



January 13, 2009

To: Citizen Advisory Committee
From: Kathi Wiederhold
Subject: Item 6: Public Participation Plan

Action Recommended: Begin 2009 annual evaluation of the *Public Participation Plan*.

The purpose of this agenda item is to begin the 2009 annual evaluation of the *Public Participation Plan*, hereafter called the Plan. Policy 3.2 on page 10 of the Plan directs that the Plan shall be reviewed annually.

Staff Recommendation on Approach

The Citizen Advisory Committee conducted an extensive first annual evaluation in 2008, spending time over four meetings discussing the evaluation of the Plan and struggling with the broader question of how to reach more members of the public about transportation planning. The committee reached five conclusions, listed in the Background section below, and made 9 recommendations (see Attachment 1) to the Metropolitan Policy Committee.

Staff recommends that the committee use a more cursory approach for the 2009 evaluation, continue to work actively on implementing the 2008 recommendations, and conduct a more in-depth evaluation in 2010.

Draft 2009 Evaluation

The Plan was followed when conducting core public involvement for each key MPO product developed in 2009 (see Attachment 2). In addition, the committee and staff have been working to implement the 9 recommendations from the 2008 evaluation and make ongoing improvements to the MPO website and outreach materials. The following list briefly summarizes the progress made to date on implementing the 2008 recommendations. The numbers in this list key to the numbers of the recommendations in Attachment 1.

1. Extensive work has been done on to establish a central clearinghouse, including inviting MPO partner staff to join a roundtable discussion with the CAC, collecting suggestions from the CAC as a result of their researching MPO partner websites, and receiving input on a conceptual proposal from the Transportation Policy Committee, and developing a draft proposal. The next steps are to refine the

proposal to include specific steps and costs, then seek budgetary and staff commitments.

2. The committee invited MPO partner staff to talk with them about how the public currently finds out about transportation related activities, plans, projects, and programs in the area. The CAC learned that effective mechanisms already are in place for answering questions from the public which could be improved by building some agreements to enhance coordination where necessary and get the word out to the public.

3, 4, 7, 8, & 9

We've taken a number of steps to strengthen the relationship between the Citizen Advisory Committee and MPO partner agencies and establish communications as a starting point to implementing all of the 2008 recommendations. This has included inviting MPO partner staff to CAC meetings to present and discuss, with staff taking suggestions back to their respective agencies. MPO staff has improved existing coordination mechanisms with MPO partner staff at Technical Advisory Subcommittee and Transportation Policy Committee meetings. One recent success as a result of this teamwork is that Springfield added a link to transportation projects to its website to provide better access to citizens.

5. Staff has developed a multi-year timeline that identifies milestones relevant to regional transportation planning.
6. Based upon the Regional Transportation Work Plan approved by the Metropolitan Policy Committee, a major policy review will not occur in the next update of the Regional Transportation Plan.

Next Steps for 2009

1. Continue to carry out the core public involvement for key MPO products as directed by the Plan.
2. Continue to work to implement the 2008 recommendations.
3. Establish ways to assess the evaluation measurements (see Attachment 3) in the Plan.

Background

The Citizen Advisory Committee conducted the first annual evaluation of the Plan at the December 2007 through March 2008 meetings. The committee considered a number of pieces of information in conducting the evaluation of the Plan:

- Public involvement for the recent update of the Regional Transportation Plan as a way to examine the usefulness of the Plan.
- A summary report on how well the outreach over the initial year met the evaluation measurements, performance objectives, and methods to meet the objectives in the Plan.

- Presentations from and roundtable discussion with local staff of MPO partners regarding public outreach they conduct for local planning activities and programs.

The following is a summary of the conclusions reached by the committee as a result of the 2008 evaluation.

1. The MPO Public Participation Plan was followed when conducting public outreach for the Regional Transportation Plan.
2. The public is most interested in having meaningful input at a point in the planning process which allows for changes to be made, for example, to projects on the project list. This opportunity largely occurs during the local planning processes and during the environmental review for a project, not at the MPO Regional Transportation Plan level. The project lists in the Regional Transportation Plan are generated from the local plans, thus projects have undergone public input during the adoption of the local plans. The public should be given a comprehensive picture that included all of the agencies involved and emphasized the opportunities to get involved early on.
3. The first year of implementing the Plan was a good start towards conducting public outreach for the key MPO products in a way that meets the requirements in the Plan. There is room to improve in the future.
4. The committee reflected that it was clear from the presentations from local staff from MPO partners that there were multiple opportunities for public involvement at every step in the process for every local planning activity and project.
5. The local process does not make it clear to the public what the issues are, how they affect people, and that now is the time to be involved.

Mayor Piercy and Vice-Chair Dave Jacobson jointly presented the CAC recommendations (see Attachment 1) from the 2008 evaluation to the Metropolitan Policy Committee at the May 8, 2008, meeting. Mayor Piercy was the Metropolitan Policy Committee liaison to the Citizen Advisory Committee.

Attachment

1. Citizen Advisory Committee Recommendations Regarding Public Involvement
2. Table 1, Summary Table of Public Involvement, p. 13, *Public Participation Plan*
3. Table 2, Evaluating Public Involvement Tools, p. 17-18, *Public Participation Plan*

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Last Saved: January 14, 2009