



M-14/Barton Drive PEL Study

Public Involvement Plan - Final

Ann Arbor, MI

May 2022

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1.0 Introduction

This plan has been prepared in compliance with the public and agency involvement provisions of federal law governing Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) studies (23 USC 168) and federal regulation (23 CFR 450.212 and 318). These require:

- Public notice provided early in the PEL process that the planning products produced in this PEL process may be adopted during a subsequent environmental review process, such as a National Environmental Policy Act process or an environmental permitting process.
- The PEL be developed in consultation with appropriate federal, state, and local resource agencies and with Indian tribes.
- The PEL documents underwent public review with reasonable opportunity to comment.
- The PEL documents were reviewed by FHWA.

This Public Involvement Plan (PIP) provides a framework for meaningful public engagement and the communication and outreach strategies necessary to build awareness, trust, and support among residents and other stakeholders for the M-14/Barton Drive PEL study. This plan outlines communication goals and objectives, engagement strategies, roles and responsibilities, and schedule. This PIP is intended to be a living document, updated throughout the life of the project, as needed, to reflect public engagement activities and stakeholder feedback.

Successful public involvement requires the inclusion of all voices, particularly those groups that have been historically underrepresented in transportation planning decisions. Bringing diversity of voices to the conversation creates a rich social dialogue and can inform the PEL study in ways that create more environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable outcomes for all participants.

Public involvement is a key component for the success of this project. Establishing strong lines of communication with the surrounding community will enable Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to inform stakeholders about the study and engage them in meaningful ways that allow the public to provide their input and perspective into project planning and design. Public involvement and feedback will help better inform the process and create projects that accomplish transportation goals and meet community needs.

M-14/Barton Drive PEL Study Project Overview

The intent of the Barton Drive PEL study is to analyze the environmental and social impacts of a proposed FY 2025 operational improvement alternative to improve the geometry of the EB M-14/Barton Drive on and off ramps and to assess the future condition needs of the M-14 bridge over the Huron River.

This area of Ann Arbor has extensive park property and trail networks along with other potential environmental and public involvement concerns. The PEL study will: 1) consider environmental, community, and economic goals early in the transportation planning process; 2) use the information analysis, and services or recommendations developed during planning to inform the environmental review process; and 3) evaluate the condition, geometric/safety, and operational needs of the Barton Drive ramps. While the main project is to improve the geometry of the EB M-14/Barton Drive ramps, the study area will extend along M-14 from just west of the Main Street ramps to just east of the Pontiac Trail bridge and include bridge scoping and a crashing history assessment and analysis of the area.

2.0 Communication Goals and Objectives

The project team's communication goals are:

- To be an effective community partner and engage a broad cross-section of stakeholders to provide timely, accurate, interesting, relevant, and authentic project information.
- To create and share project resources that keep all audiences engaged during the PEL study process.
- Provide opportunity for two-way communications with project stakeholders.
- Communicate findings and alternatives to the public and the media.
- Promote safety by educating the public about those features within the study.
- Respond rapidly to all inquiries from the area residents and commuters.

This PIP includes a series of strategies and tactics to reach specific audiences. The success of the PIP will depend on completing deliverables and meeting deadlines, and will be measured by completion of the following objectives:

- Support the MDOT through communication strategy and materials.
- Define a target stakeholder base to adequately tailor the communications process and outreach approach.
- Engage all stakeholders to gather usable input that will help the team finalize the PEL study.
- Provide opportunities for ongoing engagement throughout the project.
- Educate and engage the traveling public and local communities on project need and benefits.
- Help foster and maintain agency and community project buy-in.

3.0 Public Involvement Strategy

The M-14/Barton Drive PEL project team will utilize their communication knowledge and expertise to increase awareness of the study and provide meaningful opportunities for the public to provide their input and perspective into project planning and design. This plan will help better inform process and create projects that accomplish transportation goals and meet community needs. The team will utilize a variety of strategies and tactics to ensure we are reaching all corridor stakeholders.

Key communications and engagement outcomes

- A clear understanding of roles and responsibilities for everyone associated with this study. Specifically, an emphasis on the public's role in the decision-making process (How will their input inform outcomes?).
- Achievable and measurable objectives related to our communication and engagement goals (Outlined in plan).

- Increased engagement with target audiences.
- Build trust through open and clear communication, constructive participation, and respect for all opinions, values, and positions.

Key success factors

- Public understanding of their role in the decision-making process. This includes general and focused outreach.
- Willingness to adjust the strategy, as the study progresses, in a way that supports the communication goals and objectives outlined earlier.
- Ensuring all corridor stakeholders are provided a meaningful opportunity for input. This is defined as providing the opportunity for input in a way that is accessible by most populations. This may mean providing accommodations such as translation services, meetings in multiple formats and locations, and representation through multiple mediums.

Schedule

It is anticipated that public involvement activities will coincide with ongoing stakeholder activities that began in early 2022. Three (3) public meetings are anticipated to be convened throughout the PEL study.

Event/Activity	Purpose/Goal	Date	Responsibility
Meeting with officials from City of Ann Arbor	Initiate conversation with City of Ann Arbor prior to LAC to establish PEL process, obtain feedback, and build support.	TBD	MDOT
Local Advisory Meeting	Introduce project, discuss schedule and outcomes. Discuss the existing conditions findings. Provide draft purpose and need statement for comments, input, development at this meeting.	May 19, 2022-10AM	Atkins / MDOT
Public Meeting #1 (In-person)	Present the Project, schedule, compilation of data and plans, and solicit input from the public and stakeholders for development of the Purpose and Need Statement 6/22/22(meeting goals/stakeholder feedback). Discuss and Approve draft purpose and need statement	June 8, 2022	HDR/MDOT
Local Advisory Meeting	Discuss final purpose and need statement and draft evaluation criteria for discussion. Present preliminary alternatives and their potential impacts to the public and area stakeholders for discussion.	August 11, 2022-10AM	Atkins / MDOT

Public Meeting #2 – Virtual	Present an update to the Project, schedule, additional data and plans. Share preliminary Alternatives for public feedback and comment, authorize draft final purpose and need, and evaluation criteria.	August 11, 2022 – August 25, 2022	HDR
Local Advisory Meeting	Preview draft PEL report, including Share/approve Acceptable Alternative(s) design and Open House materials for public mtg#3	October 20, 2022-10AM	Atkins / MDOT
Public Meeting #3 – Virtual	Share / approve Preferred/Acceptable Alternative(s)	October 20, 2022 – November 3, 2022	HDR
Local Advisory Meeting	Present Draft final PEL report. Notify on the schedule and steps to completion.	December 1, 2022-10AM	Atkins / MDOT
Presentation to Ann Arbor City Council-TBD	Anticipated to summarize project, introduce acceptable alternative(s)/preferred option(s) and gather buy-in. – TBD	December 5 ,2022	Atkins / MDOT
Press release / email to stakeholders	Present Acceptable Alternative with public comments incorporated for final public feedback and comment before the study is finalized. (possibly like M-40 PEL **: Final draft PEL, materials all available on website. Please fill out comment form and let us know if you want a meeting. – 30 Day comment period – January 5, 2023).	Beginning December 5, 2022	Atkins / MDOT

Engagement tools and materials

The consultant team will work with MDOT to execute a variety of engagement tools and materials to that will enable the team to meet the communication goals and objectives outlined above. The engagement tools and materials used will help ensure stakeholders and community members are aware of the study and able to successfully engage. The following tools will be developed and maintained throughout the duration of the PEL study.

Materials Review Process:

Draft materials/files will be sent to Kari Martin and Monica Monsma of MDOT. Files will be sent as attachments with a link to ProjectWise.

MDOT staff will provide consolidated review and input on all deliverables within 1 week of receipt (3 days of MDOT project team review, 3 days of MDOT communications review).

HDR and Atkins will be responsible for updating materials and send to MDOT project team for Final Approval. Final approval is anticipated within 3 days of receipt.

HDR and Atkins will be responsible for finalizing and deploying as guided by this plan.

PRESS RELEASES

MDOT press releases will be used to announce public comment periods and public meetings.

PROJECT WEBSITE

The consultant team will develop a project specific website content and supporting graphics. The website will be hosted by MDOT. The goal of the website is to provide up to date project information, key contacts, and input opportunities. The website will be updated at key milestones and maintained for the duration of the study. The site will provide Study Details, Location/Map, Concepts Under Consideration, Resources, FAQs, and a Contact Us forum with virtual comment form/subscriber sign-up.

POSTCARDS / INVITATIONS

Prior to all public events, a post card invitation will be sent to inform the public about in-person meetings and virtual options for engaging. Invitations will be sent to every resident and business within a quarter-mile of the project area.

PROJECT HOTLINE

The project team will develop and maintain a project hotline for the duration of the study. The goal of the hotline is to offer another means of engagement and opportunity for the community to connect with the project.

IN-PERSON OPEN HOUSE

The team will plan and implement up to one public meeting to be held in-person (employing an office hour format). The in-person meeting will be held at a public forum such as a Farmers Market with some display materials and staff on hand to answer questions. It is assumed in-person meetings will follow local and state COVID Protocols. Staff and attendees will be required to wear masks and social distance as deemed necessary by local/state circumstances. The goal of the in-person open house is for study staff to share information and develop and/or deepen relationships within the community.

SELF-PACED VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSES

The consultant team will design and build two, self-paced virtual meetings to be hosted on MDOT's website. The virtual meeting will be promoted through use of social media and press releases managed by MDOT. The meeting site will be available 24/7 for up to 2 weeks. The goal of the self-paced virtual open houses is to provide the public the opportunity to explore study information and provide input at a time that is most convenient for them.

SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS AND PROMOTION

The project team will create social media content and supporting graphics that MDOT social media team will use to help promote engagement activities and project updates to targeted communities and stakeholders. Social media communications will focus on sharing updates at key milestone and to promoting online and in person input opportunities. The goal of social media promotion is to reach a broad audience, specifically those that do not normally participate in planning process.

STUDY INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

The project team will create educational handouts and/or social media content for general outreach purposes. The goal of project handouts is to offer interested parties a high-level review of the study, including process, goals, and opportunities for public input.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT MEETINGS

The project team will initiate a meeting with the City of Ann Arbor. The goal of the meeting is to provide an overview of the process, answer questions, solicit feedback and establish a positive working relationship. The first meeting will be held prior to the first LAC meeting. Future meeting times will be identified and established at a cadence determined by the City.

LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The project team will regularly brief key stakeholders/stakeholder groups. The goal of the briefings is to provide updates at key milestones and to get detailed input from planning partners. This will occur at intervals such as at the formulation of the purpose and need, delivering the existing conditions report, and development of the alternatives.

The project team will host four (4) local advisory / stakeholder meetings with MDOT, local and regional agencies to discuss the summary of the study to date. Based on the need to follow COVID-19 protocols the assumed format will be held via the Microsoft Teams format. Utilizing this format will allow the presentation of project information, as well as engage with the attendees and receive their comments and concerns. In the event that- in person public meetings are appropriate the LAC / stakeholder meetings will be held in the Ann Arbor area in a public facility.

The project team's responsibilities for the local advisory committee meetings will include:

- Determining the meeting locations (if not virtual)
- Contacting stakeholders
- Developing a presentation for the meetings
- Developing the meeting agenda
- Creating sign-in sheets
- Preparing a meeting summary

Compliance

ADA compliance regulations are important and will be met in a way that allows community members and participants to engage and take part in meetings and other involvement opportunities.

- ADA compliance will be completed for external, public-facing project materials as authorized by Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act and WCAG 2.0 web accessibility guidelines.
- Materials include outreach materials, presentations, and online content delivered in Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint; Adobe InDesign and PDF; and HTML.

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

Task/Event	Consultant Team	MDOT Staff
Public Involvement Plan	Develop Plan to be used throughout the project Update Plan, as needed	Review and provide comments
Electronic Newsletters	Develop content and graphics Distribute newsletters (via MailChimp)	Review and provide comments
Stakeholder Meetings	Plan, coordinate, and facilitate local leader briefings in advance of public meetings Coordinate and attend landowner and business meetings Take meeting minutes and send to the project team following each meeting Collect and manage stakeholder and business contact information Develop visuals and other informational materials Support MDOT staff with materials development and messaging	Review and comment on meetings agendas, materials, and minutes Provide current stakeholder list Attend local leader briefings, business meetings, and landowner meetings

Task/Event	Consultant Team	MDOT Staff
In Person Public and Virtual Meetings	<p>Plan, coordinate, summarize, and staff up to one in-person meeting</p> <p>Plan, design coordinate, summarize and provide staff support for up to two virtual meetings</p> <p>Create public meeting plan for each meeting</p> <p>Develop presentation and materials development – Virtual only</p> <p>Develop social media plan for each meeting (content & graphics)</p>	<p>Attend meeting</p> <p>Distribute press releases</p> <p>Post on social media platforms</p> <p>Develop presentation and materials – in-person only</p> <p>Review and provide comments on materials all outreach and meeting materials</p> <p>Develop and distribute notification materials</p>
Project Website	<p>Create content and supporting graphics for project website</p> <p>Develop updates</p> <p>Make online materials ADA-compliant</p>	<p>Review and approve website updates</p> <p>Develop and manage project website in coordination with the Consultant Team</p>
Social Media	<p>Develop messages and editorial calendars</p> <p>Assist in response to comments/inquiries requiring technical input</p>	<p>Develop social media strategy for each project milestone</p> <p>Design social graphics based on copy provided</p> <p>Post/Tweet</p> <p>Implement targeted ads</p> <p>Monitor social media pages to define potential risks and trending issues</p> <p>Manage comment response</p>
Contact and Comment Management	<p>Set up and manage project email and hotline account</p>	<p>Develop a comment response protocol to be included in this PIP</p>

Task/Event	Consultant Team	MDOT Staff
	Facilitate comment response process Coordinate responses with project team Provide comment logs to project team for all tools managed by Consultant Team (Hotline/Email)	Respond to all comments Track comments/inquiries

5.0 Target Audiences

The success of this project will depend on delivering important project information to key stakeholders and maintaining open communication throughout the project. Frequent, timely, and accurate communication with all project stakeholders creates a network of relationships and builds project understanding.

A stakeholder is any person or group of people who has an interest or a share in a transportation project or plan. Potential stakeholders are community organizations, state agencies, federal agencies, and local governments along with the people who have commercial, residential, personal, and tribal interests.

The following categories of agencies and organizations are identified as key stakeholders for MDOT to engage with as part of this plan update because of interest in, impact from, or role in implementing the plan:

Government Stakeholders

- City of Ann Arbor
- Washtenaw County
- Tribal Governments
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations
- Local Governments
- Other State Agencies
- Neighboring States and Provinces
- Federal Agencies

Industry Stakeholders

- Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development Organizations
- Statewide Associations
- Private Business
- Freight Shippers and Carriers

Special Interest and Advocacy Stakeholders

- Mode-specific Interest Groups (e.g. Bicycling, Walking, Transit, Rail, Air)
- Conservation Organizations
- Health Advocates
- Safety Coalitions
- Social Service Organizations

Academic Institution Stakeholders

- Schools
- Universities and Colleges
- Research Institutions

Additionally, the following demographic communities are critical audiences for MDOT to connect with as part of the PEL study to reach a cross-section of Michiganders and meet federal Title VI and Environmental Justice populations:

- Urban and Rural Residents
- Title VI and Environmental Justice Populations (i.e. Low Income, Minority)

- Additional Underserved and Underrepresented Communities (e.g. Younger, Older, Disability Community, Individuals Experiencing Health Disparities)

6.0 Key Messages

The process for the project, the purpose of PEL studies and how we got here will be illustrated.

Feedback for the initial phase of the study will be used to determine Purpose and Need, which is foundational to the project, and public input is crucial. It has three parts as described below:

- The Purpose defines the transportation problem to be solved.
- The Need provides information to support the problem statement (Purpose).
- The Goals and Objectives describe other issues that need to be resolved as part of any successful solution to the problem (i.e. what does success look like?)

This study is an opportunity to apprise what M-14/Barton Drive could look like in the future. The transportation challenges will be brought out and the options being considered with details on benefits / drawbacks for each.

7.0 Comment Collection, Response and Management Protocol

MDOT will compile all comments and manage responses as appropriate. The project team will relay all messages collected and assist as needed in providing answers.

8.0 PEL Study Communication Team Contacts

Team Member	Affiliation/Role	Email
Kari Martin	MDOT, Project Manager	MartinK5@michigan.gov
Monica Monsma	MDOT, Public Information	monsmam@michigan.gov
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