



August 31, 2011

To: Metropolitan Policy Committee

From: Kathi Wiederhold

Subject: Item 5.a: Report from the Citizen Advisory Committee

Action Recommended: None. Information only.

Report

The Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) took a field tour in lieu of their regular meeting on August 18, 2011. This memo tells about the field tour and the CAC's experience staffing a booth at the Eugene Celebration on August 27 and 28, 2011.

Field Tour

Continuing their summer tradition, the CAC took a field tour in August. Nine CAC members plus staff travelled in style via bus — thank you, Lane Transit District. Thanks, too, to David Reesor and Kurt Yeiter, Senior Transportation Planners for Springfield and Eugene, respectively, for all the many things they did to make the tour a fine one — from planning to providing materials to staffing. The Co-Chairs both attended and gave the tour high marks — things went well and there was lively discussion about the various issues at each stop.

The tour featured visits to: South Willamette Street (24th-32nd Avenues); 13th & Alder area; Downtown Springfield; and the Martin Luther King Roundabout. The group also viewed the South Bank viaduct, I-5 bridge construction, and the new signals on Harlow Road near the Gateway/International EmX route. Some of the stops/topics were new to the committee, others followed up on previous field tour stops and/or discussions at meetings.

The South Willamette stop provided a lot of fuel for discussion about possible options to improve travel for cars, pedestrians, and bikes. It caught the CAC's interest that that stretch of Willamette is well-known throughout the state as dicey, which helped secure funding for a pilot project focusing on the area. They were particularly interested in the outreach to involve businesses and residents and have requested a presentation to learn more.

The stop at the roundabout was familiar territory for the CAC. They had visited the roundabout during a previous field tour and had urged safety improvements to assist bicycles and pedestrians. So, they were particularly pleased to see the changes and how well the new signals on the roundabout were working as they watched bicycles and pedestrians travel through it.

Eugene Celebration

Buoyed by last year's positive experience staffing the MPO booth at the Eugene Celebration, six members of the CAC volunteered to help staff a booth again this year on August 27 and 28 — Paul Adkins, Wendy Butler-Boyesen, Philip Farrington, Dave Jacobson, Eleanor Mulder, and Jennifer Smith. Thank you to point2point Solutions for so generously providing the booth.

Besides the MPO and point2point, the shared booth included the Lane Transit District, Eugene's Sunday Streets project, a listening station for the Regional Transportation System Plan project, and a B-cycle display of a bike sharing system. Attachment 1 shows the MPO display and photos of CAC members in action. The booth was in the Sustainability Village on 8th Avenue, just east of Willamette Street.

I asked the CAC members who helped staff the booth to tell you about their experience. Here's what they had to say:

"A (pleasantly) surprising amount of participation, from a broad cross-section of people. Very knowledgeable input shared from teenagers to truckers. Let's make sure this input does not get lost and is incorporated into our planning process!" Philip Farrington

"I walked into the street with a stack of information cards. I handed them out to the people walking down the street. I asked them if they wanted to have in-put on the next 20 years of regional transportation. I showed them the hearing times and dates and the web-site, and I thanked them for their in-put. I talked with a lot of bicycle people and pedestrian people. Several people wanted fewer road expansions and more alternatives to vehicular traffic." Dave Jacobson

"Our booth seemed to have less space than last year, and we had three staff from various departments, so it got a little crowded. Also, tables were set up in the back of the area--probably so the staff could move out in front, but that made it challenging to get folks to come in and view the map, and other materials. Did have several good conversations with folks and encourage us to do it again next year." Wendy Butler-Boyesen

"I really enjoyed my volunteer shift at the LCOG booth this year. I solicited comments on our transportation network from passersby. People went quickly from thinking that transportation issues don't interest them to making nuanced comments about mode conflicts, amenities they enjoy, and places that need more work. I wonder how we can get people excited about transportation planning – it really does interest them once they begin to think about it." Jennifer Smith

Attachments

1. MPO public outreach display and photos from the Eugene Celebration booth