



Central Ohio
Rural Planning
Organization

Public Participation Plan

May 2026

Central Ohio Rural Planning Organization

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www.morpc.org/corpo



Introduction

This Public Participation Plan specifies the procedures that the Central Ohio Rural Planning Organization (CORPO) will use to reach members of the public for their input while conducting its transportation planning process. The plan also includes a section on the federal American with Disabilities Act, and the nondiscrimination complaint procedures for programs and activities of CORPO.

CORPO Background

CORPO is designated as an Ohio Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) for the seven counties surrounding the Columbus metropolitan area, including Fairfield, Knox, Madison, Marion, Morrow, Pickaway, Union. In partnership with the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), each RTPO is tasked with several roles and responsibilities.

CORPO as the RTPO- Roles, Responsibilities, and Work Products

As an RTPO, CORPO has several federally required duties described in [23 CFR 450.210\(d\)](#), as well as state required major work products and services. The state and federal RTPO roles and responsibilities are described in this section.

RTPO RESPONSIBILITIES & ACTIVITIES

- **Public Involvement-** Each RTPO should have an adopted, proactive, and published public involvement process. The process must provide complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and support early and continuing involvement of the public in developing plans and programs. This document outlines how this will be achieved for CORPO's transportation planning products and decisions.
- **Transportation Fairness -** Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in programs that receive federal assistance, including transportation projects (Title VI, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d). Title IV applies to the planning process and planning products produced by RTPOs. Environmental Justice requirements, which are also included in Title VI of the Civils Rights Act of 1964, must also be met through the RPTO planning process.
- **Technical Assistance-** RTPO agencies, including CORPO, view their staff as a transportation resource for the region. CORPO staff work with member governments to identify needed transportation improvements and to help their members prepare project funding applications.
- **Special Studies-** RTPOs engage their member communities in discussions of regional needs and based on the discussions, lead special studies that address needs identified by their member communities. CORPO special studies are available on the [CORPO webpage here](#).



RPTO MAJOR WORK PRODUCTS

Copies of all CORPO major work products are available on the [CORPO webpage](#).

- **Long-Range Transportation Plan-** RTPOs are required to develop long-range transportation plans. The plan should identify the multimodal and intermodal transportation policies and facilities needed to meet the RTPO's travel demand for a minimum twenty-year horizon.
- **Regional Transportation Improvement Program-** This requirement is a four-year planning document developed to reflect the investment priorities of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for the RTPO region. The document serves to reflect the continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive planning effort to advance the transportation needs of the region. The CORPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a program of projects and strategies for implementing the near-term priorities in the long-range plan.
- **Annual RTPO Work Program-** RTPO agencies must develop a work program consistent with federal and state regulations each year that discusses the RTPO's planning priorities as well as transportation-related planning activities expected during the next state fiscal year.

Purpose of the Public Participation Plan

This document outlines the structure by which member counties, local elected officials, businesses, organizations, private citizens, and any other interested parties from across the region may participate in the CORPO transportation planning process. The participation of CORPO members, subcommittees, partner agencies, regional stakeholders, and the public is key to the success of CORPO and vital to fostering inclusive local government and coordinated decision-making.

Establishing an open and flexible public participation process will stimulate collaboration between member counties, stakeholders, and the public.

Objectives

The following are the objectives of the CORPO Public Participation Plan.

1. **Comprehensive-** Ensure a process by which the public is given the opportunity to become part of the Central Ohio rural transportation planning process through a variety of methods.
2. **Timely-** Promote timely circulation of notices, planning issues, and information regarding the planning process to the public.
3. **Transparent-** Provide transparency of all information and data gathered and developed during the transportation planning process.



Public Participation Plan

This plan specifies the procedures that the Central Ohio Rural Planning Organization (CORPO) will use to reach members of the public for their input while conducting its transportation planning process.

CORPO Structure

CORPO’s primary communication outlet for outreach to its members will be the CORPO Board meetings, CORPO County subcommittees, and any other related correspondence with members. Information about the CORPO structure is provided in this section. CORPO anticipates that its member counties will use their current public involvement methods for the circulation of general information, public meeting notices, and plan documents to provide notice of public comment periods and meetings. Any other timely information regarding the transportation planning process will be included.

Board Structure

CORPO is a committee of the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission and is guided by the CORPO county subcommittees in each of the seven CORPO counties.

COUNTY SUBCOMMITTEES

The CORPO County subcommittees serve as the planning bodies for each county’s transportation planning and are composed of representatives from diverse backgrounds. Member counties are the driving force behind the county subcommittees. CORPO subcommittee meetings are public meetings and meeting dates, agendas, and minutes are displayed on the [CORPO website](#).

CORPO Member County Subcommittees Makeup	
<i>Required members</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full members of MORPC within the county • County commissioners • County engineer • Largest city in the county
<i>Suggested members</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities, villages, and townships • Regional planning commissions • Transportation agencies • Vehicle for hire companies • Providers serving individuals with disabilities • Providers serving seniors • Providers serving at-risk populations
<i>Other important members</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ODOT • Business and general citizens



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At the pleasure of the participating Board of County Commissioners
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RTPO FUNDING COMMITTEE

The RTPO Funding Committee provides advice to the CORPO Board on the development and execution of the processes used to award CORPO Dedicated Funds to projects and project sponsors. Members of the RTPO Funding Committee are members of the CORPO Board and any project sponsors applying for funding in the respective round. RTPO Funding Committee meetings are open to the public and meeting dates, agendas, and minutes are displayed on the [CORPO website](#).

CORPO BOARD

The CORPO Board is a committee of MORPC and is responsible for coordinating all RTPO planning for the CORPO area and deciding the division of resources. The CORPO Board provides representation from elected officials and other stakeholders. The Board consists of three members from each county subcommittee and meets biannually. CORPO Board meetings are open to the public and meeting dates, agenda, and minutes are displayed on the [CORPO website](#) as well as emailed to all CORPO members for circulation. The CORPO Board Bylaws are in Appendix A.

STATE COORDINATION

ODOT is an active participant in CORPO’s regional transportation planning and decision-making process and participates in CORPO through district liaisons to present the state’s perspective in the consensus building process that leads toward the identification of regional transportation needs, solutions, and priorities.

ROLE OF MORPC

The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) serves as the regional council for Central Ohio and is the designated RTPO handling agency for CORPO. As the agency contracted by ODOT to be the RTPO handling agency, MORPC provides staff to assist the CORPO Board in policy development, technical analysis, and administrative activities necessary for conducting the area’s planning process. CORPO is staffed by MORPC and guided by the CORPO Board and county-level subcommittees in carrying out of its RTPO roles, responsibilities, and in creating major work products.

Public Outreach

This section describes outreach methods and roles of the CORPO staff and county subcommittees in public involvement.



Outreach Methods

CORPO and/or its members may use numerous outlets to share information. These outlets may include but are not limited to electronic mail, newsletters, public meetings, and websites. The CORPO webpage is available at www.morpc.org/corpo. CORPO will also host CORPO Board, County subcommittees, and special meetings or open houses as needed before any planning products are adopted.

Outreach Roles

The following section describes the roles of the CORPO county subcommittees and CORPO/MORPC staff in public involvement.

COUNTY SUBCOMMITTEES

To facilitate collaboration in developing multi-modal transportation planning products, it is the responsibility of the County subcommittees to provide government, industry, and residents with the information needed to understand what the problems are, what actions are proposed, what the effects will be, and when each element of the program will be ready for public use and/or input. The CORPO County subcommittees will be the primary means of involving transportation stakeholders and the public in the planning process.

The County subcommittees are expected to facilitate public involvement at the county level by utilizing their own structures and meeting spaces in their respective counties. CORPO staff will assist in the planning and facilitation of public meetings, events, and media announcements when and where appropriate. The public participation plan and process is designed to give members, stakeholders, and the public an opportunity to participate in, review, and comment on the transportation planning process and other related activities.

CORPO AND MORPC STAFF

CORPO staff will use MORPC facilities and the [CORPO webpage](#) on the [MORPC website](#) for public involvement in the transportation planning process. CORPO Board meetings and, when appropriate, stakeholder and public engagement events including open houses, will be held at MORPC's offices.

Although much of the public participation process will be administered at the county level via each subcommittee, CORPO staff will also provide the public with a chance to review and comment on the planning products before adoption by the CORPO Board. As CORPO staff develops its transportation planning products with county subcommittees, which exist to advise the CORPO Board, the CORPO Board and staff will work to incorporate the input of the county subcommittees into the development of transportation planning products.



Work Product Public Participation Procedures

As an RTPO, CORPO is responsible for several state required work products in coordination with ODOT. The following section describes the specific opportunities for public involvement in relation to each work product and funding program.

CORPO Transportation Plan (CTP)

The components of the CORPO Transportation Plan (CTP) are presented to the CORPO county subcommittees and CORPO Board to provide opportunities for them to review and comment on the components over the course of the plan development.

A notice of availability of the draft documents for review and comment with a minimum 30-day comment period by the public is distributed by news release, social media, and by electronic mail to county subcommittees, CORPO stakeholders, media, and local communities. A notice of availability and copies of draft documents are shared on the [CORPO webpage](#) and printed copies are available upon request.

CTP OPEN HOUSE

CORPO hosts a streamed, online open house or in-person open house at least 30 days prior to the adoption of the CTP. During the open house, a formal presentation is generally given and CORPO staff are available to answer questions. If hosted online, a recorded version of the open house and the presentation is posted on the [CORPO webpage](#) during the public comment period.

Invitations to attend the open house are posted on the CORPO webpage and social media, distributed by electronic mail to the CORPO Board, county subcommittees, and local communities to be distributed throughout the seven CORPO counties in the transportation planning area.

COMMENTS ON THE CTP

Comments are received electronically, by U.S. mail, or submitted in writing at public meetings. CORPO will accommodate the needs of any members of the public in submitting comments within the allotted period. All comments received are considered public comments and therefore are subject to disclosure under Ohio's Public Records Act. Comments received are reviewed for consideration and if found appropriate, are incorporated into the document. All responses are included in the final adopted document in a separate appendix. Copies of the final adopted document are available on the [CORPO webpage](#) and printed copies are available upon request.

CORPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The CORPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a subset of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and is developed in coordination with ODOT.



DEVELOPMENT AND RURAL CONSULTATION

The CORPO TIP is developed in accordance with [ODOT's Rural Consultation Process](#). Rural consultation provides an opportunity for ODOT and rural local officials to discuss their current transportation plans and transportation improvement needs for the TIP development period. These rural consultation meetings are separate from the public involvement process for the general public. During the TIP development process, each CORPO county subcommittee meeting serves as a rural consultation meeting, providing an opportunity for CORPO staff and ODOT to present the draft development project list and collect feedback and local needs from rural transportation officials.

DRAFT DOCUMENT REVIEW

Drafts of the CORPO TIP are provided to the CORPO Board and county subcommittees for them to review and comment on prior to adoption. A notice of availability of the draft document for review and comment with a minimum 30-day comment period by the public is distributed by press release, social media, and by electronic mail to county subcommittees, CORPO stakeholders, media, and local communities. A notice of availability and copies of the draft document are shared on the [CORPO webpage](#) and printed copies are available upon request.

TIP OPEN HOUSE

CORPO and MORPC will collaborate to host a joint open house for the CORPO and MPO planning area at least 30 days prior to the adoption of the CORPO TIP. Invitations to attend the open house are posted on the CORPO webpage and social media, distributed by electronic mail to the CORPO Board, county subcommittees, and local communities to be distributed throughout the seven CORPO counties in the transportation planning area.

COMMENTS ON THE TIP

Comments are received electronically, by U.S. mail, or submitted in writing at public meetings. CORPO will accommodate the needs of any members of the public in submitting comments within the allotted period. All comments received are considered public comments and therefore are subject to disclosure under Ohio's Public Records Act. Comments received are reviewed for consideration and if found appropriate, are incorporated into the document. All responses are included in the final adopted document in a separate appendix. Copies of the final adopted document are available on the [CORPO webpage](#) and printed copies are available upon request.

CORPO Dedicated Funds

Through the biennial state transportation budget, ODOT dedicates a portion of State Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds to the state's RTPOS, including CORPO. CORPO is charged with dedicating the funds to projects and activities sponsored by local public transportation agencies located within the CORPO planning area.



FUNDING CYCLE PROCESS AND OUTREACH

CORPO solicits applications for the CORPO Dedicated Funds program biannually, according to the Policies for Managing CORPO Dedicated Funds. To begin each funding cycle, an updated draft of the Policies for Managing CORPO Dedicated Funds, including a schedule and milestones for the funding cycle is developed. Prior to adoption by the CORPO Board, a notice of availability of the draft document for review and comment with a minimum 30-day comment period by the public is distributed by press release, social media, and by electronic mail to county subcommittees, CORPO stakeholders, media, and local communities. A notice of availability and copies of draft documents are shared on the [CORPO webpage](#) and printed copies are available upon request.

The application period for CORPO Dedicated Funds is announced distributed by press release, social media, and by electronic mail to county subcommittees, CORPO stakeholders, media, and local communities.

DRAFT PROJECT LIST

When the application period for CORPO Dedicated Funds is closed, CORPO staff collaborate with the RTPO Funding Committee to select a draft list of projects proposed to receive CORPO Dedicated Funds. The draft list of projects is made available for review and comment with a minimum 30-day public comment period, announced by press release, social media, and by electronic mail to county subcommittees, CORPO stakeholders, media, and local communities. A notice of availability and copies of the draft project list are shared on the [CORPO webpage](#) and printed copies are available upon request.

COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT PROJECT LIST

Comments on the draft project list are received electronically, by U.S. mail, or submitted in writing at public meetings. CORPO will accommodate the needs of any members of the public in submitting comments within the allotted period. All comments received are considered public comments and therefore are subject to disclosure under Ohio's Public Records Act. Comments received are reviewed for consideration and shared with the RTPO Funding Committee and the CORPO Board prior to the final award of CORPO Dedicated Funds to projects. A list of the final selected projects for each funding cycle is available on the [CORPO webpage](#).

Americans with Disabilities Act

The federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) is a civil rights statute that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in all aspects of life. The ADA, therefore, calls for federally assisted programs to be accessible to people with disabilities. People with disabilities are encouraged to be involved in the transportation planning process, including the development and improvement of transportation and paratransit plans and services, through any of the various



means described previously. All public meetings conducted by tCORPO take place at locations that have accessible facilities to accommodate people with mobility limitations.

Nondiscrimination Complaint Procedures for Programs & Activities of CORPO

MORPC does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, familial status, religion or disability in programs, services or in employment.

Information on non-discrimination and related MORPC policies and procedures is available at morpc.org. The information is also publicly displayed in the lobby and breakrooms of MORPC's office.

Nondiscrimination procedures cover all external complaints regarding MORPC programs and activities filed under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 or 49 CFR 21, "Nondiscrimination in the Federally Assisted Programs of the Department of Transportation."

Information on how to file a complaint can be viewed on MORPC's website at morpc.org/title-vi, where the agency's Title VI Plan and Limited English Proficiency Plan are posted. Printed versions of the complaint process and the complaint form may be requested by calling or e-mailing MORPC's Director of Communications & Engagement at 614.233.4157 or rhampton@morpc.org.

Changes to the Public Participation Plan

CORPO staff will periodically review the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the Public Participation Plan regarding technology, people, and strategies to ensure a full and open participation process.



Appendix A- CORPO Board Bylaws

CENTRAL OHIO RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION BOARD BYLAWS

A. NAME

The name of this committee shall be the Central Ohio Rural Planning Organization Board, also known as the Central Ohio Rural Transportation Planning Committee, for the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning COMMISSION.

B. ORIGIN

The Central Ohio Rural Planning Organization Board (CORPO) is provided for the federally and state sponsored "Rural Transportation Planning Organization" (RTPO) and is administered by an ODOT approved Planning Work Program at the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission.

C. PURPOSE

CORPO is designated as the RTPO for Fairfield, Knox, Madison, Marion, Morrow, Pickaway and Union Counties surrounding the Columbus metropolitan planning area in the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission's area of interest and designated by a COMMISSION agreement with the Ohio Department of Transportation. CORPO is the forum for cooperative decision-making that will be taking the required approval actions as the RTPO. The State of Ohio has designated the RTPO area, per 23 USC § 135(m), as amended, to enhance the planning, coordination, and implementation of statewide strategic long-range transportation plans and transportation improvement programs, with an emphasis on addressing the needs of non-metropolitan areas of the State.

D. MEMBERSHIP

To be a member of the Central Ohio RTPO, each County Board of Commissioners must execute a Memorandum of Understanding and resolution declaring membership in CORPO and the creation of a COUNTY SUBCOMMITTEE. All terms of Central Ohio RTPO Membership are managed by the Memorandum of Understanding.

E. QUORUM

A quorum shall be defined as at least one representative from at least two thirds of the member counties in the RTPO. When there is a quorum, an affirmative vote of a majority of the members present is necessary for any action taken.

F. MEMBERSHIP REPRESENTATION

Fourteen representatives on CORPO shall consist of two members from each COUNTY selected by the County Board of Commissioners for their respective county.

Seven additional representatives on CORPO shall consist of one member from each COUNTY SUBCOMMITTEE selected by the members of the COUNTY SUBCOMMITTEE from their respective COUNTY.

Members of CORPO shall serve at the pleasure of their appointing authority. A vacancy on CORPO



shall be filled by the appointing authority that appointed such Member in the first instance.

Alternates may be used when CORPO members will be unable to attend. CORPO members shall notify the Secretary ahead of the meeting if they plan to send an alternate on their behalf with full member representation privileges.

Additional ex-officio representatives shall include appropriate State and Federal transportation officials.

G. OFFICERS

The officers of CORPO shall be selected from CORPO membership annually and announced at the first official meeting of CORPO. CORPO shall select the following officers: a Chairperson to preside over meetings and to certify all minutes of CORPO business meetings and a Vice-Chairperson to act on the Chairperson's behalf in his or her absence. CORPO Staff will serve as the Secretary.

H. MEETINGS

CORPO will meet at a minimum of once annually. Biannual meetings are recommended. Additional meetings may be called by the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson, fulfilling the Chair's duties, or by any three (3) members of CORPO.

I. NOTICE

Notice of all public body meetings shall be mailed and/or electronically mailed at least one week in advance of the meeting date, whenever practical.

J. COUNTY SUBCOMMITTEES

CORPO is advised by COUNTY SUBCOMMITTEES. One COUNTY SUBCOMMITTEE represents each county.

Required and suggested representation shall be determined as follows:

1. Required: One of the two CORPO members appointed by the County Commissioners in accordance with F. above.
2. Required: The County Engineer.
3. Required: A representative of the chief executive officer of the City with the largest number of people as determined by the decennial census of the United States, residing within the boundaries of the county and not within a metropolitan planning organization.
4. Required: Full members of the COMMISSION located wholly or partially within the boundaries of the subcommittee county.
5. Representation of other municipalities and townships that are located wholly or partially within the boundaries of the county.
6. Representation of any local or regional planning commission that is serving the county wholly or partially.



7. Representation of agencies that provide transportation services to the county wholly or partially, including:
 - a) Transit Agencies
 - b) Vehicle for Hire Companies
 - c) Providers serving individuals with disabilities
 - d) Providers serving seniors
 - e) Providers serving at-risk populations
8. Representation of the Ohio Department of Transportation District Office and/ or the County Garage.
9. Representation of business and general citizenry.
10. Any other representative that the Board of County Commissioners invites to participate.