



## RTPO Technical and Citizens Committee Meeting

August 21, 2019

10:30 a.m.

MVPO 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room

**Members Present:** Charles Schreck, Todd Roth, Paul Heisey, Tim Schumm, Will Burns, Jerry Hayes, Melinda Sprow, Ellen Smith, Emma Kirkpatrick, Dennis Miller

**Others Present:** Kathy Strong

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### 1. Introductions/Convene Meeting

- a. The meeting was convened at 10:30 a.m.

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### 2. RTPO Program Activities Update

- a. Safety Initiatives
    - Safety Study: MVPO is in the process of completing a safety study for Williams County at Co Rd K and Co Rd 13. There have been three crashes in the past month at this intersection, with one fatal crash. After evaluating the site, MVPO will assess countermeasures to install with grant opportunities through ODOT Safety Funds.
    - Safety Report: MVPO is currently updating the RTPO's Safety Report. This document is expected to be completed this fall.
    - Safety Funding: Henry County was awarded project funding for a diamond interchange at US 24 and Co Rd 17D, with a scheduled start date in 2022. The project will eliminate left turns at Banner School Road, Co Rd 17, Twp Rd 16, and Co Rd P. The City of Napoleon also received funding to construct a roundabout at the intersection of State Route 108 and westbound US Route 24, with the addition of sidewalks on the roundabout. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2021.
  - b. Active Transportation
    - MVPO is in the process of developing an Active Transportation Plan for Defiance County. The Active Transportation Plan will outline the vision, goals, and strategies needed to support increased modes of Active Transportation in Defiance County. MVPO has completed a public survey, gathered existing condition data, and conducted two public meetings. The public survey received 500 responses from June to July, in which participants reported the need for sidewalks where there are none, designated bike parking, as well as more nature/natural trails in the County. Two public meetings were recently held in Hicksville and Defiance to gain further feedback from residents. Through an interactive mapping exercise, several areas were identified where residents wanted to see improvements for sidewalks, bike lanes/paths, and trails, as well as connections within and outside of the County. The plan will be complete by the end of the year. MVPO is currently soliciting projects for the plan from local entities and will match grant funding to each project submitted.
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c. Safe Routes to School

- MVPO is working with the City of Bryan to draft a School Travel Plan for the Bryan City School District in grades K-8 in order to make walking and biking to school safer. Developing a Safe Routes to School Travel Plan is an implementation item from the Williams County Active Transportation Plan. The committee will be meeting again in September. Currently, MVPO is working with school officials to complete student travel tallies and parent surveys. After these are complete, a walk audit will be completed to observe any issues with arrival and dismissal and determine key countermeasures to make improvements. ODOT funds for SRTS are available at the beginning of January, with applications due in March. There is no match requirement, and funds can be used for infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects.

d. Funding Programs/Projects Info

- Local Bridge Partnership Program: This program opens on September 1<sup>st</sup> and closes on October 15<sup>th</sup>. The program provides federal funds for bridge replacement projects that are owned by city or counties. To be eligible, a bridge must have a General Appraisal rating of  $\leq 4$ , be owned by a city or county, and be open to vehicular traffic. It must also be non-historic, and meet the federal definition of a bridge, i.e. have an NBIS bridge length greater than 20 feet. ODOT provides funding at 100% for these projects.
- TID Program: MVPO submitted three applications on behalf of the County TID boards. Two applications were chosen to receive funding. The City of Napoleon received \$200,000 for reconstructing and widening American Road and Oakwood in order to accommodate new business growth. The City of Bryan also received \$200,000 for the North Industrial Park improvements project, which will include the extension and construction of new access roads. Both projects contained job creation, with direct roadway improvements to support businesses. The other project that did not receive funding was in Fulton County, though this was expected since there were no committee funds. MVPO plans to resubmit this project next year once there are funds committed.

e. Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) Rural Consultation Meeting

- MVPO will be updating the Regional Transportation Improvement Program or RTIP from one developed several years ago. The RTIP is a document that gets completed in conjunction with ODOT's STIP – the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program. The STIP is a 4-year listing of the federal and state funded transportation projects that will be implemented in Ohio during the STIP timeframe for state fiscal years 2021-2024. This document is updated every 2 years and Metropolitan Planning Organizations develop their own TIP which becomes part of the STIP. The RTPPO's are responsible for developing a RTIP, which will become part of the STIP. The document will list projects in the MVPO region with state and federal funding over the 4-year time period as well as a list of unfunded local priorities.
- MVPO will host a Rural Consultation Meeting on Tuesday, October 1<sup>st</sup> from 1:30 – 3:30 p.m. in the auditorium of Northwest State Community College to begin the RTIP process. This meeting will be open to elected officials and other transportation stakeholders, with public meetings to be held by ODOT in the spring. The Rural Consultation Meeting enables officials and stakeholders to speak directly to ODOT representatives about regional projects, plans, and priorities. Formal invitations will be sent in early September.

f. Mobility Manager

- A mobility manager was recently hired at Fulton County's Triangular Processing in Wauseon. Josh Junge, the mobility manager, will be responsible for leading the coordinated planning process for Defiance, Fulton, and Henry Counties and working with the communities to expand services for human services transportation.
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### 3. Long Range Transportation Plan Update: Moving Together 2045

#### a. Development Schedule Update

- The long-range transportation plan update is on track according to our development schedule. The next steps on the schedule will be to prioritize projects.

#### b. Business Survey Results

- A survey was also sent to businesses in the MVPO region in order to understand the specific transportation needs of regional industries. The survey link was sent to the area economic development directors and then shared with their business contacts. The survey was open for about a month from May to June 2019 and received responses from 19 businesses, of which 8 were from Defiance County, 5 from Paulding County, 1 from Lucas County, 2 from Williams County, and 4 from Henry County. Some businesses covered multiple counties. The survey gathered information on transportation for employees, freight and economic development, general transportation issues, projects, and initiatives. Transportation initiatives included better rail access, long range improvement plans, developed processes, attraction to the area, entry-level employees, and greater route options for freight. Infrastructure condition was the greatest issue affecting businesses and the need for better highway access also affected businesses in terms of freight and economic development.

#### c. Public Survey Results –

- The public survey for the long-range transportation plan update was conducted from March to May 2019 and garnered 833 total responses. A drawing for two \$25 gas gift cards was offered to individuals that took the survey. Respondents were primarily Defiance County residents, though each County in the MVPO region was represented. Demographic information reflected that most respondents were in the household income range of \$50,000 - \$75,000; the majority of respondents were female; and each age group was represented in the survey. Respondents mostly drove alone when traveling, but also walked and carpooled as other modes of transportation. Most respondents had access to reliable transportation and did not report transportation as a barrier. Respondents wanted to see greater bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and public transportation options. The top transportation issue was poor pavement and infrastructure conditions, followed by lack of sidewalks or sidewalks in poor condition. When asked about future investments in the transportation network, respondents wanted roads to be kept in good repair, followed by green infrastructure, and public transportation. Transportation priorities included improving roadway safety, maintaining the system in good repair, and improving pedestrian safety. Only 25% of respondents said they would use a self-driving car, with slightly more saying they would use a self-driving bus (30%). Major concerns for self-driving technology included safety, user cost, and hacking. Other respondents said they didn't feel like there was a need for this technology in the region. Respondents were asked if they would maintain, improve, or expand several different transportation options. Respondents wanted to maintain the expressway network, passenger rail, and rail crossing locations; improve residential streets, main and major streets, and rail crossing locations; and expand the bicycle and pedestrian network, public transportation, and passenger rail. If offered a job that required a vehicle, 85% of respondents said they could accept, though 4% reported they would not have adequate transportation. The top three goals selected were safety, infrastructure condition & efficiency, and personal mobility.

#### d. New Projects/Updates – Project List

- 29 new projects were added to the long-range transportation plan project list and 8 projects were updated. 4 projects were removed from the list as they are being constructed or bid out soon. The project types ranged from resurfacing to road extensions, reconstructions, and even a bike path project.
  - MVPO uses a prioritization method to award points per project based on data in four categories: road restoration, new capacity, bridge projects, and transportation enhancement (non-motorized).
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There is not currently a category for railroads, which typically do not fit into the other categories, which causes these projects to score low. The committee approved adding a category for railroad projects, and considering measures such as the type of railroad, cars per day, rail condition, and at-grade crossings.

e. Next Steps

- The project list will be updated with current data and scored to provide new rankings. The new rankings will be shared prior to the November meeting to be approved at the meeting. Final approval will be sought by MVPO's Executive Council in December. Additionally, a list of regional priorities will be included within the RTIP. MVPO will be asking the committee to vote on projects for this list.

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**4. Upcoming Dates/Other Information**

- a. Other Business
- b. Rural Consultation Meeting – October 1, 2019 @ 1:30 p.m. – Northwest State Auditorium**
- c. Next Meeting – November 20, 2019 @ 10:30 a.m.

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**5. Adjourn**

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