

Regional Intergovernmental Council (RIC MPO)

# **Transportation Planning Public Participation Plan**

## December 2019

Public Comment Period: October 28, 2019 - December 11, 2019



# RESOLUTION OF ADOPTION

WHEREAS, the BCKP Regional Intergovernmental Council, as the federall

designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Charleston, WV urbanized area, developed a Public Participatic accordance with all federal guidelines as required by the

America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act;

WHEREAS,

the Regional Intergovernmental Council MPO Public Participati was developed to detail public involvement processes for metro

transportation planning and programming initiatives;

WHEREAS,

the Regional Intergovernmental Council MPO Public Participar has established a formal update cycle of (3) years to maintain con

with state and federal requirements;

**WHEREAS** 

the Regional Intergovernmental Council MPO Public Participatic was made available for public review, having a public comment of (45) calendar days preceding the proposed day of adopt accordance with U.S. Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) "50.31

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the BCKP Regional Intergovernmental Council formally adopts the RIC MPO Public Participation Plan

So resolved this 12th day of December, 2019

Dane auchi

D. Anne Cavalier, Ed.D., Chairman

Regional Intergovernmental Council

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The Metropolitan Planning Organization of the Regional Intergovernmental Council (RIC MPO) places a strong emphasis on public involvement and maximizing public participation for all transportation planning initiatives. For inquiries regarding public involvement or to learn more about how to get involved, visit the RIC MPO website (www.wvregion3.org), contact the RIC MPO by telephone, (304)-744-4258 or email mail@wvregion3.org.



This plan is a dynamic document and will be formally updated on a triennial (3-year) basis. The plan will be reviewed on an annual basis by RIC MPO staff and the RIC MPO Technical Transportation Advisory Committee (TTAC) during interim years between formal updates to maintain compliance with all regulations and requirements.

## Introduction

Public involvement is an integral part of transportation planning processes. A successful public participation process ensures all members of the public have opportunity for inclusion during all stages of development in transportation planning products. This plan seeks to reduce and eliminate public participation barriers that may exist for traditionally underserved populations. The RIC MPO recognizes the significance of implementing early and continuous public involvement practices throughout all transportation planning efforts. The RIC MPO Public Participation Plan (PPP), originally adopted by the RIC Policy Board in 1993, documents the incorporation and application of strategies and activities used to inform and engage members of the public for transportation-related planning initiatives. This plan replaces the previous 2016 RIC MPO Public Participation Plan, effective, December 12, 2019.

## Role of the RIC MPO

Established in 1975, the Regional Intergovernmental Council - Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is the federally designated MPO for the Charleston, WV urbanized area and is tasked with providing surface transportation planning activities for both the urban and rural areas within Boone, Clay, Kanawha and Putnam counties. The RIC MPO performs all transportation planning and programming efforts through a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive process.

## **RIC Policy Board**

The RIC Policy Board is the decision-making body of the RIC MPO. This body is comprised of elected officials and citizen representatives from areas within the four-county region of Boone, Clay, Kanawha and Putnam counties. Additional members of the RIC Policy Board include one representative from the West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) and Kanawha Valley Regional Transportation Authority (KVRTA), two representatives from minority organizations, and twelve at-large citizen representatives. The at-large citizen representatives of the RIC Policy Board are appointed in compliance with state and federal requirements regarding member composition and proper representation of the public.

The RIC Policy Board convenes quarterly meetings (March, June, September, December) for the purposes of:

- Communicating local transportation issues and needs to the RIC MPO staff
- Receiving updates from the RIC MPO staff regarding current or proposed plans and studies
- Consideration of adoption for transportation planning products
- Consideration of approval for the RIC Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), subsequent amendments to the RIC TIP, and the RIC Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
- Annual review of the RIC MPO transportation planning budget

All meetings of the RIC Policy Board are published or posted by way of public notice through the local newspaper, the West Virginia Secretary of State website (www.sos.wv.gov), and the RIC website (www.wvregion3.org).

## **Federal Requirements**

The RIC MPO Public Participation Plan (PPP) was created in accordance with federal requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Order 12898: Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low Income Populations, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as well as the current transportation reauthorization legislation, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act.

## Civil Rights Act (1964)

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin. Title VI legislation mandates that public funding cannot be used to encourage, entrench, or result in discrimination. Since the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, legislation broadened to prohibit discrimination against persons based on age, disability, sex, religion, limited English proficiency (LEP), or income level. Throughout its transportation planning processes, the RIC MPO properly considers the transportation-related needs and concerns of traditionally underserved populations.

## Title VI of the Civil Rights Act (1964)

Title VI is one of eleven Titles of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and applies to all programs and activities of federal-aid recipients, sub-recipients, and contractors. Title VI addresses discrimination in federally funded programs by mandating requirements and responsibilities for affected programs to prevent and prohibit discriminatory behavior against minority and low income populations. Title VI requirements apply to all metropolitan planning organizations receiving federal funds and therefore prohibits discrimination in all federally-funded programs, policies, and activities of the RIC MPO.

## Additional Requirements

Executive Order 12898: Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice for Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, 1994

Executive Order 12898: Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, 1994 directs federal agencies and entities receiving

federal funds to identify and address any disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of their actions on minority populations and low-income populations, to the greatest extent practicable and permitted by law. The order also directs each participating entity to develop a strategy for implementing environmental justice practices for minority populations and low-income populations with regard to public information and public participation.

The RIC MPO adheres to federal public participation requirements for metropolitan transportation planning as described in U.S. Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 23, 450.316. Section (1) (vii) of the Title 23 regulations references how metropolitan planning organizations are to address the needs of traditionally underserved populations:

"Seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services."

Throughout all phases of its transportation planning processes, the RIC MPO properly considers the transportation-related needs and concerns of traditionally underserved populations. The RIC PPP seeks to reduce public participation barriers that may exist for minority, low income, disabled, and limited English proficiency (LEP) populations. Procedures and guidance regarding transportation planning for traditionally underserved populations is further described in the RIC Title VI Plan, available for access on the RIC website (www.wvregion3.org). Thematic maps and data for minority, LEP and low-income populations for both Kanawha and Putnam counties are provided in the Appendix of this plan.

## Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 1990

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, all meetings of the RIC MPO will be held in ADA-compliant buildings and special accommodations will be made for disabled persons to participate in meetings, events and activities of the RIC MPO.

## Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act

The current transportation reauthorization legislation, Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, emphasizes public participation within metropolitan transportation planning processes and requires the inclusion of public comment from all populations of the RIC metropolitan planning area. This legislation extends through Federal fiscal year 2020. Current FAST Act guidance requires the RIC MPO to:

- Publish public notice of the proposed RIC MPO Public Participation Plan with a minimum (45) day public comment period prior to plan update or adoption
- Summarize, analyze, and report on the disposition of written and oral comments for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and the RIC MPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- Submit comments to the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) with the MTP or TIP and make available to other parties by request
- Provide an additional opportunity for public comment when the final MTP or TIP is different than the one made available for public comment
- Provide opportunity for citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, private providers of transportation, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of persons with disabilities and other interested parties to participate in the development of the Public Participation Plan, the MTP and the TIP
- Meetings, events or forums are to be conducted in ADA compliant facilities, ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities
- Respond to all public comment and feedback with diligent consideration

## **Guiding Principles for Public Involvement**

To ensure best-practice decision making for transportation planning and programming, public participation is essential for all transportation planning initiatives. The RIC MPO is responsible for early and continuous involvement of the public through a transparent, collaborative and fully accessible process. The following guiding principles outline the RIC MPO public involvement initiatives:

## Opportunity

The public will be provided with opportunities to participate during all phases of transportation plans, studies and projects. The RIC MPO will ensure all stakeholders and members of the public have adequate opportunities to express their opinions and concerns about transportation issues and are given reasonable access to all transportation plans and documents.

- Attend community events in both Kanawha and Putnam counties to engage members of the public to identify transportation needs and concerns
- ii. Contact local community and advocacy organizations to attend routine meetings or events and coordinate targeted community engagement in collaborative efforts
- iii. Encourage all participants of RIC MPO meetings or events and stakeholders to provide input through oral or written comments and surveys

## Engagement

Publicize all public involvement opportunities during the development of all transportation plans and studies.

- i. Engage community members through the RIC MPO website (www.wvregion3.org) and social media platforms of the RIC MPO
- ii. Provide timely and proper notice of all meetings, open house events, workshops to the RIC website (www.wvregion3.org), RIC social media accounts, broadcast media, radio stations, print media sources (i.e. flyers, posters)

#### Involvement

Involve members of the public and stakeholders in transportation planning processes.

- Conduct public meetings, stakeholder meetings, and steering committee meetings during all phases of a plan, project, or study
- ii. Document all public comments for incorporation into appropriate plans, projects, and studies
- iii. Ensure all issues and concerns of the public are properly considered

#### Education

Effectively communicate potential transportation-related concepts and planning activities to stakeholders and members of the public.

- i. Ensure RIC MPO staff and other meeting facilitators are prepared to provide current, accurate and relevant transportation-related information to meeting participants
- ii. Provide publicly accessible visual and educational materials that clearly and easily communicate the subject material

## Accessibility

Outreach to traditionally underserved populations of minority, low-income and limited English proficiency (LEP).

- i. Continuity of implementation of Title VI and Environmental Justice requirements for all transportation plans, projects, studies and activities
- ii. Public meeting locations that serve areas of LEP, minority, and low-income populations
- iii. Provide accessibility accommodations for RIC MPO public meetings, events and activities to ensure all persons can participate

## Compliance

Ensure compliance with all statutory regulations and requirements.

- i. Maintain compliance with current and future legislation regarding public involvement in metropolitan transportation planning processes
- ii. Conduct continuous research pertaining to best-practice public involvement strategies and methodologies

## **Public Involvement**

Participants who engage in transportation planning processes consist of key stakeholders and members of the general public.

As federal guidelines specify, the following groups must be given opportunity for involvement in metropolitan transportation planning and programming processes:

- Elected officials from all levels of government
- City and county government staff, such as city and county managers, department heads, planning department officials, city and county engineers
- Representatives from the Federal Highway Administration and the State of West Virginia departments and divisions such as the West Virginia Department of Transportation, West Virginia Division of Highways, West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection
- Public transportation providers, such as the Kanawha Valley Regional
   Transportation Authority (KVRTA), paratransit agencies, and local taxi services
- Regional freight providers, including trucking or delivery companies
- Community leaders in the sectors of business and development, including economic development and chamber of commerce officials

Members of the general public include:

- Users of roadways, public transit, bicyclists and pedestrians
- All other persons residing, working, or conducting business within the RIC Metropolitan Transportation Planning Area

## **Public Outreach Initiatives**

The RIC employs a variety of public participation techniques including meeting with citizen and technical advisory committees, steering committees, interagency consultation groups, key stakeholders, the public, and special interest groups.

Additional public participation methods include tabling at local community events, charrettes, surveys, public notices, newsletters, and online engagement through the RIC website (www.wvregion3.org) and RIC social media accounts.

## **Advisory Committees**

Two transportation advisory committees, the Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) and the RIC Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee serve as coordinated groups to provide oversight and feedback surrounding transportation planning decisions.

## Transportation Technical Advisory Committee

The RIC Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) consists of representatives from FHWA, WVDOH, Kanawha Valley Regional Transportation Authority (KVRTA), the City of Charleston, Kanawha County Commission, Putnam County Commission, and regional economic development agencies. Members of the TTAC review planning products such as transportation studies, plans and projects. The TTAC discusses regional transportation-related issues and concerns. TTAC meetings provide a forum for members to share ideas and provide feedback for transportation improvement projects in the area. Additionally, TTAC members review the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and subsequent TIP amendments and adjustments to make recommendations for approval to the RIC Policy Board. Meetings of the TTAC are conducted on a quarterly basis and are typically scheduled two days prior to RIC Policy Board meetings.

## Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee

The RIC Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee is composed of members from the following organizations: local bicycle and pedestrian advocacy groups, WV DOH, City of Charleston, Kanawha County Commission, and the Putnam County Planning Commission. The committee meets on a quarterly basis, two weeks prior to meetings of the RIC TTAC. The

RIC MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee works in collaboration with the RIC MPO throughout the development of the *Kanawha-Putnam Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan*, advises the RIC MPO on regional bicycle and pedestrian needs and concerns, recommends policies that could improve and promote non-motorized transportation, and provides recommendations for potential bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

#### **Additional Committees**

RIC transportation planning staff also meets bi-monthly with the James H. Caruthers Jr. Transportation Committee, a committee sponsored by the Putnam County Commission. This committee was established to review and discuss existing and potential transportation issues with the citizens of Putnam County.

## **Plan-Specific Committees**

## **Steering Committees**

During the development of a transportation plan, the RIC MPO may assemble a steering committee to meet at predetermined intervals in order to provide direction and input for the planning process. Steering committees typically consist of key stakeholders and affected agencies or organizations.

#### Stakeholder Committees

Throughout the development of a special study, the RIC MPO incorporates public participation procedures to the maximum extent practicable to include public outreach activities where applicable. During the development of any transportation plan or study, the RIC MPO seeks input from key stakeholders. The RIC MPO engages stakeholder members through stakeholder committee meetings, individual meetings, telephone and email. Stakeholder committee members are informed of all updates surrounding the development of the study. Stakeholder committee activities include the following: participation in public workshops, community events such as bike rodeos and the facilitation of feedback through surveys or comments.

## **Interagency Consultation**

For the purposes of transparency and the continuation of inclusive transportation planning processes, RIC consults with external transportation planning partners as a resource for technical guidance and oversight to review findings and recommendations from a plan or study. Transportation planning activities involving air quality conformity are conducted in conjunction with interagency consultation. Communication between the RIC transportation planning staff and an interagency consultation group is facilitated through meetings, telephone, or email.

## **Public Meetings**

Public meetings are essential in the public involvement process. They provide the general public with opportunities to:

- provide input into the transportation planning process
- express their thoughts or concerns regarding proposed transportation improvements or policy proposals
- receive information and education from the RIC MPO staff and other officials regarding transportation issues, projects, and policies

The RIC MPO conducts a variety of public meetings in various formats. These meetings may be in the form of:

- general open house-style meetings open for the public
- meetings held in conjunction with local civic or community groups
- meetings at locations in minority or low-income population areas to provide accessibility for all persons

Public meetings are publicized through notices in the local newspaper, broadcast media, press releases, flyers and social media platforms such as the RIC Facebook and Twitter pages and the RIC website.

#### **ADA and LEP Accommodations**

Meeting participants needing accommodations or individuals of limited English proficiency (LEP) are encouraged to contact the RIC MPO at least (5) business days prior to the proposed meeting date to ensure appropriate accommodations will be made.



#### Visualization Methods

For all public meetings, participants can view maps and other visual media, review current and proposed plans or studies and engage with RIC transportation staff. Ample opportunity to provide oral and written comment and feedback regarding current or proposed plans, projects and studies is always encouraged.

## **Event Tabling**

The RIC transportation staff may set up and staff a table or booth at an existing local or statewide event in order to publicize public outreach events, share information on existing and developing plans and studies, and engage members of the public regarding regional transportation policies and issues, and obtain input on current and potential plans and studies.

#### Charrettes

Charrettes have been used by planning and design teams for many years. A charrette is a collaborative, workshop-style session in which a group of individuals drafts a solution to a problem. The RIC MPO occasionally conducts charrettes with groups of stakeholders to generate ideas and feedback surrounding transportation issues.

#### Surveys

The RIC transportation staff uses public surveys to gather public input on transportation needs and concerns during the development of a plan or study. Survey formats consist of paper or web-based surveys and are disseminated through email, social media, the RIC website (www.wvregion3.org) and public meetings.

## **Public Notification Procedures**

Timely notification is important for successful public involvement practices. Early and consistent notification allows participants the opportunity to provide comments and input on proposed planning documents or products. An official public notice is published in the local newspaper preceding the adoption of a public planning product to inform members of the public of the opportunity to participate during a public comment period. A public comment period is required for the following transportation planning products: adoption of a new TIP, amendments to an existing TIP, adoption of an MTP update, adoption of an MTP amendment, adoption of a new or updated Public Participation Plan, and other activities which require or benefit from public input.

The following table further describes the public review procedures for the RIC MPO:

Plan or Process	Minimum Required Public Comment Period	Procedures for Adoption or Approval	Notes	
Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)				
MTP Update (4-year update cycle)	(15) calendar days  * A second review period of (15) calendar days shall be provided if the final MTP is different from the one made available for public comment	Presentation for consideration of adoption before the RIC Policy Board * All public comments will be provided to the TTAC and the RIC Policy Board	All public comments and responses are to be included in the final document	
MTP Amendment	(15) calendar days	Presentation for consideration of approval before the RIC Policy Board  * All public comments will be provided to the TTAC and the RIC Policy Board	Presented to the TTAC for review prior to policy board approval	
Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)				
UPWP (annually updated)	(45) calendar days	Presentation for consideration of adoption before the RIC Policy Board *Presented to the TTAC for review prior to policy board approval	A summary of public comments will be provided to the TTAC and the RIC Policy Board	
Public Participation Plan				
Public Participation Plan (annual review with 3-year update cycle)	(45) calendar days	Presentation for consideration of adoption before the RIC Policy Board *Presented to the TTAC for review prior to policy board approval	All public comments received will be included in the final document	
Title VI Plan				
Title VI Plan (annual review with five-year update cycle)	(15) calendar days	Presentation for consideration of adoption before the RIC Policy Board *Presented to the TTAC for review prior to policy board approval	All public comments received will be included in the final document	

The following table describes the public review procedures for the RIC Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):

#### RIC MPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) **Procedures for Minimum Required Notes Process** Adoption or **Public Comment** Period **Public Hearing** (15) calendar days Presentation for Presented to the consideration of adoption \* A second review period of (15) New or Amended RIC TIP\* TTAC for review before the RIC Policy Board calendar days shall be provided if \* All public comments and prior to policy the final TIP is different from the responses are to be included board approval one made available for public in the final document comment Presented to the **RIC TIP Administrative** TTAC for review/ No required public comment No public hearing required Amendments/Adjustments informational period purposes

<sup>\*</sup>A new RIC MPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is adopted by the RIC Policy Board every two years at the December RIC Policy Board Meeting to accommodate the update cycle of the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

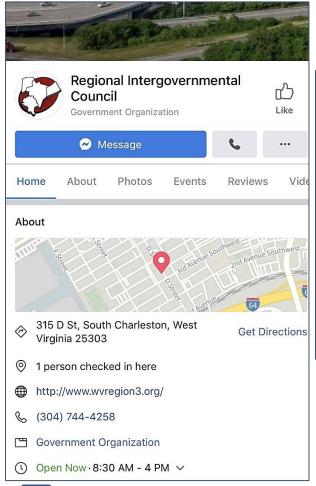
#### **Additional Public Notification Tools**

The Regional Intergovernmental Council distributes quarterly publications known as the *RIC Messenger*. The *RIC Messenger* serves as an informative and communicative newsletter and can be accessed at the RIC website (www.wvregion3.org). Additionally, the RIC publishes an annual report, the *RIC Annual Report* details all agency-wide initiatives, activities, accomplishments and future endeavors. The *RIC Annual Report* can be accessed at the RIC website (www.wvregion3.org).



#### Social Media

The RIC MPO maintains both active Facebook and Twitter accounts. RIC MPO social media accounts are used to actively engage the public with informative posts and visual content regarding RIC public meetings, photographs from projects and events, and articles or graphics related to transportation planning.



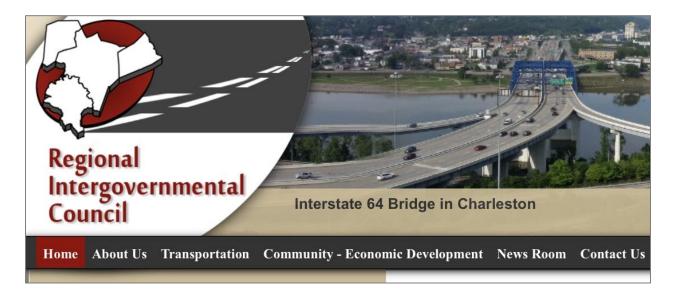


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www.facebook.com/wvregion3

## **RIC** Website

RIC maintains a publicly available website (www.wvregion3.org). The current RIC Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), RIC Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), other planning documents, and information regarding upcoming meetings can be accessed at www.wvregion3.org. The RIC website is published in the English language, users may utilize Google Translator for translation to other languages.



## **Getting Involved**

The RIC MPO encourages involvement from all interested parties and members of the public. There are many ways to get involved in the transportation programming and planning processes. Upcoming meetings and events are regularly posted online at the RIC website (www.wvregion3.org). To contact the RIC MPO for additional information by telephone at (304)-744-4258 or email at mail@wvregion3.org or the RIC website at www.wvregion3.org.

## **RIC MPO Contact Information**

Mailing Address: Regional Intergovernmental Council 315 D Street South Charleston, WV 25303

## RIC MPO Transportation Planning Staff

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Executive Director 304-744-4258

#### **Kara Greathouse**

Transportation Planning Director 304-744-4258

**Kelsey Tucker**, Public Participation Coordinator Transportation Planner 304-744-4258

#### Sam Richardson

Transportation Planner 304-744-4258

## **Outside Agency Contacts**

## **West Virginia Equal Employment Opportunity Office**

50 Dee Drive Charleston, West Virginia 25311 304-558-0400

## **West Virginia Human Rights Commission**

1321 Plaza East Room 108A Charleston, West Virginia 25301-2616 304-558-2616

## **West Virginia Department of Transportation**

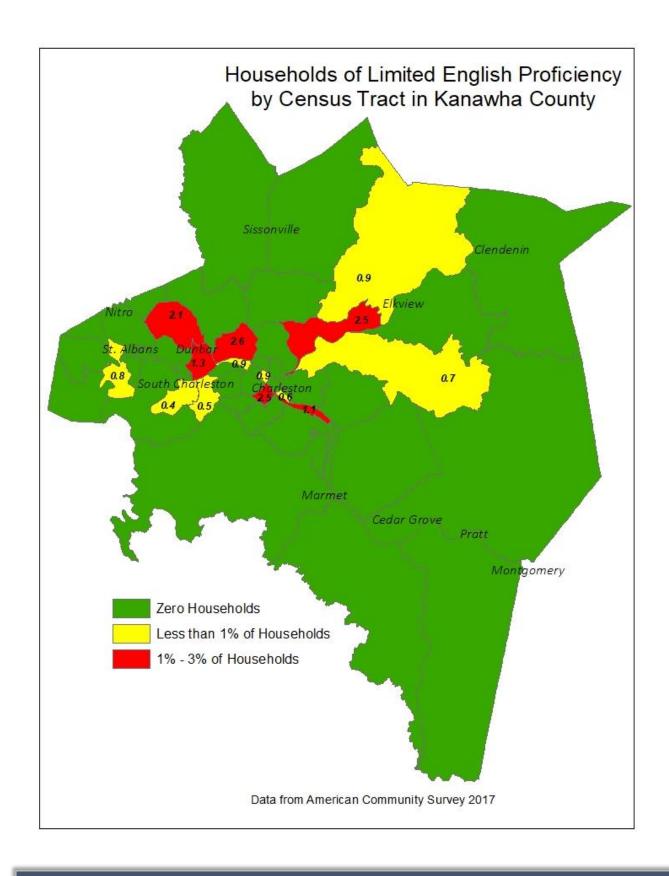
Equal Employment Opportunity Division (EEO) 1900 Kanawha Boulevard East Building 5, Room 948 Charleston, West Virginia 25305 304-558-4236 A public presentation on the proposed *Draft* RIC MPO Public Participation Plan was given at the September 12, 2019 meeting of the RIC Policy Board. A presentation and proposal for adoption of the RIC MPO Public Participation Plan was given at the December 12, 2019 meeting of the RIC Policy Board. The plan can be accessed at any time through the RIC website (www.wvregion3.org).

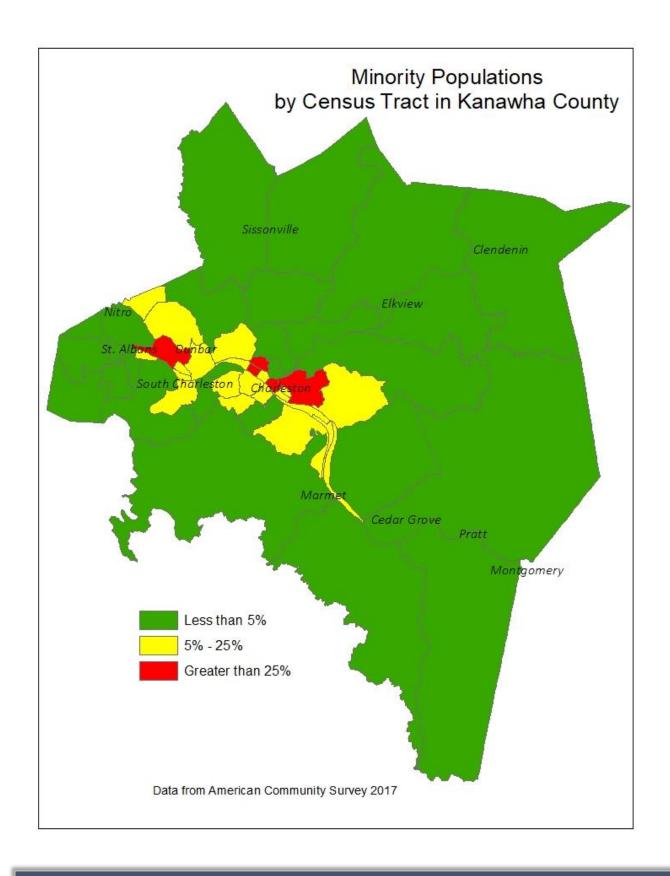
## **Appendix**

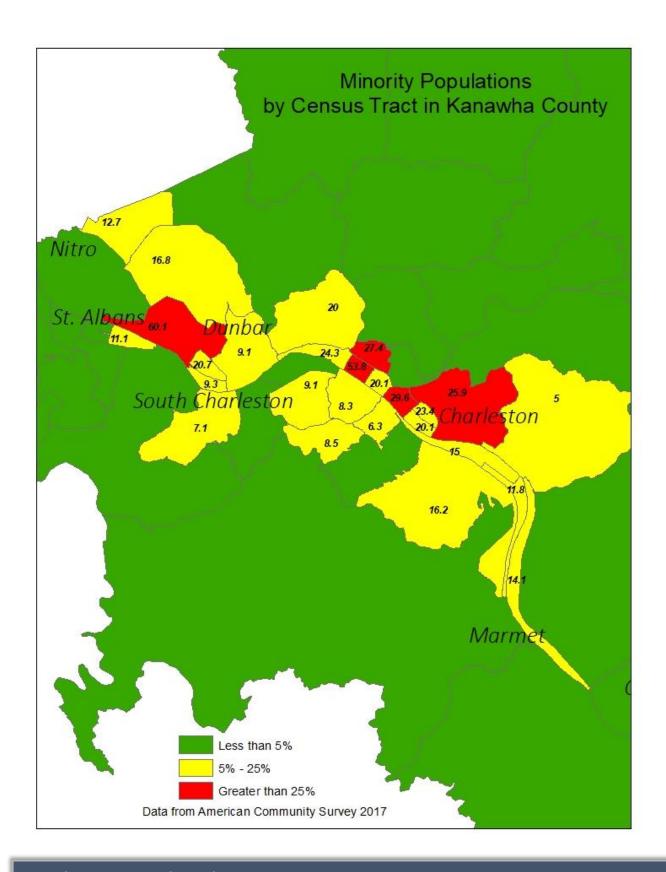
# Demographic Maps

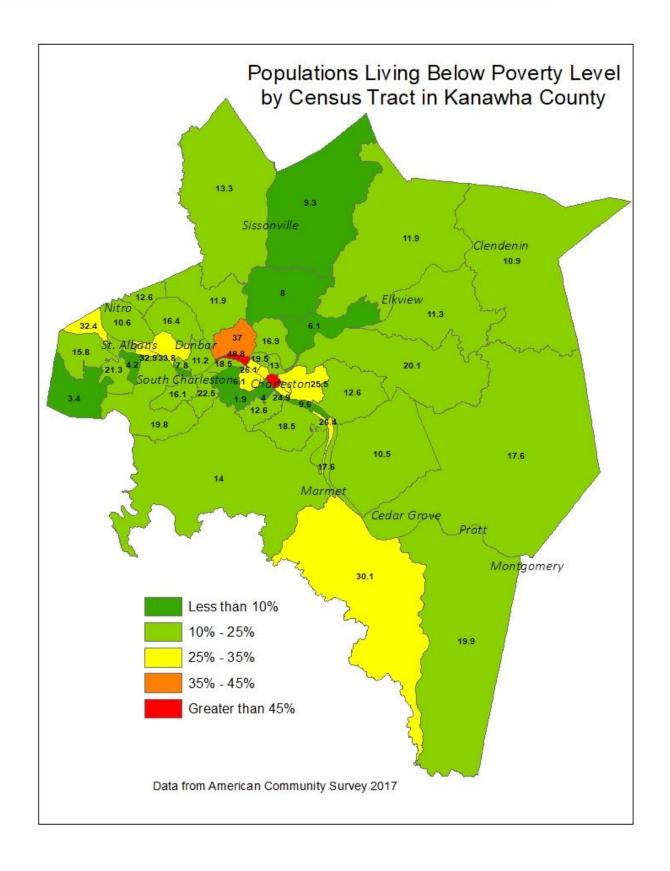
## **Kanawha County**

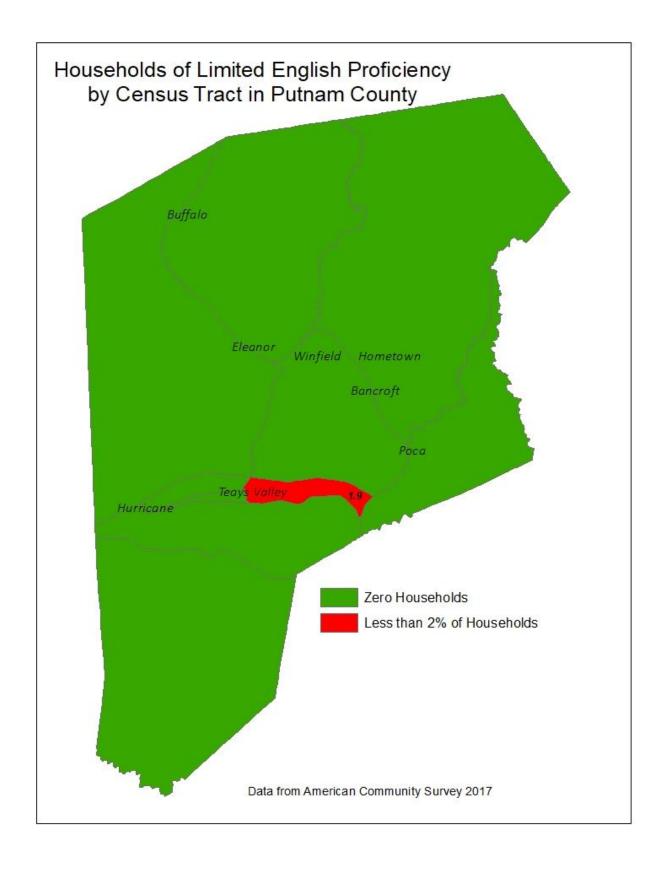
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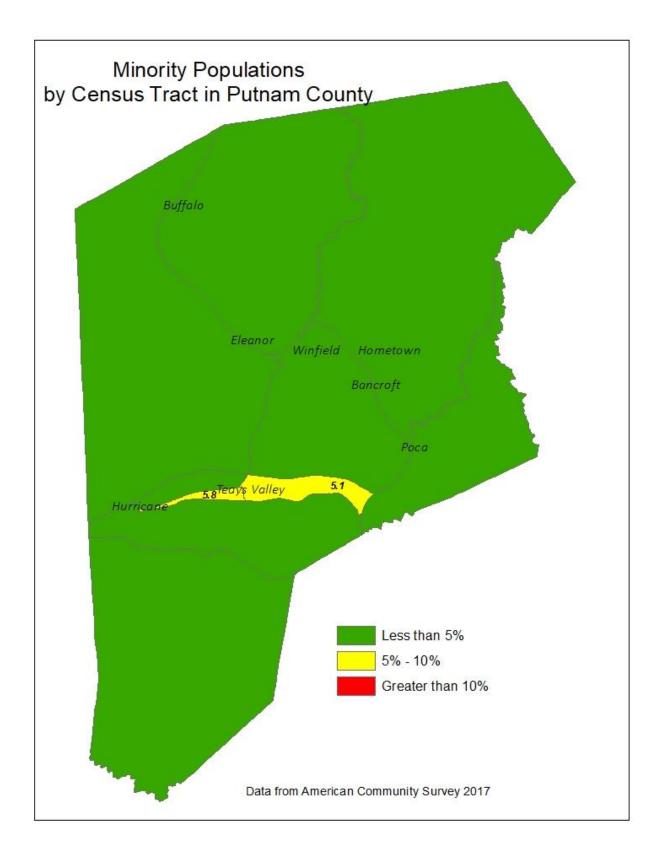


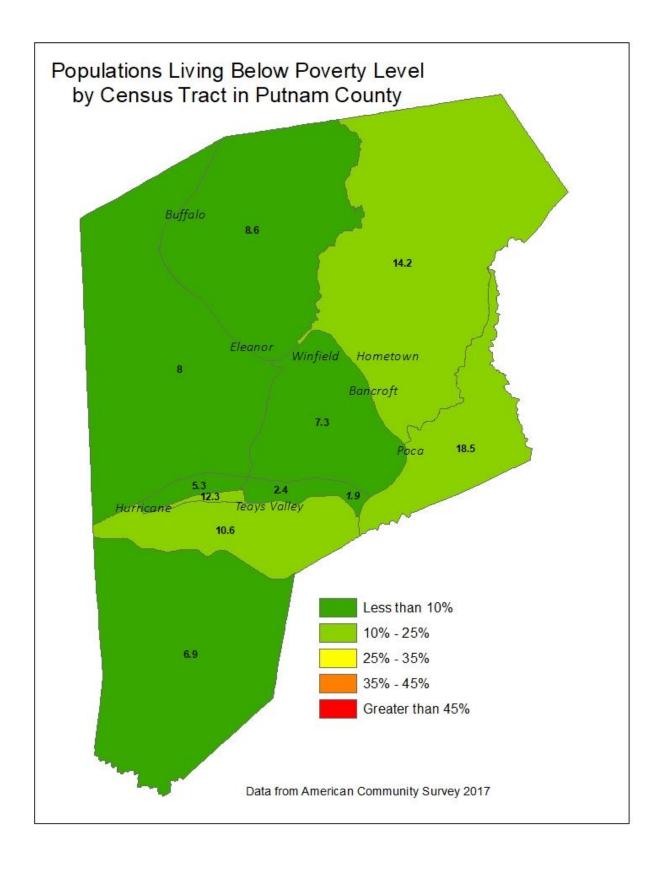












## **Public Comments**

No public comments were received during the 45-day public comment period of October 28, 2019 – December 11, 2019.

#### Public Notice, Charleston Gazette-Mail – October 25, 2019



