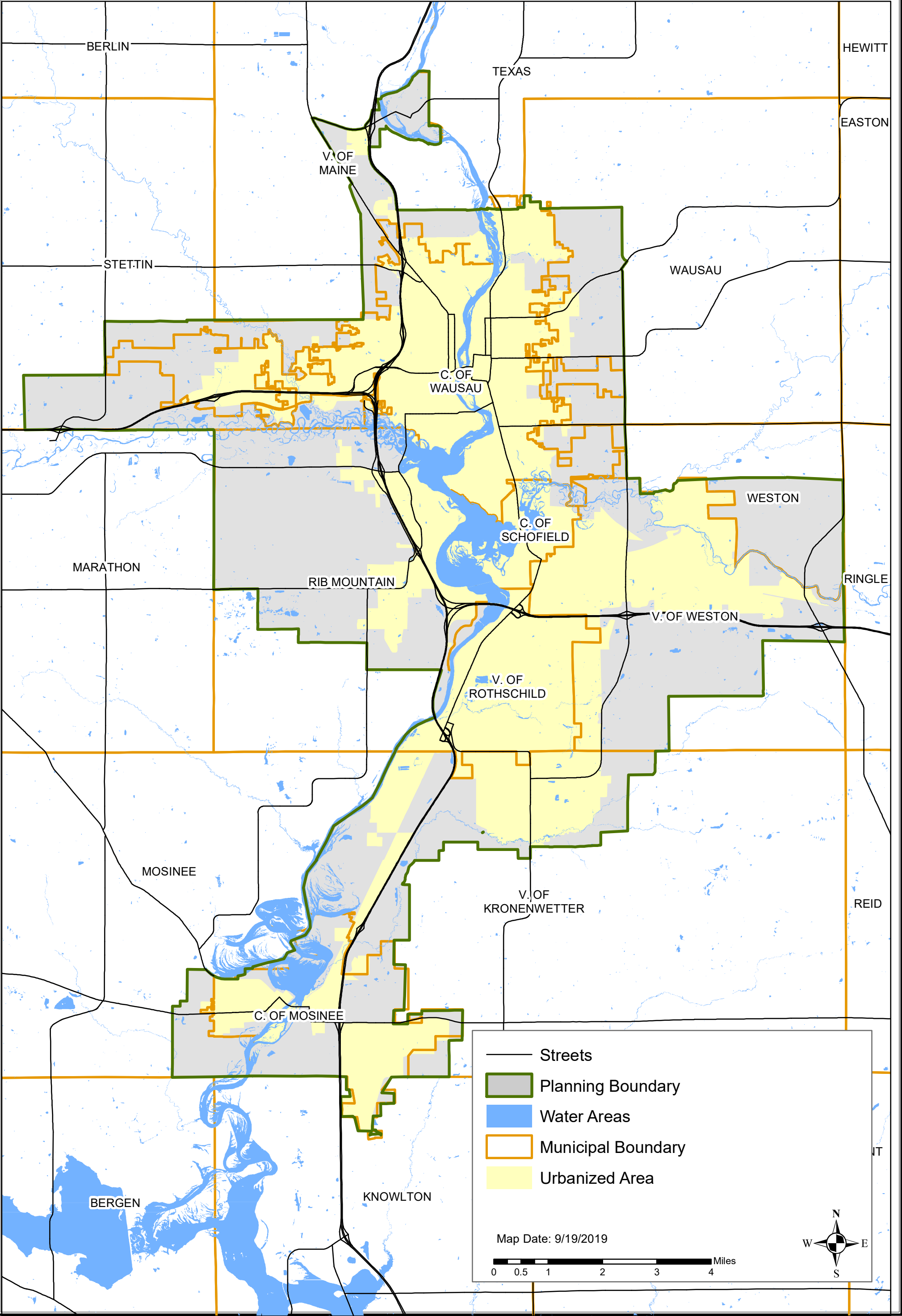
The MCMPC is currently comprised of one member from each of 14 governmental entities: the mayors from Mosinee, Schofield, and Wausau; the presidents from Kronenwetter, Maine, Rothschild, and Weston; the chairpersons from Mosinee, Rib Mountain, Stettin, Wausau, and Weston; a representative of the Marathon County Infrastructure Committee; and the WisDOT Regional Director. (See Map 1 for an illustration of the planning area and its constituent communities.)

### MEETINGS

The Marathon County Metropolitan Planning Commission generally conducts business on the second Tuesday of every month. Meetings are held at 2:00 p.m. at the Marathon County River Drive Complex, 210/212 River Drive, Wausau, WI 54403 unless otherwise noted on agendas. These meetings are being conducted virtually and are still open to the public. The meeting postings has the information needed to access the meeting remotely.

All meetings are documented in minutes, with minutes and agendas distributed via mail and e-mail to all Wausau MPO contact lists. Minutes and agendas are also posted to the Wausau MPO website ([www.WausauMPO.org](http://www.WausauMPO.org)), as well as, the Marathon County website at least 7 calendar days prior to the scheduled meeting. The main local media outlets of Midwest Communication, WAOW TV9, WSAW TV9, and Gannet newspaper, and The Record Review newspaper all receive agendas via fax and e-mail.

# Wausau MPO Planning Boundary



## TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC)

### WORK ELEMENTS

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) is one of two subcommittees of the Wausau MPO. TAC responsibilities are to:

- Review the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), and Public Participation Plan (PPP).
- Determine and evaluate transportation and land use alternatives during update of LRTP.
- Review, evaluate and recommend adoption of Wausau MPO policies and plans that are not under the purview of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Sub-Committee.
- Solicit, evaluate, and prioritize STP-Block Grant (Urban) and local studies projects.
- Prioritize transportation enhancement projects.
- Serve as technical experts.

### MEMBERSHIP

Membership includes representatives from each municipality within the MPO urbanized area boundary. Other representatives are members of: The Marathon County Highway Department, WisDOT Regional Staff, Wausau Area Transit System (Metro Ride), Central Wisconsin Airport, North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, and the Wausau/Central Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce.

### MEETINGS

TAC meetings generally take place on the second Tuesday of every month beginning at 1:00 p.m. at the Marathon County River Drive Complex, 210/212 River Drive, Wausau, WI 54403, when needed. During significant planning activities, the TAC may meet more often at the request of the committee. These meetings are open to the public.

All meetings are documented in minutes, with minutes and agendas distributed via mail and e-mail to all Wausau MPO contact lists. Minutes and agendas are also posted to the Wausau MPO website ([www.WausauMPO.org](http://www.WausauMPO.org)), as well as the Marathon County website at least 7 days prior to the scheduled meeting. The media receive agendas via fax and e-mail. These meetings are being conducted virtually and are still open to the public. The meeting postings has the information needed to access the meeting remotely.

## BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN SUB-COMMITTEE

### WORK ELEMENTS

The Bicycle & Pedestrian Sub-Committee (Bike/Ped. Committee) was established to study, develop, recommend, and advise the Wausau MPO TAC on a wide range of programs and issues concerning the development and implementation of the bicycle and pedestrian components of the LRTP. The Bike/Ped. Committee may:

- Develop and recommend the bicycle and pedestrian elements of the Long Range Transportation Plan.
- Work to implement the Wausau MPO and member community bicycle and pedestrian modal plans.
- Study, pursue, and encourage public and private funding for future bicycle and pedestrian-related projects.
- Develop programs to promote bicycling and walking; to educate bicyclists, pedestrians, and the public; and to encourage and foster the increased use of bicycling and walking as transportation throughout the Wausau metro area.
- Review the TIP for the inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian facilities in roadway projects.
- Prioritize transportation enhancement projects.
- Carry out other bicycle and pedestrian related tasks as requested by the MPO.

### MEMBERSHIP

The committee membership shall strive to reflect the larger regional community and include a mix of representatives from the Wausau MPO municipalities as well as from the following areas:

Business Community	Civic/Philanthropic interests
Education Community	Law Enforcement
Recreational interests	Engineering/Consultants
Community seniors	Government officials and staff
Commuter and Recreational bicyclists	Regional Planning Staff
Health Professionals	Pedestrians

### MEETINGS

Bike/Ped. Committee meetings generally take place every fourth Thursday of the month beginning at 5:30 p.m. at the Marathon County River Drive Complex, 210 River Dr., Wausau, WI 54403. Any change in the meeting date, time, or place will be reflected on the agenda.

All meetings are documented in minutes, with minutes and agendas distributed via mail and e-mail to all Bike/Ped. Committee contact lists. Minutes and agendas are also posted to the Wausau MPO website ([www.WausauMPO.org](http://www.WausauMPO.org)), as well as the Marathon County website at least 7 calendar days prior to the scheduled meeting. The media receive agendas via fax and e-mail. Involvement

in this committee is open to the general public and any individual or organization interested in bicycle and pedestrian issues. These meetings are being conducted virtually and are still open to the public. The meeting postings has the information needed to access the meeting remotely.

# PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCEDURES FOR MPO PLANS & PROGRAMS

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## LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (LRTP)

### UPDATES & AMENDMENTS

The Wausau MPO is required by Federal law to prepare a long-range (20-year) transportation plan every five years. The plan, at a minimum, must address:

- Transportation facilities, including major roadways, transit, multimodal and intermodal facilities, and intermodal connectors
- Bicycle and Pedestrian;
- Environmental mitigation activities;
- Financial plan;
- Operational and management strategies
- Projected Demands (23 CFR 450.322(f));
- Capital investment and other strategies; and
- Transportation and transit enhancement activities.

As the LRTP is being prepared, Wausau MPO staff makes use of all of the outreach activities identified earlier. Each activity and its results are summarized and incorporated into the LRTP as appropriate (either within the body of the LRTP or as an appendix). Public Participation is encouraged throughout the update process at Wausau MPO and technical committee meetings, through comments received at the Wausau MPO office, and at outreach events.

Although a new LRTP is completed only every five years, components of the LRTP, which include modal plans like the Transit Development Program and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, may be completed or amended as needed. These plans serve as stand-alone plans as well as components of the LRTP. Once adopted by the Wausau MPO, stand-alone documents that amend the modal plans or the LRTP will be considered part of the LRTP. During the development of the LRTP, new and amended modal plans will be incorporated into the LRTP either by reference or by content. Amendments to the LRTP may occur when significant changes have been made in Federal transportation law. “Significant” changes include:

- Changing the scope of the planning process (i.e. adding a new planning factor).
- Adding new requirements for the development of the plan.
- Adding new requirements for consultation.
- A Safety Element.

## PUBLIC NOTICE & COMMENT

The public notice process for the new and amended LRTP and related modal plans includes:

- Publishing the draft plan along with a public notice on the Wausau MPO website (WausauMPO.org) and the Marathon County website (MarathonCounty.org) to begin a 45 calendar day public comment period on the plan document;
- Distributing the public notice via mail and e-mail to all Wausau MPO contact lists;
- Inviting the public, and notifying the media, by meeting agenda to provide public comment at the Wausau MPO meetings that are scheduled to adopt the new or amended LRTP or modal plan. Comments made at the meeting are recorded in the minutes and comments received at the Wausau MPO staff office are read into those minutes.

A summary of the public process and all significant comments will be included as an appendix in the final LRTP.

## PUBLICATION

The LRTP and modal plans will be made available in digital format at WausauMPO.org and in hardcopy at the Wausau MPO staff office. Hardcopies will be distributed to Wausau MPO member communities, agencies, and other stakeholders by request on a case by case basis. Reasonable requests for alternate formats will be considered and accommodated when possible. Hardcopies of the LRTP may be requested. A fee may be charged, depending on the nature of the request.

## TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)

Federal law requires the Wausau MPO to develop a four-year transportation improvement program (TIP) that includes:

- A list of proposed federally- or state-funded and regionally significant multi-modal projects to be carried out within the four-year period after the initial adoption of the TIP. All regionally significant projects may not include federal funds, some may be totally funded by local communities;
- A list of “illustrative projects” that are desired but that do not yet have identified funding;
- A prioritization process for allocating funds to competitive federal programs;
- Project descriptions in sufficient detail to identify each project or phase of the project;
- An estimate of total project costs;
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compatibility, if applicable;
- A financial plan that:
  - Demonstrates how the TIP can be implemented; and
  - Indicates resources from public and private sources that are reasonably expected to be available to carry out the program.

All projects listed must be consistent with the LRTP.

## UPDATES & AMENDMENTS

Wausau MPO policy is to update the TIP annually to reflect changes in Wisconsin's federal- and state-funded projects. The TIP includes the state's allocations of Surface Transportation Program Block Grant (STPBG) and Transportation Alternatives funds. Public participation is encouraged throughout the update process at Wausau MPO and technical committee meetings, through comments received at the Wausau MPO office, and at outreach events.

The general update schedule is illustrated in Table 2.

**TABLE 2:  
GENERAL SCHEDULE FOR TIP REVIEW AND APPROVAL**

Activity	Schedule
Solicit transportation projects for TIP project list	July
Prepare draft TIP	August
TAC and Wausau MPO review and adopt TIP project list	September
Review draft TIP with FHWA, DOTs, TAC	October
Wausau MPO approves and submits final TIP	November

Revisions to the TIP may occur between its annually-scheduled updates. Revisions include administrative modifications and amendments.

### TIP AMENDMENT PROCEDURES

Administrative Modifications are revisions to the TIP that are not significant enough to require public or committee notification, review, and comment.

No Amendment is required if:

- Changes to the implementation schedule for projects are within the first four years of the approved TIP.
- Changes in the scope or character of work or project limits remain reasonably consistent with the approved project.
- Changes to the funding sources, categories or amount for a project without changing the scope of work or schedule within the first four years of the TIP.

The Amendment process goes through the MPO committee structure and the WisDOT and FHWA if:

A Minor Amendment is needed if:

- There is an addition of a preservation project to the first four years of the TIP, including advancing a project for implementation from the out-years of the TIP.

- Moving a preservation project out of the first four years of the TIP.
- Changing the scope of a preservation project within the first four years of the TIP such that the current description is no longer reasonably accurate.
- Changes in a project funding that impacts the funding for other projects within the first four years of the TIP forcing any preservation project out of the four-year window.

A Major Amendment is need if:

- An addition of an expansion project into the first four years of the TIP, including advancing a project for implementation from the out-years of the TIP.
- Moving an expansion project out of the first four years of the TIP.
- Significantly changing the scope of an expansion project within the first four years of the TIP such that the current description is no longer reasonably accurate.
- The addition or deletion of any project that exceeds the lesser of:
  - 10 % of the federal funding programmed for the calendar year or \$1,000,000.

The Amendment process goes through a public involvement opportunity then through the MPO committee structure and the WisDOT and FHWA.

## PUBLIC NOTICE & COMMENT

The annual TIP update and TIP amendments initiate a public participation process whereby Wausau MPO staff:

- 1) Publish the TIP update or amendment and a public notice on the Wausau MPO website to begin a 30-day public comment period for amendments, the annual project list, and TIP document.
- 2) Distribute the public notice via mail and e-mail to all Wausau MPO contact lists. Invite the public, and notify the media, by meeting agenda to provide public comment at:
- 3) The Wausau MPO meeting scheduled to approve a TIP Amendment
  - The Wausau MPO meeting scheduled to approve the annual TIP update project list (September).
  - The Wausau MPO meeting scheduled to approve the annual TIP update (November).

Comments made at the meeting are recorded in the minutes and comments received at the Wausau MPO staff office are included in the minutes.

## PUBLICATION

A copy of the public notice and all significant comments received will be incorporated into an appendix in the final TIP document. The TIP will be made available in digital format at [www.WausauMPO.org](http://www.WausauMPO.org) and in hardcopy at the Wausau MPO staff office. Hardcopies of the TIP and modal plans will be distributed to Wausau MPO member communities, agencies, and other stakeholders by request on a case by case basis. Reasonable requests for alternate formats will be

considered and accommodated when possible. Hardcopies of the TIP may be requested. A fee may be charged, depending on the nature of the request.

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN (PPP)

### PUBLIC NOTICE & COMMENT

The public participation process outlined in the PPP will be evaluated and amended at least every five years. An amendment to the PPP may also occur if a federal or state regulation regarding public participation or environmental justice has been created or modified. In all cases, the public will be invited to provide comment. Public participation is encouraged throughout the update process at the Wausau MPO and TAC meetings. Additional public meetings may be held depending on the scope of the update or amendment.

The public notice process for the PPP includes:

- 1) Publishing the PPP document a public notice on the Wausau MPO website at [www.WausauMPO.org](http://www.WausauMPO.org) to begin a 45-day public comment period on the draft plan.
- 2) Distributing the public notice via mail and e-mail to Wausau MPO contact lists.
- 3) Inviting the public, and notifying the media, by meeting agenda to provide public comment at the Wausau MPO meeting scheduled to adopt the PPP. Comments made at the meeting or received at the staff office are recorded in the minutes. Significant comments received by staff during the review period are documented and included in the Appendix.

### PUBLICATION

The PPP will be made available in digital format at [www.WausauMPO.org](http://www.WausauMPO.org) and in hardcopy at the Wausau MPO staff office. Hardcopies of the PPP will be distributed to Wausau MPO member communities, agencies, and other stakeholders by request on a case by case basis. Reasonable requests for alternate formats will be considered and accommodated when possible. Hardcopies of the PPP may be requested. A fee may be charged depending on the nature of the request.

## TITLE VI AND NON-DISCRIMINATION PROGRAM / LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY PLAN

The Wausau MPO maintains a Title VI and Non Discrimination Program / Limited English Proficiency Plan (Title VI Program) in compliance with *Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964*, the *Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987* and related federal regulations.

The Title VI Program assures that no person or groups of persons shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability/handicap, and income status, be excluded from

participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any and all programs, services, or activities administered by the Wausau MPO, regardless of whether those programs and activities are federally funded or not.

These regulations also assure that every effort will be made to prevent discrimination through the impacts of its programs, policies, and activities on the basis of sexual orientation, minority, and low-income status. In addition, that the Wausau MPO will provide meaningful access to services for persons with Limited English Proficiency.

The Wausau MPO Area *Title VI and Non-discrimination Program / Limited English Proficiency Plan* are inherently related to public participation and is considered part of this PPP by this reference.

## UPDATES & AMENDMENTS

The assurances and procedures in the Title VI Program will be evaluated and amended at least every five years. An amendment to the Title VI Program may also occur if a federal regulation regarding non-discrimination or limited English proficiency has been created or modified. In all cases, the public will be invited to provide comment. Public participation is encouraged throughout the update process at Wausau MPO and technical committee meetings, through comments received at the Wausau MPO office, and at outreach events.

## PUBLIC NOTICE & COMMENT

The public notice process for the Title VI Program includes:

- 1) Publishing the Title VI Program and a public notice on the Wausau MPO website at [www.WausauMPO.org](http://www.WausauMPO.org) to begin a 45 calendar day public comment period on the draft plan.
- 2) Distributing the public notice via mail and e-mail to Wausau MPO contact lists.
- 3) Inviting the public, and notifying the media, by meeting agenda to provide public comment at the Wausau MPO meeting scheduled to adopt the Title VI Program. Comments made at the meeting or received at the staff office are recorded in the minutes.

## PUBLICATION

The Title VI Program will be made available in digital format at [www.WausauMPO.org](http://www.WausauMPO.org) and in hardcopy at the Wausau MPO staff office. Hardcopies of the Title VI Program will be distributed to Wausau MPO member communities, agencies, and other stakeholders by request on a case by case basis. Reasonable requests for alternate formats will be considered and accommodated when possible. Hardcopies of the Title VI Program may be requested. A fee may be charged depending on the nature of the request.

# OUTREACH ACTIVITIES & EVALUATION

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## OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

The Wausau MPO uses a variety of methods to inform and engage the public during the planning, update, and amendment of plans and programs. The type of medium used and the degree to which the public are encouraged to be involved depends, of course, on the planning activity that is taking place. The Wausau MPO commonly uses the following methods and techniques:

- **News Media.** Wausau MPO staff distributes committee meeting agendas, public notices, and public announcements via a media fax list maintained by Marathon County and its own e-mail list of media contacts.
- **Contact Lists.** Wausau MPO staff maintain an extensive list of public participation contacts (e-mail and mail) to include representatives of:
  - Elderly and disabled populations;
  - Transportation providers;
    - Public and private transit
  - Federal, state, regional, & local government agencies;
  - Members of Wausau MPO committees;
  - Special Interests; and
  - Other interested public.
- **Website.** Wausau MPO staff update the site at [www.WausauMPO.org](http://www.WausauMPO.org) on a regular basis with agendas and minutes from committee meetings, and as the opportunity arises with draft and final plans and programs. The website also serves as a medium by which the public may obtain contact information for comments or questions.
- **Public Information Meetings (PIMs), Workshops, & Open Houses.** These activities generally take place during plan updates and planning studies. The meetings provide an opportunity for public participation and comment early and throughout the planning process and an opportunity for planning staff to illustrate alternatives and recommendations. The results and comments obtained at these meetings are incorporated into their respective planning documents. All public meetings are held at accessible locations that are served by transit.
- **Public Relations Presentations.** Wausau MPO staff will upon request present before any school, civic, special interest, neighborhood, or other group to educate the public on Wausau MPO planning functions, plans, programs, and studies.
- **Focus Groups.** Wausau MPO staff will conduct focus groups, when deemed appropriate, with invited members of project-specific stakeholders during issues

identification and other data gathering activities. The results and comments are incorporated into their respective planning documents.

- **Surveys.** Surveys, which are project-specific, are used extensively by Wausau MPO staff during the updates of plans for data gathering and by consultants during planning studies. The survey process and the survey results are incorporated into their respective planning documents.
- **Information Booths/Kiosks.** Wausau MPO will set up and maintain information booths or kiosks at locations (i.e. transit center) and special events (i.e. bicycle rodeo, fairs).
- **Visualization Techniques.** Wausau MPO staff relies heavily on maps, PowerPoint presentations, and display boards to describe LRTPs and TIPs. Graphics to include maps, charts, graphs, and pictures are used extensively within the documents themselves to illustrate relationships, trends, deficiencies, etc. in the existing conditions of our transportation systems and to illustrate recommendations.
- **Social Media.** Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) has been used in the past by current staff with seemingly little success and so was abandoned. Potential new staff may have more knowledge of social media to make this a more successful outreach technique

Table 3 has been developed to illustrate and describe the elements of each outreach activity or technique. Those elements include:

- Audience (who the activity is meant to reach);
- Solicitation (how we invite participation);
- Distribution (how we disseminate information);
- Use (what purpose(s) the activity serves);
- Updates (when the activity is modified/improved);
- Public Notice and Public Comment Period; and
- Evaluation how activities are tracked over time.

As discussed previously, the results and comments obtained from public information meetings, focus groups, and surveys will be documented and incorporated into their respective planning documents.

## EVALUATION

Table 3 is an evaluation matrix of the outreach activities, their frequency of use, and their relative success rank for and challenges to engaging the public in Wausau MPO plans and programs.

TABLE 3: EVALUATION MATRIX OF OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Outreach Activity	Frequency of Use	Success Rank	Challenges	How to improve
Committee structure	Monthly or bi-monthly	Good	Participation has been lagging.	Survey of committee members
News media	Monthly or bi-monthly	Fair	Attend only when a controversial issue is on the agenda	Direct solicitation of reporters as well as the organization
Distribution lists	Monthly	Good	Limited contacts among low-income and minority groups	Seek out new organizations in the community
Website	Monthly	Good	Not currently ADA accessible	Make website accessible
Public meetings	During plan updates	Fair	Poor to fair attendance	Better marketing
Public relations	When requested	Good	Too infrequent	Direct solicitation of civic, neighborhood, and other groups
Focus groups	During plan updates	Very good	Obtaining the appropriate contacts	Expand network; improve public relations
Surveys	During plan updates/studies	Very good	Distribution to desired universe	Establish contacts for external distribution
Information booths	At special events	Fair	Attendees reluctant to stop and chat	Provide more eye-catching displays
Visualization	Monthly to more or less frequently	Very good	Can be too technical	Simplify; make easier to interpret
Technical assistance	When requested	Fair	Passive	Recipients of data or maps will credit the MPO as the source

Table 4 identifies the pages in this Public Participation Plan where the requirements of 23 CFR 450 are addressed.

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**TABLE 4: ASSESSMENT OF REQUIREMENTS UNDER 23 CFR 450 SECTION 316  
INTERESTED PARTIES, PARTICIPATION, AND CONSULTATION**

Requirement	Pages where addressed
Providing adequate public notice	4, 5, 6
Providing timely notice and reasonable access to information	4, 5, 6
Employing visualization techniques to describe plans and programs	6
Making public information available in electronically accessible formats	6
Holding public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times	4, 5
Demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input	24-25, 28-29
Seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems	7, 8-10
Providing an additional opportunity for public comment if the final MTP or TIP differs significantly from the version made available for public comment	19
Coordinating with statewide processes	5
Reviewing the effectiveness of the participation plan	22, 28-29

# PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Evaluation of the current Public Participation Plan reveals a need to be more aggressive with some of our outreach techniques to increase participation, especially by those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems. We also need to establish accessibility policies and best practices so as to make the Wausau MPO plans, programs, and processes equally accessible to persons with disabilities as they are to persons without disabilities. The Public Participation Improvement Plan outlines the objectives and outcomes for three broad goals to be met by the next update of the Public Participation Plan:

1. Improving attendance at Wausau MPO committee meetings;
2. Improving participation by those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems;
3. Complying with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

## Improving Attendance at Wausau MPO Committee Meetings

- A. Increase the general public attendance at each Wausau MPO committee meeting by 5% before 2023 as calculated from the baseline average for 2020.
  - Improve outreach to the general public.
  - Market the Wausau MPO.
- B. Increase committee members attendance at each Wausau MPO committee meeting to 80% by 2023 as calculated from the baseline average for 2020.
  - Modify membership as needed to achieve maximum attendance and representation.
  - Conduct a survey of members to find out how best to improve member attendance. These data will be tracked annually and reported in the next update of the Public Participation Plan in 2023.

## Improving Participation by those Traditionally Underserved

- A. Add at least one TAC and/or Bike/Ped. member to the groups to represent the interests of minority persons and low-income persons by 2023.
  - Solicit organizations interested in connecting workers to jobs
  - Post educational materials and meeting agendas at local libraries

## Complying with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act

### Establish Accessibility Guidelines and Policies

Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 requires the Wausau MPO and other state and local governments to provide people with disabilities equal access to

programs, services, and activities. Because Marathon County is the Wausau MPO's third party fiscal agent, Marathon County compliance with Title II is not a condition of Wausau MPO compliance with Title II. The Wausau MPO certifies ADA compliance in its planning process:

1. An ADA coordinator. Contact: Dave Mack, MPO Director at 715-261-6043, [dave.mack@co.marathon.wi.us](mailto:dave.mack@co.marathon.wi.us), or 212 River Drive, Wausau, WI 54403.
2. A Notice under the Americans with Disabilities Act. See [Appendix B](#). The notice is posted in the Wausau MPO staff office and on the Wausau MPO website at [www.WausauMPO.org](http://www.WausauMPO.org).
3. A grievance procedure. See [Appendix B](#). The grievance procedure is posted in the Wausau MPO staff office and on the Wausau MPO website at [www.WausauMPO.org](http://www.WausauMPO.org).
4. Effective communications policies and procedures to deal with requests from the general public for alternative formats and interpreters. See [Appendix C](#). The effective communication's policies are posted in the Wausau MPO staff office and on the Wausau MPO website at [www.WausauMPO.org](http://www.WausauMPO.org).
5. An accessible website. This activity is in progress. The Title II checklist for website accessibility as provided in the *ADA Best Practices Tool Kit for State and Local Governments* can be found in Appendix D. This checklist assesses where the Wausau MPO is as of this Public Participation Plan update.

# COVID-19 IMPACT

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With society in the grips of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the past few months have seen communities experience difficulties connecting to their constituents. Although there are technologies and ways to conduct business virtually, the connection using effective digital methods are still in their infancy from a public sector prospective. Online communication has its challenges and opportunities. Communities need to be conscience of the fact that not everyone has the ability or resources to participate successfully even though there are many new virtual engagement tools available to increase the accessibility of people that can and choose to utilize the technology.

The Wausau MPO will be looking at ways to provide adequate notice, reasonable accommodations, and options to provide the public the ability to share in open and accessible meetings and project discussions.

The public engagement process will needs to establish a clear purpose for each of the engagement opportunities. The ability to identify and rectify the barriers to access for people interested in participating need to be determined for the future. Identifying what unique difficulties may exist for people of race, age, income and education levels needs to also be part of identifying solutions.

There are many agencies and organizations that work in the public participation field, all of whom have created comprehensive lists of the tools and best practices to guide public participation efforts in the current pandemic state and into the future.

Some of the things the Wausau MPO will begin to establish is a better digital presence with the ability to share information and invite feedback from the public through our email, social media accounts, website, press releases and others approaches. It is our intent to use the most familiar and widely used platforms to make it easier to adapt to the new and ever changing communication approaches. Over the past several years, virtual engagement platforms have been developed to specifically target local governments and planning agencies with features that can be tailored to suit the needs of the community or project. The use of video conferencing is now being use on an everyday basis. Providing the public the ability to view or call in, provide recordings or transcripts can make all the difference in staying connected with the public.

In these uncertain times, the Wausau MPO will be pursuing many of the options addressed here and will continue to look for opportunities to better engage with the public in the future.

# APPENDIX A:

## Record of Public Process

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Public Notice, Record of Comments

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Published August 27, 2020 Wausau Daily Record Herald

### Public Notice of Availability

#### **Wausau Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Public Participation Plan**

The Marathon County Metropolitan Planning Commission, acting as the Wausau Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), is updating its Public Participation Plan (PPP) providing an overview of how the Wausau MPO includes public participation in long and short term transportation planning. The draft PPP is available for public review and comment at the Marathon County Conservation, Planning and Zoning Department, 210 River Drive, Wausau, WI and at [www.wausaumpo.org](http://www.wausaumpo.org) from August 28, 2020 to October 13, 2020.

The Public Participation Plan will be considered at the October 13, 2020 Marathon County Metropolitan Planning Commission meeting. The public will be provided an opportunity to submit written or oral comments at this meeting.

Any person planning to review the document or attend this meeting who needs some type of special accommodation to participate should call the County Clerk's Office at 715-261-1500. Comments regarding the document may be mailed to David Mack at the Wausau MPO office, (Marathon County Conservation, Planning and Zoning Department) 210 River Drive, Wausau, WI 54403, (715) 261-6043, or e-mailed to [dave.mack@co.marathon.wi.us](mailto:dave.mack@co.marathon.wi.us).

### Public Comment

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No Public Comments were received at the Wausau MPO office or at the above referenced Public information Meeting.

## Appendix B:

### **Notice and Grievance Procedure**

#### **Notice under the Americans with Disabilities Act**

In accordance with the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Wausau MPO will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in its services, programs, and activities.

**Employment:** The Wausau MPO does not discriminate on the basis of disability in its hiring or employment practices and complies with all regulations promulgated by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission under title I of the ADA.

**Effective Communication:** The Wausau MPO will generally, upon request, provide appropriate aids and services leading to effective communication for qualified persons with disabilities so they can participate equally in the Wausau MPO's programs, services, and activities, including qualified sign language interpreters, documents in Braille, and other ways of making information and communications accessible to people who have speech, hearing, and vision impairments.

**Modifications to Policies and Procedures:** The Wausau MPO will make all reasonable modifications to policies and programs to ensure that people with disabilities have an equal to enjoy all of its programs, services, and activities.

Anyone who requires an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, or a modification of policies or procedures to participate in a program, service or activity of the Wausau MPO, should contact the office of Dave Mack at 715-261-6043 as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before the scheduled event.

The ADA does not require the Wausau MPO to take any action that would fundamentally alter the nature of its programs or services, or impose an undue financial or administrative burden.

Complaints that a program, service, or activity of the Wausau MPO is not accessible to persons with disabilities should be directed to Dave Mack at 715-261-6043.

The Wausau MPO will not place a surcharge on a particular individual with a disability or any group of individuals with disabilities to cover the cost of providing auxiliary aids/services or reasonable modifications of policy, such as retrieving items from locations that are open to the public but are not accessible to persons who use wheelchairs.

## Grievance Procedure under the Americans with Disabilities Act

This Grievance Procedure is established to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA"). It may be used by anyone who wishes to file a complaint alleging discrimination on the basis of disability in the provision of services, activities, programs, or benefits by Marathon County. Marathon County's Personnel Policy governs employment-related complaints of disability discrimination.

The complaint should be in writing and contain information about the alleged discrimination such as name, address, phone number of complainant and location, date, and description of the problem. Alternative means of filing complaints, such as personal interviews or a tape recording of the complaint, will be made available for persons with disabilities upon request.

The complaint should be submitted by the grievant and/or his/her designee as soon as possible but no later than 60 calendar days after the alleged violation to:

Dave Mack, MPO Director  
Wausau Area MPO  
210 River Drive,  
Wausau, WI 54403

Within 15 calendar days after receipt of the complaint, Dave Mack or his designee will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and the possible resolutions. Within 15 calendar days of the meeting, Dave Mack or his designee will respond in writing, and where appropriate, in a format accessible to the complainant, such as large print, Braille, or audio tape. The response will explain the position of the Wausau MPO and offer options for substantive resolution of the complaint.

If the response by Dave Mack or his designee does not satisfactorily resolve the issue, the complainant and/or his/her designee may appeal the decision within 15 calendar days after receipt of the response to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) ADA Coordinator or her designee.

Within 15 calendar days after receipt of the appeal, the WisDOT ADA Coordinator or her designee will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and possible resolutions. Within 15 calendar days after the meeting, the WisDOT ADA Coordinator or her designee will respond in writing, and, where appropriate, in a format accessible to the complainant, with a final resolution of the complaint.

All written complaints received by Dave Mack or his designee, appeals to the WisDOT ADA Coordinator or their designee, and responses from these two offices will be retained by the Wausau MPO for at least three years.

## Appendix C:

### **Provision of Effective Communication**

The Wausau MPO has adopted a written communications policy and a public meeting accessibility policy to ensure that persons with disabilities have an opportunity to request auxiliary aids and services to participate in Wausau MPO programs, services, and activities.

#### Written Communications Policy

The Wausau MPO will include in each document it distributes to the general public the following statement indicating that the information is available in alternate formats to individuals with disabilities upon request and within reason:

“To request this document in an alternate format, please contact

Dave Mack at 715-261-6043 or at [dave.mack@co.marathon.wi.us](mailto:dave.mack@co.marathon.wi.us).”

#### Public Meeting Accessibility Policy

The Wausau MPO will include in all of its written correspondence for meetings and events open to the public the following statement ensuring accessible meeting locations and interpretive assistance:

“If you have a disability and need assistance participating in this meeting, please contact Dave Mack at 715-261-6043 or at [dave.mack@co.marathon.wi.us](mailto:dave.mack@co.marathon.wi.us) at least one week in advance of the meeting.”