

City of Fort Wayne

Southeast Corridors Planning Project

Public Participation Plan (Draft)

Purpose:

The purpose of this Public Involvement Plan is to help the Southeast Corridors Planning Area Community understand the goals, scope, and outcomes of this project, as well as the places where they will engage with the technical team to make key decisions.

Goals:

- 1) Develop an approach to address the immediate multimodal transportation needs of the corridors using context sensitive solutions, and
- 2) Develop a long-term vision for the corridors to foster development that creates a vibrant urban environment in service of surrounding neighborhoods.

Principles:

The following Principles for Public Participation will guide the project:

- Careful Planning and Preparation
- Inclusion and Demographic Diversity
- Collaboration and Shared Purpose
- Transparency and Trust
- Impact and Action
- Use Established Community Networks
- Understand Community Context
- Do Not Operate from Preconceived Notions

Rules of Engagement:

Prior to each major decision point, the project management team will communicate with stakeholders about:

- Who will make the decisions
- How stakeholders can influence the decisions
- When stakeholders will have opportunities to participate
- How stakeholder input will be considered
- Who will respond to public comments

Equity Analysis:

At the beginning of the project, an equity analysis will be conducted to identify environmental justice populations within the project area so that specific approaches to communicate with these populations could be developed. The EPA's Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool will be used to conduct this analysis.

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Key roles in the project include:

Project Management Team

- Small core staff team tasked with making day-to-day decisions in a timely manner. The project management team is comprised of City Public Works and Community Development staff and hired planning, design, environmental review, administration and public participation consultants. This team will carry out the work plan.

Southeast Corridors Planning Project Community Advisory Committee:

- Represents varied voices of the project area.
- Advises Project Management Team and Technical Advisory Committee.
- Works with City staff and Technical Advisory Committee to give input to products and outcomes.

Technical Advisory Committee:

- Composed of City and partner agency staff and serves as advisory body to the Project Management Team and the Community Advisory Committee.
- Participants represent their own project or departmental interests and communicate how the Corridor Study fits within the broader City/County context.
- Provides technical support to the project and conducts analysis, when appropriate.
- Vets ideas, policies, or potential capital projects for feasibility in balance with budgets and other City priorities.

Southeast Fort Wayne Community Organizations

- During key decision points in the project, the organizations will be consulted and help get the word out about public meetings.
- The organizations will also keep the project connected to current projects, actions, and community led advocacy efforts.

General Public

- At a few key points in the process, the Study will reach out to the general public. At these points, materials will be easy to understand with clear methods for input. The
- Project will reach out to under-represented populations by collaborating with organizations, businesses, and agencies that have built trust and communication networks. Input methods must meet the needs of the underserved, including translation.
- The project team will conduct active outreach to achieve full and fair participation by under-represented populations including youth, communities of color, and individuals with low-incomes, limited English proficiency or disabilities. To actively involve businesses, the project will need individual visits to businesses to involve them in the Plan.
- Project stakeholders include area property owners, residents, renters, affordable housing interests, business owners and employees, organizations and advocacy

groups, institutions, public agencies, local transportation interest's media, and emergency service providers.

- The project management team will prepare a public involvement update at the end of each key milestone, as well as a summary at the end of the project that includes outcomes of the public involvement activities, along with comments and public contacts collected throughout the life of the project.

Communications

Communications to the interested parties list will focus on timeframes when public input is important to the decision process. The following methods will be used by the project:

- Engage Fort Wayne Website and Social Media
- Email Updates to the Neighborhood & Community Organization List
- Community Advisory Committee meetings (open to the public)
- Media (at key decision points)

Public Comment and Response

The City will collect comments via email and the website and respond individually within 3 working days. Responsiveness is one of the best ways to build trust and accountability and offers a chance to acknowledge what has been said and explain more detailed information to the interested person.

Direct Outreach

Direct outreach is a key component of how the project will involve businesses as well as Environmental Justice communities. The project will proactively initiate outreach such as:

- Display outreach (otherwise known as “tabling”) at one to two key points in the decision process with a focus on community events frequented by people under-represented at public meetings.
- Informal meetings with businesses and leaders to discuss issues and share opinions.
- Business outreach to collect opinions at a key point in the decision process.