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COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING ASSISTANCE: INFORMATIONAL GUIDE

MID-OHIO REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

The following document details the overall structure and guidance for Community-Based Planning Assistance (CBPA). Due to the rolling nature of incoming Requests for Assistance, no timelines are associated with the umbrella program.

In general, the process for this umbrella program is straight-forward:

1. Incoming Requests for Assistance are submitted through the Community-Based Planning Assistance Form located on the [Community-Based Planning Assistance](#) website.
2. Follow-up meetings will be scheduled with the requesting community so that MORPC Staff can ask any clarifying questions regarding the request's scope and desired timelines.
3. The proper program for assistance can then be identified, and the community requesting assistance will be directly referred to that particular program.

Community-Based Planning Assistance is intended to be a process which streamlines the way communities can access the assistance services provided by MORPC. Through this approach, communities can more effectively and quickly get connected to the resources that are requisite to completing their desired projects and tasks.

COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING ASSISTANCE STRUCTURE

The following outlines the overall structure of Community-Based Planning Assistance.

COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING ASSISTANCE LANDING PAGE

The CBPA landing page on MORPC's website is the main vehicle for both receiving assistance requests and providing information on assistance services that other organizations in the region are providing. The landing page includes generalized instructions on filling out the assistance form, a flowchart providing an overview of the program, and a link to tables which identify potential organizations which may also be providing services in a particular area.

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE FORM

The Request for Assistance Form is the heart of the Community-Based Planning Assistance umbrella of services. A link to this form will be located on the CBPA landing page, as well as instructions which provide some guidance on how to fill it out; the degree of specificity, contact information, etc.

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The form was designed to gather as much high-level information about a communities' anticipated needs as possible. All submitted requests will be followed up with a brief meeting to gain more information about the originating issues, desired goals, and timelines so that MORPC Staff can direct a community to the best resource for their particular needs.

FOLLOW-UP COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Community Requests for Assistance may not contain all of the information necessary to accurately refer a request to an appropriate source of assistance. Some projects may be able to be assisted by multiple programs, whereas others may need to be developed a little bit before an appropriate program can be identified. As such, it's necessary that every Request for Assistance has an associated follow-up meeting to discuss the proposed project, need, reasons for assistance, etc. so that assistance can be provided in a way that is best suited to that community's need and situation.

NOTIFICATION OF REQUESTS TO REGIONAL PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS (RPOs)

To promote regional approaches to planning and ensure that all RPOs in the Central Ohio region are aware of planning projects that may impact them, MORPC will send a summary table of requests to regional RPOs. To streamline the notification process, a bi-weekly email containing a table of the requests received over the previous two-week time period will be sent to organizational contacts with the region's RPOs.

PROGRAM REFERRAL PROCESS

For assistance services that remain with MORPC, the process of determining which program would be the most applicable will require some discernment. In general, all projects which are more tangential to tasks – as opposed to full projects – should be referred to the Planner Pool Program. These tasks / projects should be small enough that a consultant would not be interested in pursuing an RFP for a task / project of that size. Eligible activities under the Planner Pool Program are more fluid based on the expertise available through MORPC Staff; however, these requests should be primarily related to Community Development, Sustainability, Active Transportation, or Housing.

Projects which may be too intense for the Planner Pool – subsequently requiring a Consultant – should be referred to either the Consultant Services Program or the Technical Assistance Program. Any assistance request that falls within the eligible services of the Technical Assistance Program should be referred to that Program initially due to the potential for funding assistance with the project. Requested assistance that falls outside the scope of the Technical Assistance Program, or was otherwise not selected as a project through the Technical Assistance Program, should be referred to the Consultant Services Program.

In short, the Planner Pool Program was designed to assist with short to medium-term projects. Medium to long-range projects will likely be too intense for the Planner Pool Program, and will likely be referred to the Technical Assistance or Consultant Services Programs.

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE CLOSE-OUT

Once a request is referred to a Program, no additional follow-up or work through Community-Based Planning Assistance is needed. The referred program will be recorded with the request to help advise future requests which may be similar, but the Community will work through the referred program for the duration of the assistance.