

Best Practices, Policies and Procedures Recommendations for Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Citizen Participation Program

June 13, 2002



Presentation to
**Richmond MPO's
Citizen's Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC)**

by
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Acknowledgement

Prepared in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, and the Virginia Department of Transportation.

Disclaimer

The contents of this report reflect the views of the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization. Howard/Stein-Hudson is responsible for the facts and accuracy of the data presented herein. The contents do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VDRPT), the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), or the Richmond Regional Planning District Commission. This report does not constitute a standard, specification, or regulation.

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to set out best practices, policies and procedures recommendations for the Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) citizen participation program. The report focuses on the key concerns that were raised in the MPO's FHWA certification review, specifically; under-represented communities outreach, web site techniques, pro-active education about the planning process, and outreach evaluation systems. The bulleted matrix below summarizes the MPO recommendations:

MPO Recommendations: Bulleted Matrix

<i>Under-represented Community Outreach</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Use mapping technology to identify community transportation patterns❑ Bring meetings to the community❑ Bring the community to meetings❑ Make meetings family-friendly❑ Teach people about the planning process❑ Involve respected local officials	<i>Pro-active Planning Education</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Make materials easy to understand/avoid jargon❑ Use creative information distribution techniques❑ Information kiosk❑ Include a glossary❑ Describe the MPO❑ Partner with other organizations❑ Use CTAC members as community liaisons❑ Cross-reference in phone book
<i>Improving Web Site</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Explore other MPO web sites❑ Add more extensive maps❑ Explain the MPO's function and purpose❑ Link the web site to other outreach materials❑ Post the Citizen Participation Plan on the web❑ Explore advanced Internet features<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Interactive mapping- Photo simulations- Video clips- Games- Chat room or LISTSERV❑ ADA compliance	<i>Outreach Evaluation</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Evaluate outputs<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Elements that comprise citizen participation outreach techniques- Qualitative and quantitative❑ Evaluate outcomes<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Results of the outputs (citizen participation techniques)- Qualitative and quantitative❑ Create and distribute internal and external evaluation surveys❑ Conduct internal and external telephone surveys❑ Create a Citizen Participation evaluation matrix; regularly update

The report includes a review of current Richmond area MPO citizen participation policies and procedures and a peer review of six other MPO's. Understanding the existing Richmond area MPO protocols provides opportunities to evaluate the trade-offs the agency makes currently among time, cost and quality, and how this results in the successes and failures in reaching out to both the general public and to minority/low income populations in particular.

The Richmond Area MPO shares many commonalities with other MPOs in terms of the public involvement challenges that they face and the real world constraints of staff, budget, and time pressures. The exercise of developing goals and policies to create a comprehensive public involvement plan is often a world away from creating real opportunities for public participation among all stakeholders in the transportation process. Identifying Environmental Justice (EJ) groups is relatively easy; finding ways to get EJ groups to fully participate in the planning process is not. Understanding that a web site could benefit from improvements to the format, content, or style is one thing; finding someone in-house to manage the web site may in fact be as difficult a task as the alternative option of finding money in the budget to pay an expert. Pro-active education about the planning process can be a wonderful way to engage stakeholders, but it's sometimes a difficult gift to give away.

The Richmond Area MPO has made many strides in its transportation planning programs, including the development of a regional long-range 20-year transportation plan, a three-year transportation improvement program, and related plans and studies. Citizen participation is a large part of MPO focus and concern.

In order to know how to best incorporate input from stakeholders into the planning process in an effective manner, it may be important to reconsider the critical path of the MPO and its various subcommittees in terms of decision-making. You can create superb strategies for engaging and educating the public, but if their comments can never be organized and presented in a meaningful way at the appropriate time in the planning process, there will be a gap between information that is gathered and information that is used to make decisions about the final built transportation system.

To analyze the effectiveness of a public involvement program, it's prudent to use a combination of standard public outreach techniques and the tools of current technology. Use standard sign-in sheets at meetings but consider geo-coding the addresses of meeting attendees to evaluate whether the turnout is representative of the stakeholders you tried to attract. Use newsletters to distribute information in a uniform format but also keep electronic issue logs to track the outcomes and gauge the importance of particular issues. Measure feedback via website questionnaires, and by handing out hard copies at transit centers. Making a marriage of standard and new techniques will provide opportunities to reach new audiences. Develop a system for measuring the implementation of input may also be best developed using technology and tried-and-true methods. If your MPO is diligently tracking information that cannot be plotted onto maps, organized onto tables, or illustrated via photo-renderings, then why are you doing it? Understanding the changing needs of an expanding community will require good database abilities, but more importantly, will require that the data be good.

Best Practices, Policies and Procedures Recommendations for Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Citizen Participation Program

Overview

This is the draft final report of “Best Practices, Policies and Procedures Recommendations” for the Richmond Area MPO’s Citizen Participation Program.

Part one will focus on the key concerns that were raised in the MPO's FHWA certification review, specifically:

- Under-represented communities outreach (minority, low-income, disabled and elderly)
- Web site techniques
- Pro-active education about the planning process
- Outreach evaluation systems

1. Part one of the report focuses on:

- A review of current Richmond area MPO citizen participation policies and procedures and
- A peer review of six other MPO’s citizen participation policies and procedures.

2. Part two includes:

- Development of a set of best practices techniques and strategies
- Recommendations for developing and implementing a system to gauge the effectiveness of public outreach practices, policies and procedures

3. The Appendix:

- Contain examples of documents that can be used in future public outreach efforts, as well as a summary of input received from the CTAC at the March 26 meeting, see page 61

Voting Members:

Town of Ashland

Angela LaCombe
Linwood Attkisson, Mayor*

Charles City County

Michael L. Holmes
William R. Britton, Jr.*

Chesterfield County

Edward B. Barber
John L. McHale
R. John McCracken
Kelly E. Miller
Stan B. Newcomb*
Barbara K. Smith*
Steven E. Simonson*
James R. Banks*

Goochland County

Malvern R. Butler
James T. Taylor
Robert A. Hammond*
William D. Harvey*

Hanover County

Rebecca G. Draper
J.T. "Jack" Ward
John E. Gordon
David P. Maloney*
Timothy E. Ernst*
Wanda G. Moore*

Henrico County

Patricia S. O'Bannon
Eric B. Millirons
Frank J. Thornton
Randall R. Silber
John R. Marles*
Robert C. Thompson*

New Kent County

Rebecca M. Ringley
W.R. Davis, Jr.
George M. Homewood*
Mr. Richard S. Ellyson*

Powhatan County

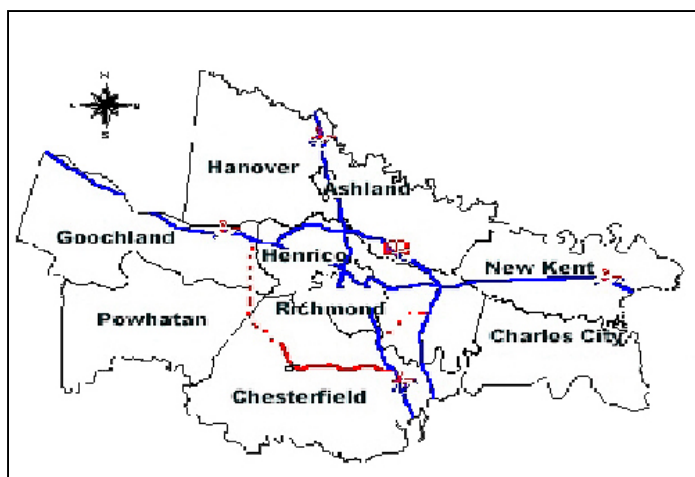
Roy J. Harrison, Jr.
Richard W. Ayers
Paul J. Grasewicz*

City of Richmond

Viktoria W. Badger
Joseph E. Brooks
Gwen C. Hedgepeth
Diane M. Linderman
William E. Harrell*
William Henley*
S. Mark Strickler*

Who Is the Richmond Area MPO?

The Richmond Area MPO is the federally designated regional transportation planning organization that serves as the forum for cooperative transportation decision-making in the Richmond area. Members include the following jurisdictions, agencies, and stakeholders:



What is the Richmond MPO?

The MPO planning area boundary includes all of the City of Richmond, the Town of Ashland, Henrico County, Hanover County, most of Chesterfield County, and portions of Charles City, Goochland, New Kent and Powhatan Counties. All local governments are part of the Richmond Regional Planning District Commission, which provides staffing for the MPO. Within the MPO are three standing committees: the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), the Citizen Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC), and the Elderly and Disabled Advisory Committee (EDAC), all of which have scheduled a monthly meetings and meet as needed (generally 5 to 8 times a year).

Capital Region Airport Commission

Jon E. Mathiasen
Douglas E. Blum*

Greater Richmond Transit Company

Rollo Axton
Robert Hodder*

Richmond Metropolitan Authority

Robert M. Berry
James B. Kennedy*

Richmond Regional Planning District Commission

Paul E. Fisher

Virginia Department of Transportation

K.E. Lantz, Jr.
W.R. Mustain, II*

Non-Voting Members

Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee Chairman

Herbert Richwine

FHWA

Ivan Rucker

FTA

Pat Kampf

MPO Chairman's Citizen Appointees

Ronald Buchanan
John Zeugner

Ridefinders, Inc.

Felicia H. Woodruff

Virginia Department of Aviation

P. Clifford Burnette, Jr.

Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation

Jack Apostolides

*Alternates**

The Richmond Regional Planning District Commission serves as lead staff and contracting agent for the Richmond Area MPO.

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Rhonda J. Bailey, Administrative Secretary
Sharon E. Robeson, Administrative Secretary



Efforts Underway

The Richmond Area MPO has made many strides in its transportation planning programs, including the development of a regional long-range 20-year transportation plan, a three-year transportation improvement program, and related plans and studies. Citizen participation is a large part of MPO focus and concern. Recently, the Richmond MPO has demonstrated the importance of using the Internet as a citizen participation tool, and has begun attaching MPO committee meeting minutes on their web site, thus providing the public the opportunity to learn more about MPO activities.

The Richmond MPO is committed to enhancing its citizen participation outreach programs. It is our hope that this report may assist in building on the assets already in place within Richmond MPO citizen participation planning methods, in order to strengthen outreach effectiveness.

Richmond MPO Document Review

This review of current citizen participation practices and recommendations for the Richmond Area MPO will help provide an understanding of the positive and negative features of current MPO policies and procedures. Understanding the existing Richmond area MPO protocols will provide opportunities to evaluate the trade-offs the agency makes currently among time, cost and quality, and how this results in the successes and failures in reaching out to both the general public and to minority/low income populations in particular. The section below combines consultant comments with comments from the various documents reviewed.

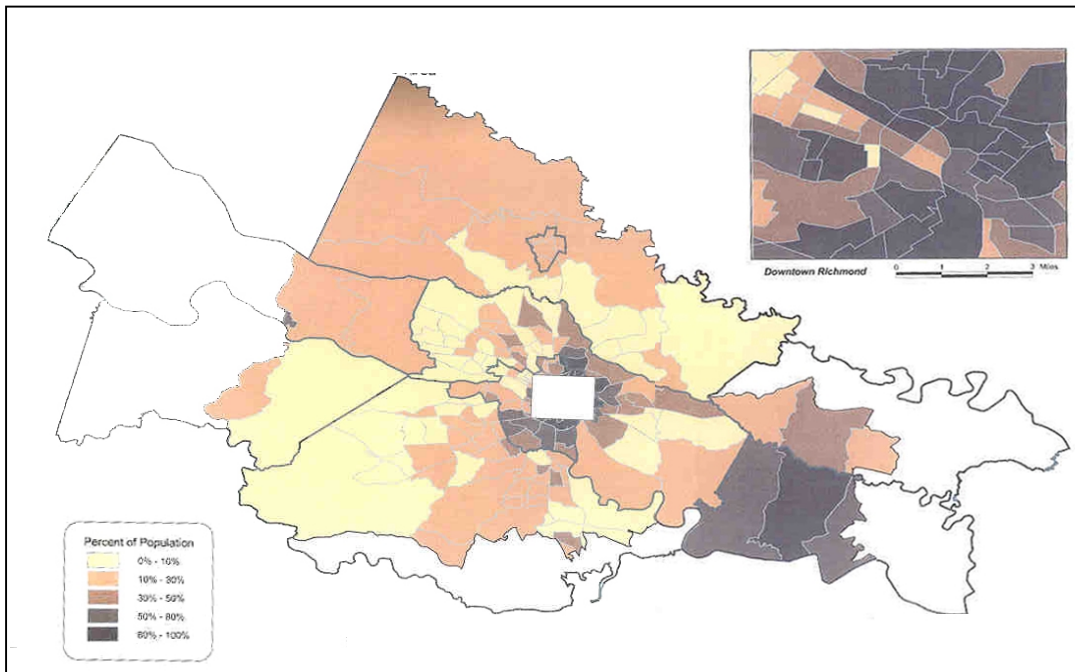
Documents examined for this task include:

1. The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Certification Review Report
2. The Richmond MPO Long Range Transportation Plan
3. The Richmond MPO Congestion Management System
4. CTAC Mission Statements and Evaluation Workshop
5. Public survey recommendations and Elderly and Disabled Advisory Committee (EDAC) meeting

U.S. Department of Transportation Certification Review Report (January 17, 2001)

This review suggested improvements to the Richmond MPO's advertising strategy, its web site, and citizen participation and Environmental Justice (EJ) efforts. Specific comments are summarized below:

- Advertising tools are in need of evaluation, to determine their effectiveness and appropriateness—a form of evaluation mechanism would be helpful in this area, especially in courting under-represented communities.
- The web site would benefit from including Advisory Group minutes (recently implemented by the MPO) as part of their overall selection, as well as adding an electronic guest book, for better identification of interested parties. Overall, the web site is informative, but could use more regular updating.
- Public outreach could become more proactive in nature, especially in developing stakeholder relationships, which could be augmented by more public workshops and presentations about upcoming planning issues.
- U.S. DOT recommended formal documentation of EJ efforts, in order to be more consistent with Long Range Plan goals. An evaluation strategy could be developed that assesses and suggests improved strategies for reaching low-income and minority groups. Upgrading the demographic profile of the region with information detailing car ownership, transit use, and journey-to-work patterns would help better identify locations of under-represented communities. It would be beneficial to assess the region's transportation investments in these neighborhoods, in order to better decide how to increase the benefit while minimizing the burden for these groups.

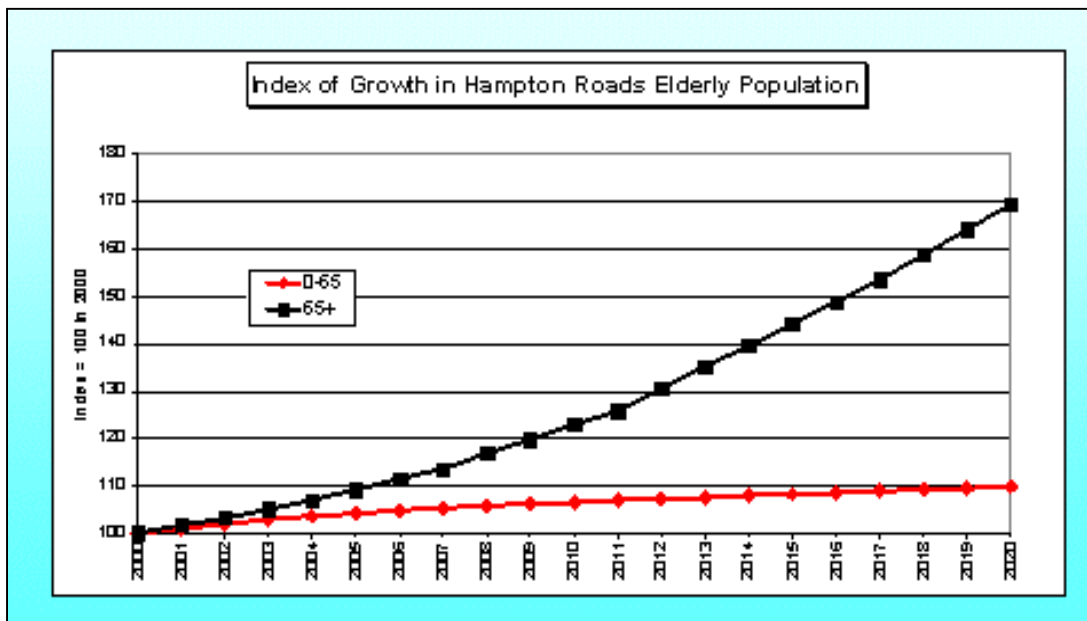


Richmond Regional MPO Area – 1990 Minority Population by Census Tract

The Richmond MPO Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

Included in the LRTP are extensive goals and objectives that deal with all levels of EJ and citizen participation strategies:

- Regional transportation access must parallel the growth rate of elderly/disabled populations and prepare for changing regional demographics. Transportation linkages between employment centers and neighborhoods with high unemployment need to be strengthened and information about these available linkages needs to be made available to social service agencies. Coordination of non-emergency transportation services such as welfare-to-work would also help attain EJ goals.



Hampton Roads faces demographic issues similar to Richmond, as its elderly population is projected to climb.

- The current LRTP provides minimal consideration for EJ requirements. Consideration should be given to more fully addressing EJ requirements in the LRTP
- Improving outreach through local media outlets, civic groups, and social service agencies. A major effort of this campaign would be to develop a list of transit projects that will serve the Richmond area for the next 20 years, and assist in meeting EJ requirements.
- The MPO should consider the reorganization of the Elderly and Disabled Advisory Committee to include an EJ committee, as many areas of concern in the region overlap between elderly/disabled populations and low-income/minority groups. This committee would review MPO public participation programs to ensure fair and adequate public input in the transportation planning process.
- Planning outreach could include regular descriptions of what the MPO does, in order to further educate an interested public on the invaluable services the MPO provides. Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and CTAC surveys on transportation needs from 2000/2001 public meetings should be downloadable over the internet, so that the public is aware of local opinions, as well as of efforts being made to gather these opinions.
- More vigorous advertising is needed to reach EJ communities, besides advertising in the Richmond Free Press. Outreach to other local newspapers and community papers would be beneficial.
- Focus in EJ neighborhoods needs to be on transit development and improvement, to offset the fact that most regional transportation efforts are on roadway projects in upper-income areas.
- The same Transportation Demand Management (TDM) marketing strategies recommended in the LRTP (creatively disseminating information through mass mailings, newspapers, radio, TV, poster, bulletin boards, flyers, in-house newsletters, fairs, etc.) are equally applicable to under-represented community outreach. Similarly, the Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) goal of improving inter-agency coordination and establishing a main contact number for travel information could also be applied as outreach strategies.
- The MPO would benefit from examining how information is being distributed to the public, analyzing the effectiveness of this distribution process.

The Richmond MPO Congestion Management System

There were a number of congestion management strategies that could be applicable to enhancing citizen participation:

- Efforts to encourage the MPO to use Ridefinders in order to help coordinate TDM activities could be equally applied towards improving CTAC and MPO relationships.
- Similar “out-of-the-box” thinking as considering other alternatives than building new roadway could be modified to creatively develop citizen participation evaluation strategies.
- Increasing funding for more TDM studies and analysis could dovetail with increasing the citizen participation budget.
- Improved TDM survey and forecasting methods could be modified to improve public outreach efforts, especially to under-represented communities.

Citizen’s Transportation Advisory Committee Mission Statements and Evaluation Workshop (September 28, 1999)

Mainly, these recommendations dealt with issue identification, inter-agency communication, representation, and outreach:

- The CTAC needs to identify major regional issues and concerns, and communicate these to the MPO. Overall communication between the MPO and the CTAC needs improvement.
- The MPO should recommend priority topics for the CTAC to address.
- The MPO should receive a wide variety of viewpoints from the CTAC so that the MPO can be made aware of diverse opinions. This is especially applicable to achieving EJ goals.
- CTAC needs more feedback and outreach from MPO representatives, more visibility in order to get significant public input (especially in the media and on the internet), and there should always be an MPO representative at CTAC meetings.
- Language between the MPO/CTAC needs to be simplified in order to reach a broader audience (e.g.: less reliance upon acronyms, better explanations of the planning process, etc.)
- CTAC needs a wider variety of techniques with which to get feedback from the MPO.
- Consistent meeting schedules and a more defined MPO vision would help the CTAC effectively translate this vision to the public.

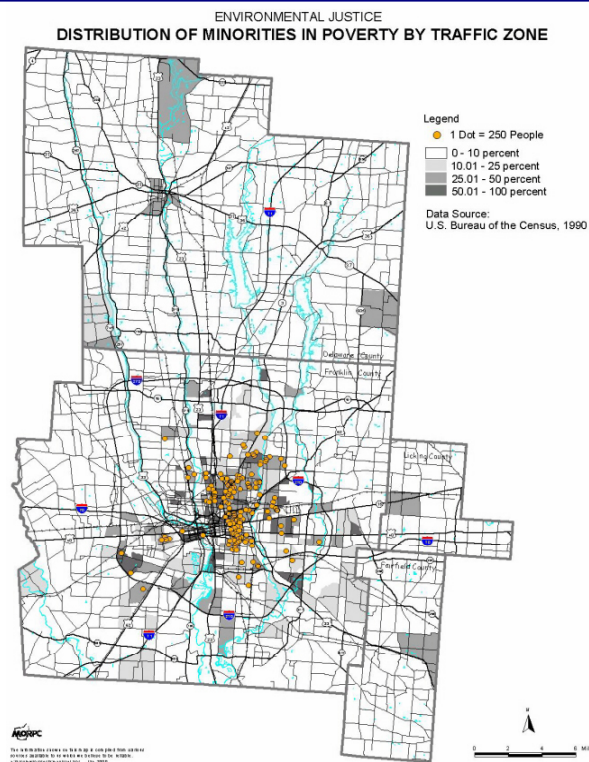
Public Survey Recommendations and EDAC Meeting Suggestions

These recommendations also dealt particularly with outreach issues:

- The MPO needs more outreach to disabled communities, seniors, and people without cars (would also be representative of lower income communities).
- Focus on outreach to students would be helpful, as lower-income students often cannot rely on parents for automobile transportation, and need some other form of public transportation.
- The MPO could improve regional demographic mapping techniques and analysis, in order to better understand where underrepresented communities are located.

Using the findings of the document review as summarized above we developed a questionnaire (see Appendix page 39) to investigate citizen participation policies and procedures in cohort MPOs.

*GIS mapping
to show
where lower
income and
minority
people live*

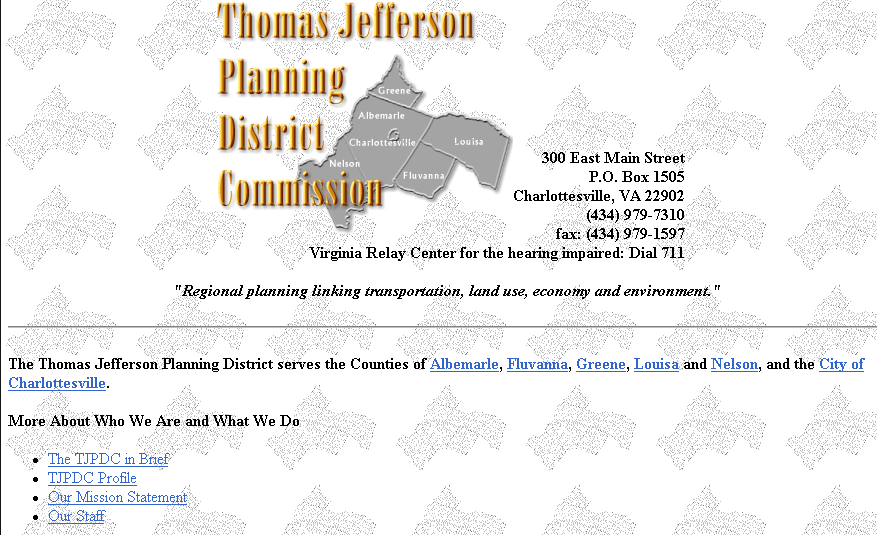


Review of Cohort MPO Citizen Participation Policies and Procedures

In an effort to provide the Richmond MPO best practices, policies and procedures recommendations for their citizen participation program, HSH conducted telephone interviews with six peer MPOs.

Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission

<http://www.tjpd.org/>



The logo for the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission features the name in a stylized font. Below the name is a map of the planning district, which includes Albemarle, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, and Nelson counties, as well as the City of Charlottesville. To the right of the map, the address is listed: 300 East Main Street, P.O. Box 1505, Charlottesville, VA 22902. The phone number is (434) 979-7310 and the fax number is (434) 979-1597. Below the address, it says "Virginia Relay Center for the hearing impaired: Dial 711". A quote below the map reads: "Regional planning linking transportation, land use, economy and environment."

The Thomas Jefferson Planning District serves the Counties of [Albemarle](#), [Fluvanna](#), [Greene](#), [Louisa](#) and [Nelson](#), and the [City of Charlottesville](#).

More About Who We Are and What We Do

- [The TJPDC in Brief](#)
- [TJPDC Profile](#)
- [Our Mission Statement](#)
- [Our Staff](#)

TJPDC covers an area of 2155 sq miles and a population of almost 200,000

Capital Area MPO in Raleigh, NC (CAMPO)

<http://www.raleigh-nc.org/campo>



The logo for the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) is at the top. Below the logo are four small images: a flag, a classical building, a landscape with a bridge, and a street scene. Below the images, the text "Overview Transportation Planning TAC/TCC Improvement Program News" is displayed. A section titled "~CAMPO Currents~" lists several items: Transportation Plan Survey, Transportation Plan Update, Fall/Winter Newsletter 2000-01, Center of Region Enterprise (C.O.R.E.), Wake County Sidewalk / Greenway Inventory, Regional Transportation Strategy, and Options Analysis Report v4.1. To the right of this list, a blue box contains information about two town hall meetings: Fuquay-Varina Town Hall on April 8, 2002, from 5-7:30pm, and Wake Forest Town Hall on April 9, 2002, from 5-7:30pm, at the Wendell Community Center.

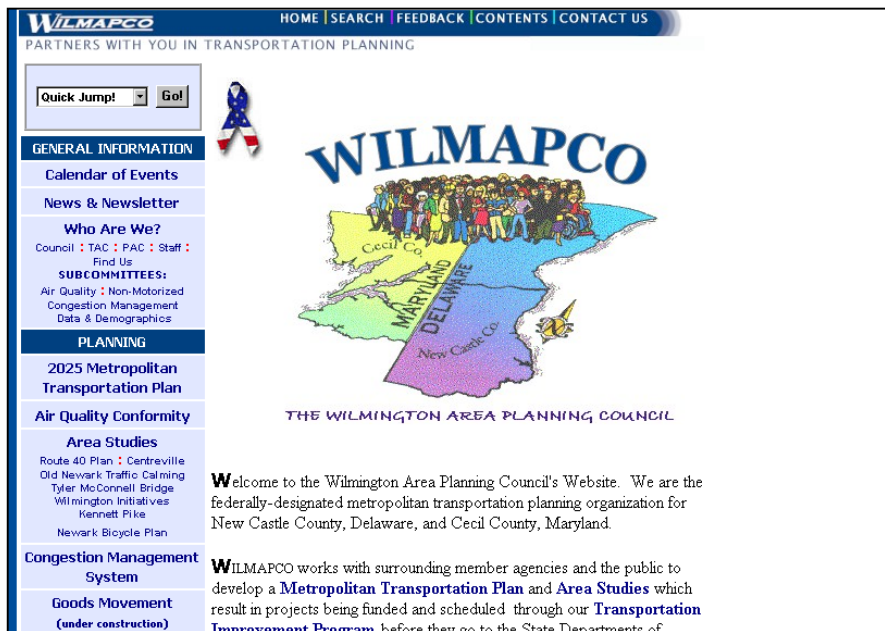
Currently, CAMPO is in the process of seeking public review and comment on the Preferred Transportation Plan

Hampton Roads Planning District Commission in Chesapeake, VA (HRPDC)
http://www.hrpdc.org/transport/presentations/congestion_management_web_version_files/frame.htm



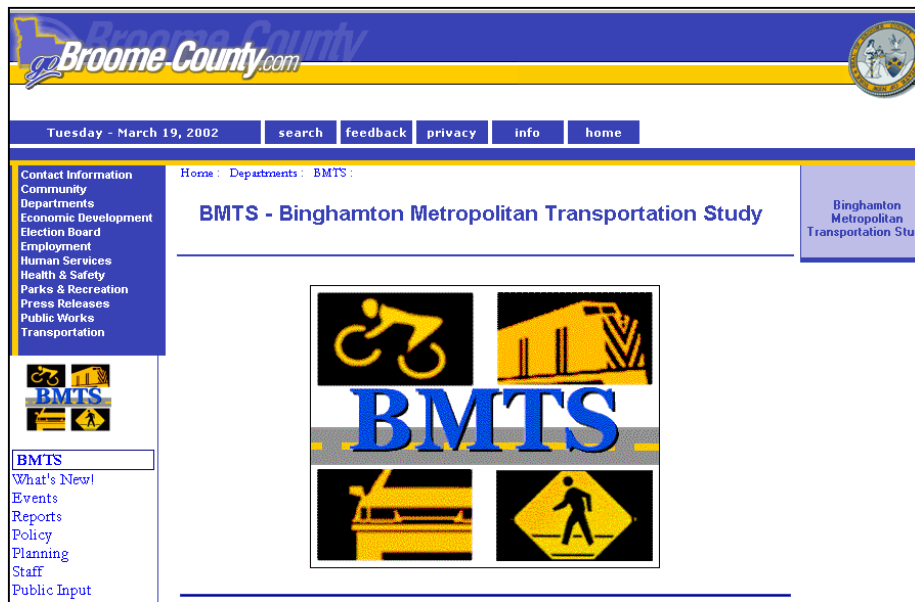
HRPDC are looking to increase the efficiency of its transport system, manage demand and add capacity.

Wilmington Area Planning Council in Newark, DE (WILMAPCO)
<http://www.wilmapco.org/>



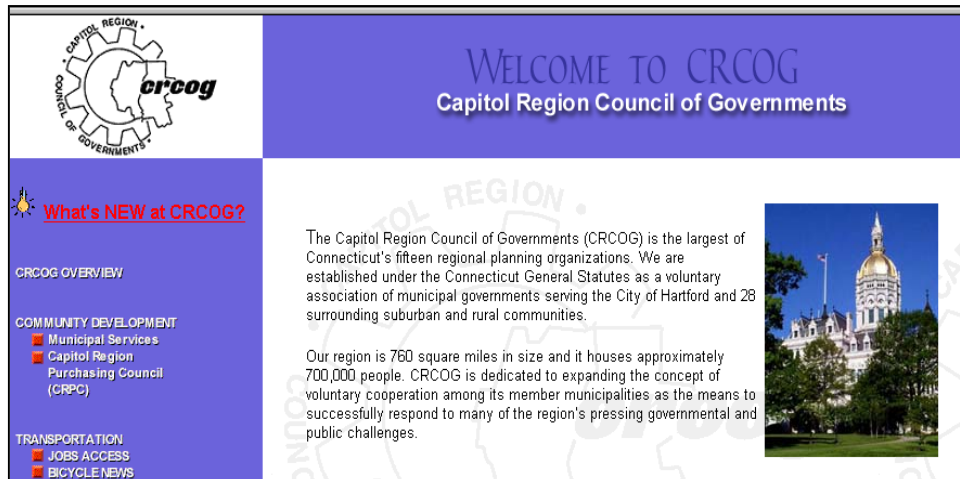
In March, 2002, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) will conduct a certification review of the transportation planning process for the Wilmington Metropolitan Area.

Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study, NY (BMTS)
<http://www.gobroomecounty.com/departments/BMTS.php>



Members of BMTS include professional staff of member municipalities, engineers, planners, and public works officials

Capitol Region Council of Governments in Hartford, CT (CRCOG)
<http://www.crcog.org/>



CRCOG recently adopted an action plan to address six major areas: regional vision and community, services to local governments and shared services, inter-municipal collaboration and cooperation, strengthening the City of Hartford as the core of a strong region, advocating for the region and its municipalities with the State and Federal governments, and working with other regional organizations.

Summary of MPO Discussions

Conversations held with these MPOs were guided by the questionnaire shown in Appendix page 36. It is hoped that by examining citizen participation practices of peer MPOs, an understanding of current policies and procedures will help the Richmond MPO advance its own citizen participation techniques. At the same time, they will highlight common difficulties shared by all MPOs, and provide insight into how such difficulties are being overcome.

Who are the key stakeholder groups?

The constituencies that typically contribute to the MPO process were commonly organized into the following groups:

- Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) that guides the process
- Public Advisory Committee (PAC)
- Local Advisory Committee (LAC) deals with specific local issues. (Each constituent town has its own LAC who then come to a larger group to report back.)

Examples of typical membership of these committees are:

- Elected Officials
- Chamber of Commerce
- State DOT
- Office of Economic & Community Development
- Regional Transit Operators
- Business Community
- Senior Groups
- Transit Users
- Disabled Groups
- Neighborhood Groups
- Bicycle & Pedestrian Advocacy Groups

*“People come to meetings when they see a line on a map, not for long range plans”.
(CRCOG)*

*“I think it is important to have someone who comes from a more creative/ marketing background. Planners tend to think in terms of getting people into the planning process and not be as continuous of the need to create general awareness and "market" the organization. I would urge any organization who has the resources to have planners involved in public involvement, but think about hiring someone with a different skill set or background that makes them strong in outreach”.
(WILMAPCO)*

What are the common challenges faced by MPOs?

Almost without exception EJ was cited as the biggest citizen participation challenge. Increasing involvement of low income and minority populations in the planning process was a goal shared by all MPOs. Another common challenge was trying to gain more input and participation from the general public, particularly in longer term planning studies that are not necessarily project specific. In a smaller number of cases, MPOs stated that more input from the business community and legislators would be desirable. In all cases, MPOs declared that one of their biggest challenges was to get the public involved early enough in the planning process.

MPOs also desired a broader range of input, since on many occasions there always seems to be a core group of participants who attend every event. One MPO observed that attendance at meetings can be dominated by staff from the various agencies involved with a project or plan. Meanwhile, representation from the community is limited. The challenge lies in how the MPOs can extend their base of interested parties and individuals.

How are MPOs trying to attract new audiences?

It seems the most common MPO approach is to take an event or message to the people, rather than expecting the people to come to events. This more proactive approach seems to be paying off, particularly in the case of the Binghamton MPO, which considers their willingness to forge direct contact with new audiences as one of their organization's biggest citizen participation strengths.

In an attempt to reach new audiences, Hampton Roads has invested in an interactive kiosk. The kiosk is a portable touch screen that allows the MPO to set up in many different locations (e.g.: shopping centers, libraries and transit stations). The flexibility afforded by the kiosk is a real advantage for targeting communities that are not mobile, are transit-dependent, and are traditionally under-represented in the planning process.



Hampton Roads Planning District Commission's Kiosk

"It's very hard to do this. We can track the number of people who attend, and provide comments at meetings. We have a public opinion survey every year and one of the questions is 'Have you heard of WILMPACO'? to judge awareness. Most of the survey questions are related to our long-range goals to ensure that our plan is still valid and relevant. We are trying to track the number of web site hits, but our counter keeps resetting."

*"We feel our public meetings can be pretty effective, if we can get people there".
(CRCOG)"*

How do MPOs rate the effectiveness of their outreach methods?

MPOs were asked to rate the effectiveness of the following outreach efforts: public meetings, mass media outreach, brochures and other promotional materials, and web sites. A majority of the MPOs agreed that it is very hard to gauge effectiveness of their various outreach methods, besides the traditional method of tracking the number of people who attend various events and meetings. Most cited this inability to assess effectiveness as something they would like to tackle and improve in the future, a clear sign that MPOs are not able to answer this question with any certainty at this time.

“We have pretty much discovered that day time meetings are not good in reaching out to the public, we have to meet in the evenings and try not to do anything in the middle of holidays or during the summer”. (CRCOG)

How do MPOs assess their public meetings?

Assessment of public meeting effectiveness was mixed. All MPOs agreed that a meeting’s success often depends upon the number of attendees. However, number of attendees, although an important factor, was not always the key. MPOs noted that quality of input is also important, as well as receiving input from a broad range of stakeholders. While this is commendable and should be encouraged, a broader, more inclusive group of stakeholders is desired.

MPOs stressed that the structure of a public meeting is vital to its success. A clear structure and understanding of what input you want from the public is crucial to receiving feedback that can be used in the planning process. Also highlighted was the fact that in order to build trusting relationships with stakeholders, they need to be assured that their comments will be taken seriously. CRCOG in particular tries to demonstrate at meetings how public comments have influenced an MPO approach, plan or study. The key here is to illustrate that the MPO is responsive and will act on suggestions made, and hopefully this will encourage more people to regularly attend future public meetings.

The most effective meetings reported were those in which the MPO has been proactive in bringing the presentation to a neighborhood. These meetings are particularly successful when the subject involves a specific planning study or project. The least effective meetings are those that are more traditional and often relate to a more general topic, such as the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). Of course, the political will has to exist to support this kind of coordinated outreach effort. There has been no history in this area of joint efforts with local governments on planning projects.

How do MPOs judge their mass media outreach?

MPOs assessment of their mass media outreach was mixed. Many of the MPOs stressed the importance of developing good working relationships with reporters. Many of the local newspapers do not have a dedicated staff writer for transportation issues, therefore the MPO has to be proactive in bringing transportation issues to their attention. To this end the Capital Area MPO in Raleigh, N.C. calls the major newspapers on a weekly basis in an attempt to establish and maintain an effective line of communication.

How are brochures and other promotional materials used?

The MPOs use brochures and other promotional materials to support the education of the general public in the transportation planning process. The brochures tend to provide more detail about the role and responsibilities of the MPO and are used to supplement materials available at public

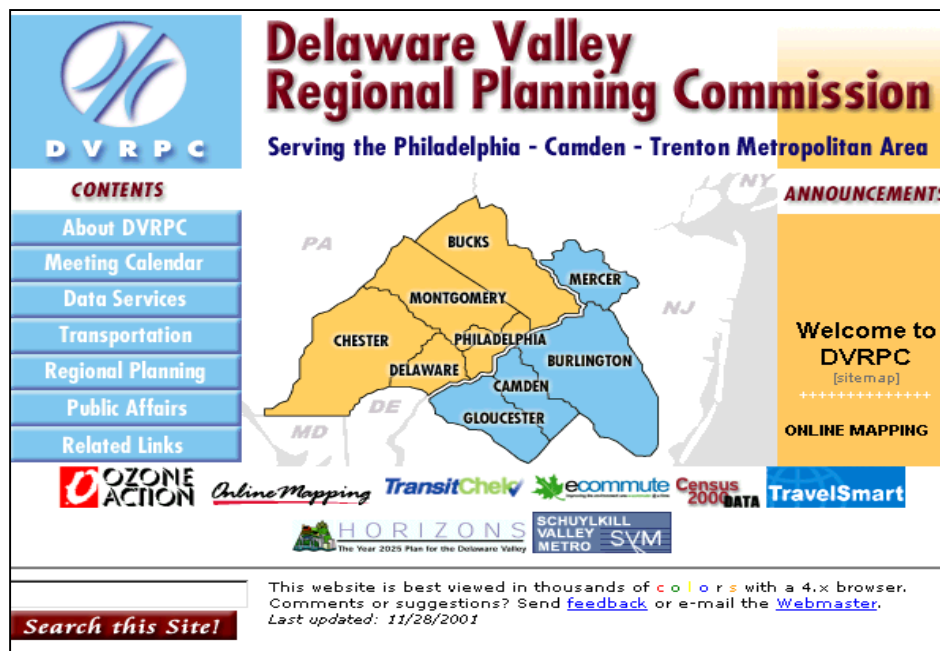
events. MPOs are trying to make all printed material they produce available on their web site, including brochures. It was generally felt that brochures were well received by interested parties, but did not generate a lot of new interest.

What are the successes and failures of paid advertising?

The MPOs use of paid advertising was limited, mostly due to cost constraints. As a result the use of paid advertising tended to be restricted to legal advertisements and notices of meetings. One MPO is starting to experiment with display ads in minority newspapers in an attempt to improve outreach to under-represented communities.

How effective are the MPO web sites?

The majority of MPOs saw their web site as an effective means of communicating with their constituents. All agreed they would like to develop this method of public outreach further. One MPO saw the Internet as a tool for reaching and engaging groups that would otherwise not be contacted, primarily teenagers.



Delaware Valley Regional Website

How can MPOs better utilize their web site?

Of the six MPOs surveyed, the use and development of the internet as a tool for engaging the public ranged from those that were well established and long running, to one that had been set up within the last year.

The amount of staff time dedicated to managing and updating the web site also varied. No MPO had the resources or need to dedicate a full time person to the web site. However, it is clear that where a structure for managing the web site exists, the MPOs felt that the web is a major strength in their citizen participation efforts. Conversely, where the web site is considered an after thought and updates are ad hoc rather than timely, the site is considered underutilized by the

MPO. As a result, its effectiveness as part of the MPO's citizen participation program is perceived to be and often is limited.

The MPO with the most structured approach towards managing its web site has three staff members out of ten who update it regularly. At least once a week, meeting information such as dates and agendas are changed. Pages, links and reports are reviewed to ensure that they are not out of date and that new project information is posted. Requests for reports and comments made electronically (totaling on average one a week) are also reviewed and responded to on at least a weekly basis.

Although the MPOs surveyed did not use any other MPO web sites as a template for their own, a number of sites were mentioned as being worthy of a visit:

San Diego's Regional Planning Agency (SANDAG)

<http://www.sandag.cog.ca.us/>

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Authority (DVRPC)

<http://www.dvrpc.org/>

Hillsborough County MPO Tampa, FL

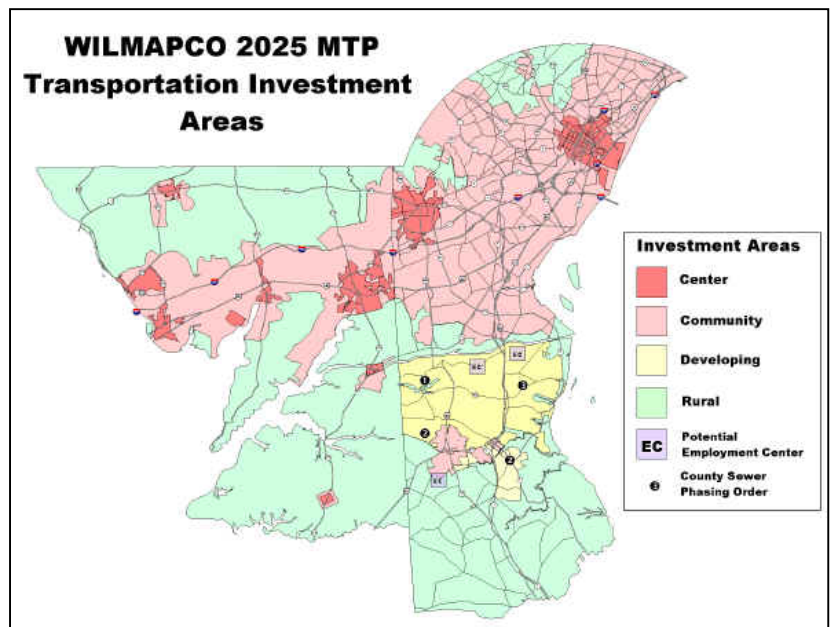
<http://www.hillsboroughmpo.org/>

How do MPOs typically advertise events?

Typically, public announcements are posted in newspapers and flyers, are mailed to targeted groups, and notices are included in the MPO newsletter and on their website. MPOs also rely on their committee members to distribute information to their respective constituents. For larger events, interviews are solicited on talk radio stations, cable TV channels and local newspaper reporters are also encouraged to write articles and put stories in member agency newsletters.

How do MPOs incorporate education about the transportation planning process?

Brochures and booklets seem to be readily available to the public for the purpose of educating them about the transportation planning process. WILMAPCO claimed its best education method is their annual "Our Town" event. Speakers are invited to make presentations about a topic (examples included Transportation Oriented Development (TOD), roundabouts, planning in Portland, Oregon, land use, etc). This is followed by a workshop or interactive discussion



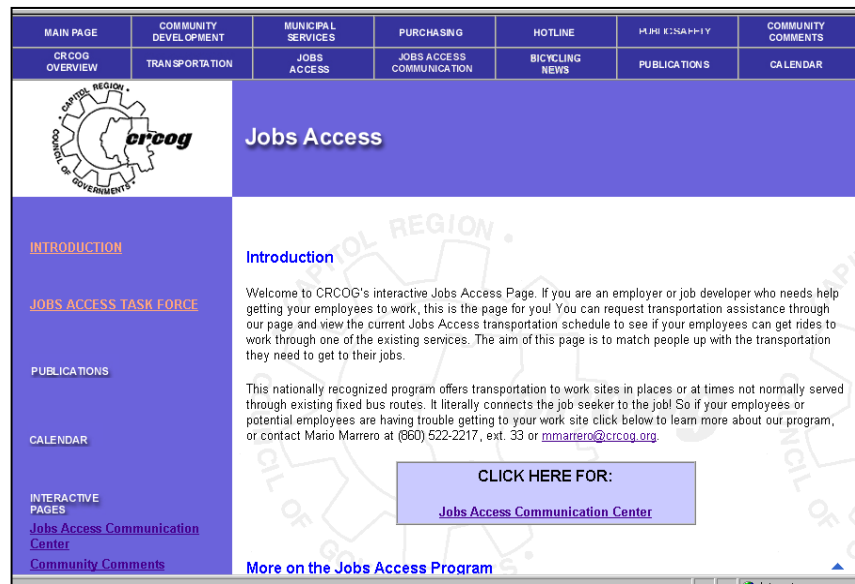
Generally the public does not know what TIA are located in.

where exhibition boards and literature are also available.

WILMAPCO created a school children's transportation packet to educate eight and ninth-grade students about transportation and land use issues. This age group was selected because they are able to understand the issues, but don't yet have their driver's licenses. It is a self-contained binder with handouts, projects and slides that the teacher can present over five days.

An MPO cannot exist in isolation

MPOs stressed that they are always attempting to link transportation to other topics and issues to increase relevance and as a result interest from the public. As the Binghamton MPO stated, congestion is just not a burning issue in their region. They are therefore looking to impress upon the business community the value of transportation to their success.



CRCOG Job Access Linkages

How do MPOs rate their Environmental Justice efforts?

Almost without exception MPOs are currently undertaking an analysis of their Environmental Justice efforts. MPOs were aware that EJ is an area requiring improvement, but were unable to provide details of their work in progress.

“In Hartford there is an organization known as the Environmental Justice Coalition, we go to their meetings to present the findings of our transportation studies, so they do not have to come to ours”. (CRCOG)

“We have just begun our Environmental Justice Analysis for our region. Our initial steps are to identify areas of concern, evaluate current and forecasted conditions, and prepare ways to deal with these areas in terms of public involvement”. (WILMAPCO)

Part One Closing Thoughts

In conclusion, the Richmond Area MPO shares many commonalities with other MPOs in terms of the public involvement challenges that they face and the real world constraints of staff, budget, and time pressures. The exercise of developing goals and policies to create a comprehensive public involvement plan is often a world away from creating real opportunities for public participation among all stakeholders in the transportation process. Identifying EJ groups is relatively easy; finding ways to get EJ groups to fully participate in the planning process is not. Understanding that a web site could benefit from improvements to the format, content, or style is one thing; finding someone in-house to manage the web site may in fact be as difficult a task as the alternative option of finding money in the budget to pay an expert. Pro-active education about the planning process can be a wonderful way to engage stakeholders, but it's sometimes a difficult gift to give away. Across America, very few people understand what an MPO is, or what the MPO does for the region, or who's in charge of the MPO, or how it's funded. As a rule, the MPOs are uncertain about how to evaluate their own successes or failures. Any evaluations that do occur may be based on political feedback or qualitative assessments rather than quantitative or scientific data management.

The Richmond Area MPO has developed many policies and goals that together make a strong framework for a comprehensive public involvement program. Developing a blueprint for outreach that is technically sharp, easy to implement, inexpensive to track, and politically correct is the utopian balance that all MPO's seek. The next section of this report will include the development of a "Best Practices, Policies and Procedures Recommendations" based on the information gathered about Richmond Area MPO and other cohort MPOs, that will aim to provide real and actionable strategies for the Richmond Area MPO.

Best Practices, Policies and Procedures Recommendations for Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Citizen Participation Program Part Two

Overview

This second section is based on information gathered in our previous MPO initial findings report, plus input from the Citizen's Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC) after a presentation of these findings on March 26, 2002.

This report will be divided into three sections: *Section A* will focus on best practices and policies for a citizen participation program, and *Section B* will focus on recommendations for evaluating the effectiveness of this citizen participation program, and *Section C* will have contact information.

As in part one of this study, this report will focus on the key concerns raised in the MPO's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) certification review, specifically:

- Under-represented communities outreach (minority, low-income, disabled and elderly)
- Pro-active education about the planning process
- Web site techniques
- Outreach evaluation systems

These four categories often overlap, with one recommendation being applicable to more than one key concern. Where this is the case, an asterisk (*) will indicate the various other categories that the recommendation could potentially address. A bulleted matrix of MPO recommendations is provided in the Appendix on page 41.

Section A – Best Practices and Policies for a Citizen Participation Program

Under-represented Communities Outreach

In all six MPOs interviewed for the first part of this report, a major goal was to attract new audiences to their meetings—especially lower income, minority, disabled and elderly populations. Common barriers to under-represented community participation dealt mainly with accessibility: under-represented communities often do not get notified about upcoming meetings, and if they do, often have difficulty attending them, due to time and transportation constraints, as many members of these communities do not have access to a car and the meetings do not take place in areas served by public transportation.

Use Mapping Technology

A key aspect in reaching out to under-represented communities is determining where they are located. The Richmond MPO already has low-income and minority group locations mapped in

their Long-Range Plan, but using GIS mapping to identify where those people work, shop, learn, worship and recreate would provide even more enhanced information about community needs and assets. These maps would need to be easy to read and small scale, with recognizable street names and landmarks that members of the community could recognize*.

Bring the Information to the Community

One option might be to bring information to the community, rather than expecting the community to be able to attend meetings held at a central location. In Washington, DC, the regional planning agency of the Washington Council of Governments (WashCOG), created a “vision van” that traveled through the urban region to community events, shopping centers, transit stations, and soup kitchens, distributing information and collecting suggestions and survey cards (National Transit Institute (NTI) Course #FP 203: *Public Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making*, January 7-9, 2002, New Brunswick, NJ).



Vision Van

The Richmond MPO could consider creating a mobile field office to travel to neighborhoods that have little or no access to public transportation.



Churchill

Get the Community to the Meetings

Other options might be to provide transportation to the meeting, perhaps through creating a carpool that can pick up community members from the nearest transit station and drive them to and from the meeting, or ensure that the meeting is held within walking distance of a bus stop.

Make Meetings Family-Friendly

Providing a childcare option would also increase the pool of possible meeting attendees, as would holding meetings in more than one location make it easier for people to attend, as practiced by a number of MPOs.

Teach People About the Planning Process

The Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO) MPO has created a school's transportation packet to educate students in grades 8-9 about transportation and land use issues. They recommended developing an education program that can be used in schools to help reach community members.

* This GIS technology is also applicable to improving MPO web sites, and will be discussed further in that section of the report.



Old Goochland High School

Teachers could be presented with an information packet to use in the classroom. An MPO could also attract new audiences by forging links to universities and other educational establishments, planning and engineering departments, as well as printing announcements and information about the MPO in university newspapers, which is one of the goals of the Charlottesville-Albemarle Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) MPO.

Involve Respected Local Officials

In Jacksonville, Florida, flexibility proved to be a main factor in successfully involving under-represented communities in a regional corridor study. The Jacksonville Transit Authority (JTA) study addressed growth, congestion and sprawl, with early initial citizen participation and multiple advertising techniques. However, African-American participation levels were disappointing. Instead of going ahead with their study, JTA delayed their policy decisions, in order to focus on more extensive minority outreach. Working with a coalition of 25 churches in the city, JTA sponsored a dinner in which agency representatives described the study and explained the significance of citizen participation in getting feedback on transportation alternatives. The organization also sought the assistance of Congresswoman Elaine Brown, a highly respected African-American member of the community, who agreed to hold a corridor study workshop. She provided personal attention, and brought significant press coverage. Results were positive: minority group participation rose, the selected corridor became more equitable, local decision-makers gained a heightened awareness of equity issues, and the process helped develop a basis for future under-represented community participation (NTI Course #FP 203).



Congresswoman Elaine Brown

Pro-Active Planning Education

Make Materials Easy to Access and Understand; Avoid Jargon

This was a recommendation that was heard often by the project manager, Karen Rosenberger, as she presented the first part of this report to the CTAC on March 26.

MPO staff already successfully adopt a number of the techniques listed below to improve meeting attendance and simplify materials. Staff could experiment with any new ideas listed to see what works well in this area :

- Co-sponsoring meetings with local community groups (ethnic, environmental, social, public service, etc.)
- Serving or sponsoring meals at meetings
- Posting easily understood, clear, colorful and bi-lingual information materials
- Identifying and using channels of communication that the community relies upon, including minority newspapers, radio and local public access television stations
- Keeping in touch through existing newsletters of unions, companies, clubs, Parent Teacher Associations, etc.
- Providing cost-saving alternatives to direct mail such as:
 - Sending flyers home with schoolchildren
 - Utility bill stuffers
 - Newspaper inserts
 - Doorknob flyers
 - Faxes and e-mails



Hampton Roads Planning District Commission's Kiosk

Information Kiosk

The information kiosk used by the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC) that was mentioned in the first part of this report is only one example of creative information booths that can be used both to get information out to under-represented areas, and receive input from these areas. Interactive touch screens in shopping centers, mobile screen displays, mailings that include response cards, brochures, newsletters, flyers, seat drops on buses, and progress bulletins all can augment traditional forms of upcoming MPO project and study advertisements. Providing a glossary of transportation acronyms is essential, and can be given out with all presentation materials, as well as a telephone hotline number*. In Appendix pages 42-47 of this report are examples of survey forms, comment cards, and a jargon-related exercise. All materials can be adapted to fit specific MPO needs.

Describe the MPO/Partner with Other Organizations

One critical aspect that many of the MPOs faced was that often their communities did not understand the basic role of their MPO, and this hindered meeting interest. One suggestion might be to have an information sheet about the MPO handed out at all meetings and events.* On page 51 of the Appendix are a few paragraphs that address these concerns in a light-hearted fashion, and might work well as an approachable template to use for the CTAC and/or the general public.

The WILMAPCO MPO recommended sponsoring a bus tour of the region for partnering members as an excellent way to show the CTAC and other involved agencies what areas are in need of work, and how well certain improvements are working.

Attending the annual Association of Metropolitan Planning Organization (AMPO) conference in September (for more information, see www.ampo.org/events) would further contacts between Richmond and other MPOs, and would provide a wealth of ideas for augmenting citizen participation techniques. Cross-referencing the MPO in the phone book under "Transportation" would be helpful, as well, so that the public immediately associates the MPO with transportation work.

Improving Web Site Techniques

What Kinds of Information can augment a Web Site?

There are a number of additional elements that can make a web site more accessible and interesting to the public. The Richmond MPO already has an extensive list of current projects, Frequently Asked Questions, meeting minutes, and other necessary information about current MPO goals and objectives. However, additional graphics and interactive materials would take advantage of available technologies and upgrade the overall quality of the site.

Add Maps

Added to the web site could be more extensive mapping of the MPO region, both physically and demographically, perhaps on the introductory page, and/or within a separate map section.

* An acronym glossary and a telephone hotline would also be invaluable as part of the Richmond MPO web site.

* This information could also be presented in downloadable form on a web site.

Explain the MPO's Function and Purpose

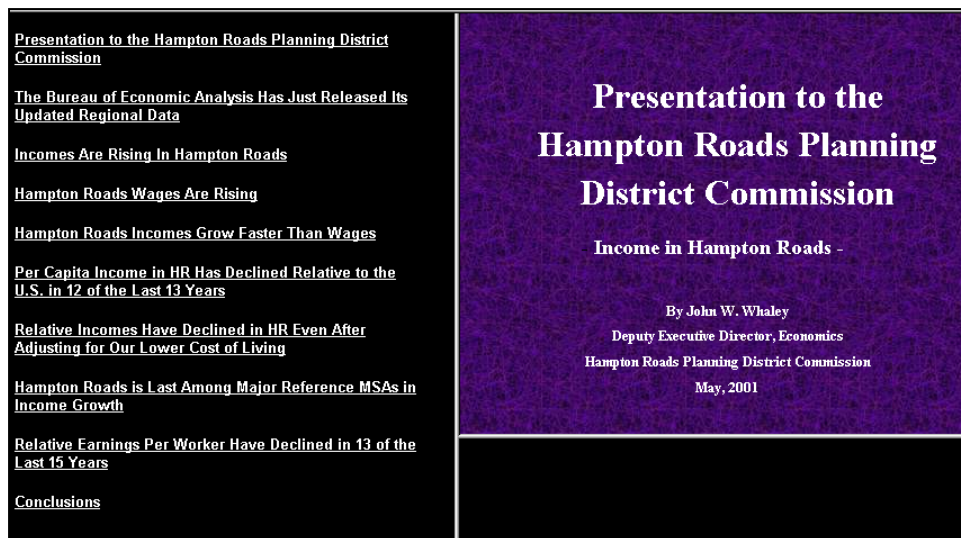
Downloadable pages that describe what the MPO does would help stress why it is significant to the Richmond community. Project team information pages could include more contact numbers, emails, and biographies, and a page containing electronic and downloadable feedback forms and/or project surveys would be useful, as well.

Link the Website to Other Outreach Materials

Publicizing upcoming events on the home page and providing a project "hotline" number would allow for more effective advertising, and perhaps boost meeting attendance. Merging other technologies with the internet would also be effective: some web sites, such as the HRPDC MPO, have actual PowerPoint slides of project presentations that have been made web-accessible. These are very interesting and informative, and provide a more complete understanding of the issues that are of importance to the MPO. An issues log would also be helpful, an example of which can be found in the Appendix on page 61.

Post the Citizen Participation Plan on the Web

It is important to make citizen participation plans web-accessible. The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) MPO not only has their entire Citizen Participation Plan available on their web site, but a description of their Environmental Justice efforts.



Some advanced internet features that could be explored if financially feasible include interactive mapping (or, a link to the U.S. Census web site where visitors can map socio-economic characteristics of a particular region), photo simulations (a simulated picture of what an area would look like were a particular project undertaken), video clips, games, and a chat room or a LISTSERV® (a system that makes it possible to create, manage and control electronic "mailing lists" on a corporate network or on the Internet) where visitors can discuss issues of importance to them.

ADA Compliance

In terms of FHWA certification, web site compliance with the Congressional Rehabilitation Act (amended in 1998) is essential. This Act requires federal agencies to make their electronic and information technology accessible to people with disabilities. An overview of the guidelines endorsed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) is provided on page 49 in the Appendix. Further information can also be found on www.section508.gov, and a useful site on which to check web site compliance is www.cast.org/Bobby.

DVRPC
Return to Homepage
Site Map

**DVRPC's PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN:
A STRATEGY FOR CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT**

REACHING OUT TO THE PUBLIC

The Regional Citizens Committee:

Public Affairs

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

[Download .pdf version](#)

- [Mission/Introduction](#)
- [The Mandates](#)
- [Vision for the Future](#)
- [Strategy](#)
- [Reaching Out](#)**
- [Project Guidance](#)
- [Acronyms Glossary](#)

The Regional Citizens Committee (RCC) meets monthly to review and comment on DVRPC policies and plans. This open avenue of communication gives us the chance to hear your voice, ideas, and concerns on major decisions that will affect the way you live, work, and travel. We encourage you to get involved early in the planning process, so that we can make informed decisions that will have the best possible impact on all the citizens of our region.

The RCC includes approximately 75 members representing the private sector, social service agencies, environmental activists, and other interest groups. Voting Members must attend at least three consecutive RCC meetings, or have attended at least four meetings in the past 12 months. Corresponding Members don't attend regular meetings, but remain on the mailing list.

Committee membership is open to anyone who wishes to join. To maintain balance, no more than one representative of any organization or company is permitted to cast votes. Members on the RCC prior to 1990 are grandfathered and may continue to vote, regardless of organizational quota.

Environmental Justice Task Forces:

DVRPC has established two Environmental Justice Task Forces: one is a technical committee designed to review staff's work in the area of mapping transportation improvements with the goal of overlaying low income and minority population data; the second committee is a public participation focus group comprised of organizations throughout the region that represent minority, low income, disabled, economic, religious, housing and educational groups. The two committees will soon be merged in order to provide one overall direction for the Commission's Environmental Justice/Title VI work. Membership on this committee is open to anyone wishing to join. Representatives of the Regional Citizens Committee sit in on environmental justice discussions to facilitate interaction and to utilize contacts for expansion of the RCC's membership.

Section B – Recommendations for Evaluating the Effectiveness of a Citizen Participation Program

Evaluating Outputs and Outcomes

What are Outputs and Outcomes?

Outputs are those elements that comprise citizen participation outreach techniques. Evaluating outputs requires asking questions such as:

- How many people attend meetings?
- How large and extensive is the mailing list?
- How many people visit the web site?
- How many news articles have appeared?
- Are under-represented groups involved?
- Do people receive and read distributed fact sheets?
- Do people see flyers, advertisements, etc.?

Outcomes are the results of the outputs/citizen participation outreach techniques. Evaluating outcomes means examining the overall effectiveness of these techniques to inform, involve and influence the plan or project, and requires questions such as:

- Are meetings useful and informative to participants?
- Is the MPO getting relevant information from the public?
- Is citizen input shaping the findings/increasing or refining the alternatives?
- Do participants “see their fingerprints” in the process?

The matrix below can be adapted to evaluate the quantitative and qualitative elements of each output and outcome, in order to get an overall picture of MPO citizen participation outreach effectiveness (from NTI Course #FP 203).

	Outputs	Outcomes
Quantitative		
Qualitative		

Internal Evaluation

Not only is it important to evaluate citizen participation techniques in terms of public input and opinion, but also in terms of internal opinion and evaluation within the MPO. Within our own firm, Howard/Stein Hudson Associates, we have developed an electronic internal evaluation form for Project Teams. This is especially useful during partnering sessions between various agencies, as it allows all members of the team to comment on the successes and challenges of their citizen participation efforts. On page 50 of the Appendix is a copy of one of these evaluations that can be adapted to suit MPO needs. Below are listed other evaluation tactics that have been successful for an MPO in Florida.

FHWA and the Brevard Case Study

The Federal Highway Administration has on their web site (www.fhwa.dot.gov), a detailed account of the Brevard County, Florida MPO citizen participation case study, in which MPO staff monitored and improved their citizen participation outreach, both through internal and external evaluation, conducted as part of the development of their MPO Citizen Participation Handbook as required by FHWA certification guidelines.

What Happened

- In 1997, the Brevard MPO staff began informally monitoring its outreach activities. In 1998, a consultant team working on the Northwest Palm Bay Transportation Study recommended to the MPO Board a series of actions to improve mobility and increase roadway capacity in and around the City of Palm Bay. This Study was *not* endorsed due to citizen opposition, mainly claiming that citizen participation had not involved people throughout the entire study area. In response, the MPO staff conducted six public workshops over an eight-month period, at which more than 1,500 individuals participated. The result: greater and more effective public participation from throughout the study area.
- Based on feedback from the initial round of citizen participation, two changes were made to the citizen participation process in the second round of outreach. First, the study was renamed the Southwest Brevard Transportation Study to be more reflective of the area being considered for improvements. Second, rather than relying on advertising public meetings in a newsletter or on the web, the MPO direct mailed meeting notices to over 26,000 individuals. By listening to the public's concerns, the MPO was able to modify the study name, mailing list, and means of meeting notification *before* launching the second round of outreach.
- To gauge the effectiveness of the second round of outreach, the agency conducted both *external* and *internal* evaluations of the process. External evaluation entailed conducting five-minute telephone surveys of the approximately 1,500 participants from the first round of meetings (This survey can be found on page 52 in the Appendix). Internal evaluation consisted of a form completed by agency staff that specified the type of study, the point at which the evaluation was conducted, the public involvement tools employed, the target audience, and the type of evaluation conducted (This general internal evaluation form is also located in the Appendix on page 54). These forms are then reviewed by the MPO staff and, if applicable, are forwarded to the Florida Department of

Transportation (FDOT). Copies of these evaluation forms are also be provided to the Technical Committee and the Citizen's Advisory Committee for review and comment.

- By developing the Citizen Participation Plan and Evaluation Handbook as companion pieces, the MPO established an effective framework to conduct, evaluate and refine its public involvement policy and techniques on a regular basis. The Handbook was developed over a period of a year and a half during which it was continually refined to reflect the activities of the MPO. Included in the Handbook is a Citizen Participation Tools Evaluation Matrix (Can be accessed in Appendix page 55), which lists specific techniques/tools, evaluation criteria, performance goals and methods to meet those goals.

Lessons Learned from the Brevard MPO Project

1. Direct mailings were regarded to be the most successful means of meeting notification
2. The best source of technical information about the project was considered to be public meetings followed by contacting MPO staff members, either through e-mail or through a hotline number, all of which should be available on the MPO web site.
3. To be cost effective, the project hotline and web site should be publicized more and the web site should be kept up-to-date in order to be useful to the public
4. More frequent coverage should be sought from the local media
5. Tailor public involvement handbook techniques to local needs

Also of note is that all of these forms used by the Brevard County MPO were available on their web site for the public to examine. The Brevard County MPO can be accessed at www.brevardmpo.com. A contact person from this MPO is provided in the next section of this document.

Section C – Contacts and Useful Web Sites

Below are contacts for the six MPOs that the HSH team researched. They are available for any further thoughts or questions:

Mr. Harrison Rue, Executive Director
Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission/Charlottesville-Albemarle MPO
P.O. Box 1505
Charlottesville, Virginia 22902
Phone: (434) 979-7310
Fax: (434) 979-1597
E-mail: hrue.tjpd@state.va.us

Mr. Scott Lane, LPA Administrator
Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO)
P.O. Box 590
Raleigh, North Carolina 27602
Phone: (919) 831-6785
Fax: (919) 831-6821
Email: corlpa@mindspring.com

Mr. Dwight Farmer, MPO Transportation Director
Hampton Roads Planning District Commission/Metropolitan Planning Organization (HRPDC)
The Regional Building
723 Woodlake Drive
Chesapeake, Virginia 23320
Phone: (757) 420-8300
Fax: (757) 523-4881
Email: dfarmer@hrpdc.org

Mr. Ted Matley, Executive Director
Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO)
850 Library Avenue, Suite 100
Newark, Delaware 19711
Phone: (302) 737-6205
Fax: (302) 737-9584
Email: wilmapco@wilmapco.org

Mr. Steven Gayle, Executive Director
Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study (BMTS)
P.O. Box 1766, Broome County Office Building
Binghamton, New York 13902
Phone: (607) 778-2443
Fax: (607) 778-6051
Email: sgayle@co.broome.ny.us

Ms. Sandy Fry, Senior Planner
Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG)
241 Main Street, 4th Floor
Hartford, Connecticut 06106
Phone: (860) 522-2217
Fax: (860) 724-1274
Email: sfry@crcog.org

Below is the MPO contact for the Brevard County, Florida Case Study:

Kama Dobbs, Transportation Planner
Brevard Metropolitan Planning Organization
2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way, Building A
Viera, Florida 32940
Phone: (321) 690-6890
E-mail: kamad@brevardmpo.com

A number of MPO web sites were very useful to examine, in order to get ideas about site structure and technology. Below is a list of these MPO sites:

Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission/Charlottesville-Albemarle MPO
<http://www.tjpd.org>

Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO)
<http://www.raleigh-nc.org/campo/Index.htm>

Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC)
<http://www.hrpdc.org>

Hampton Roads Planning District Commission/Metropolitan Planning Organization
<http://www.hrpdc.org/transport/mpo.shtml>

Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO)
<http://www.wilmapco.org>

Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study (BMTS)
<http://www.gobroomecounty.com/departments/BMTS.php>

Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG)
<http://www.crcog.org>

Brevard County Metropolitan Planning Organization
<http://www.brevardmpo.com>

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC)
<http://www.dvrpc.org>

San Diego's Regional Planning Agency (SANDAG)
<http://www.sandag.cog.ca.us>

Hillsborough County MPO, Tampa, Florida
<http://www.hillsboroughmpo.org>

Other sites referenced in this report:

Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations
<http://www.ampco.org>

Federal Highway Administration
<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov>

Section 508 Accessibility information
<http://www.section508.gov>

Checking web sites for Accessibility
<http://www.cast.org/Bobby>

Part Two – Closing Thoughts

To create a set of “Best Practices” for citizen participation, you must first know your audience. Understanding the linkages between the citizen participation process and the built environment begins with understanding the needs and wants, fears, constraints, dreams, and visions of the MPO’s stakeholders. Second, it’s important to understand your own goals. In order to know how to best incorporate input from stakeholders into the planning process in an effective manner, it may be important to reconsider the critical path of the MPO and its various subcommittees in terms of decision-making. You can create superb strategies for engaging and educating the public, but if their comments can never be organized and presented in a meaningful way at the appropriate time in the planning process, there will be a gap between information that is gathered and information that is used to make decisions about the final built transportation system.

To analyze the effectiveness of a public involvement program, it’s prudent to use a combination of standard public outreach techniques and the tools of current technology. Use standard sign-in sheets at meetings but consider geo-coding the addresses of meeting attendees to evaluate whether the turnout is representative of the stakeholders you tried to attract. Use newsletters to distribute information in a uniform format but also keep electronic issue logs to track the outcomes and gauge the importance of particular issues. Measure feedback via website questionnaires, and by handing out hard copies at transit centers. Making a marriage of standard and new techniques will provide opportunities to reach new audiences. Develop a system for measuring the implementation of input may also be best developed using technology and tried-and-true methods. If your MPO is diligently tracking information that cannot be plotted onto maps, organized onto tables, or illustrated via photo-renderings, then why are you doing it? Understanding the changing needs of an expanding community will require good database abilities, but more importantly, will require that the data be good.



Peer Review Questionnaire

Name _____ Title _____

Organization _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: (_____) _____ Fax: (_____) _____

Email: _____

1) Name your key stakeholder groups (i.e. constituencies that typically contribute input to MPO processes):

2) What constituencies would your organization like to get more input from?

3) What efforts does your organization make to cultivate new stakeholders?

4a) Please rate the following outreach methods in terms of their effectiveness in cultivating and maintaining stakeholder relationships:

Public Meetings

____ very effective ____ somewhat effective ____ not effective enough ____ ineffective
____ N/A

comment:

Mass media outreach (e.g. newspaper articles, TV/Radio segments)

____ very effective ____ somewhat effective ____ not effective enough ____ ineffective
____ N/A

comment:

Brochures & other promotional materials (e.g. posters, flyers, etc.)

____ very effective ____ somewhat effective ____ not effective enough ____ ineffective
____ N/A

comment:

Website

_____ very effective _____ somewhat effective _____ not effective enough _____ ineffective
_____ N/A

comment:

Follow-up – What efforts does your MPO take in order to keep its website updated:

Follow-up – Are there other MPO web sites you have found particularly useful or may have used as a template?

4b) What percentage (%) of your budget and or net amount (\$) do you spend on each of the following outreach methods?

Public Meetings

_____ percentage (%) _____ net amount (\$)

comment:

Mass media outreach (e.g. newspaper articles, TV/Radio segments)

_____ percentage (%) _____ net amount (\$)

comment:

Brochures & other Promotional materials (e.g. posters, flyers, etc.)

_____ percentage (%) _____ net amount (\$)

comment:

Website

_____ percentage (%) _____ net amount (\$)

comment:

Other(s):

_____ percentage (%) _____ net amount (\$)

comment:

- 5) Describe your organizations use of paid advertising:

Follow-up – How is advertising targeted to reach specific audiences:

How does your organization gauge the effectiveness of its various outreach methods?

- 6) How many times per year does your organization hold public meetings, workshops, and presentations?

_____ *Follow-Up* – Describe the presentation formats used by your organization:

Follow-Up 2 – How does your organization promote its public presentations?

- 7) How does your organization incorporate education about the transportation planning processes into public meetings, workshops, and presentations?

8) Describe your organization's efforts to reach out to under-represented communities:

9) Does your organization track regional statistics on car ownership, transit use, journey to work, racial and economic demographics, etc. in order to understand where under-represented communities exist?

_____ yes _____ no *Follow-Up* – How often is this information updated?

Follow-Up 2 – How is updated information on under-represented communities presented publicly?

10) Does your organization formally assess the benefits and impacts of transportation investments on under-represented communities?

_____ yes _____ no *Follow-Up* – What form does this assessment take?

11) Does your organization hold public presentations in under-represented communities? _____
yes _____ no

Follow-Up – Describe efforts made by your organization to provide public input opportunities for under-represented communities:

12) How are your organization's efforts to involve under-represented communities (Environmental Justice activities) documented in organizational planning documents?

13) How does your organization gauge the effectiveness of its strategies for involving under-represented communities (Environmental Justice activities)?

14) How does your organization ensure that TIP and LRTP processes and documents are consistent with Environmental Justice Goals?

15) Name your organization's biggest public involvement challenge:

16) Name your organization's biggest public involvement strength:

Thanks for your input!

If there are any hard or electronic copies of outreach material you would be willing to share we would be most grateful. If so, please use the mailing/e-mail address below for the attention of Chris Ryan.

MPO Recommendations: Bulleted Matrix

<p><i>Under-represented Community Outreach</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Use mapping technology to identify community transportation patterns ❑ Bring meetings to the community ❑ Bring the community to meetings ❑ Make meetings family-friendly ❑ Teach people about the planning process ❑ Involve respected local officials 	<p><i>Pro-active Planning Education</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Make materials easy to understand/avoid jargon ❑ Use creative information distribution techniques ❑ Information kiosk ❑ Include a glossary ❑ Describe the MPO ❑ Partner with other organizations ❑ Use CTAC members as community liaisons ❑ Cross-reference in phone book
<p><i>Improving Web Site</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Explore other MPO web sites ❑ Add more extensive maps ❑ Explain the MPO's function and purpose ❑ Link the web site to other outreach materials ❑ Post the Citizen Participation Plan on the web ❑ Explore advanced internet features <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interactive mapping - Photo simulations - Video clips - Games - Chat room or LISTSERV ❑ ADA compliance 	<p><i>Outreach Evaluation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Evaluate outputs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elements that comprise citizen participation outreach techniques - Qualitative and quantitative ❑ Evaluate outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Results of the outputs (citizen participation techniques) - Qualitative and quantitative ❑ Create and distribute internal and external evaluation surveys ❑ Conduct internal and external telephone surveys ❑ Create a Citizen Participation evaluation matrix; regularly update



LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK:

Project Title
Environmental Review Process
Date
Location
Open House

The **(Agency Name Here)** is interested in learning more about what you think. Please use this comment form to let us know your thoughts about this process and the area it serves.

Please leave this form with us tonight. If you have any comments please contact:

Name, Agency
Address 1
Address 2
City, State, Zip
Phone: Fax:
E-mail:

How useful and informative did you find this meeting?

- ☐ Very useful and informative
☐ Somewhat useful and informative
☐ Slightly useful and informative
☐ Not useful and uninformative

Comment _____

Do you feel your questions and comments were adequately addressed?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

If no, how could we respond better?

What kind of information would you like to hear about at future Open House Meetings?

How Did You Hear about this Meeting?

- ☐ Received Flyer ☐ Newspaper Ad If so, which newspaper? _____
☐ Radio ☐ TV ☐ Through a Friend
☐ Other _____

(over)



LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK:

Is this a good time for an Open House Meeting?

_____ Yes

_____ No

If no, what time is better? _____

Is this a good day of the week for an Open House Meeting?

_____ Yes

_____ No

If no, what day is better? _____

Is this a good location for an Open House Meeting?

_____ Yes

_____ No

If no, what location is better? _____

If you'd like to be added to our mailing list, please fill in the following:

Name

Organization/Affiliation

Street Address

City

State

Zip

Tel

Fax

E-mail

Additional Comments:

<div>PROJECT LOGO HERE</div>	<div>SAMPLE COMMENT CARD</div> <div>PROJECT TITLE</div> <div>We Welcome Your Comments!</div> <div><div>Please write your questions or comments on this sheet and leave it with a member of the Study Team.</div><div>Or mail or fax to: Name Organization Street Address City, State, Zip Fax:</div></div>

<div>PROJECT LOGO HERE</div>	<div>PROJECT TITLE</div> <div>We Welcome Your Comments!</div> <div><div>Please write your questions or comments on this sheet and leave it with a member of the Study Team.</div><div>Or mail or fax to: Name Organization Street Address City, State, Zip Fax:</div></div>

EXAMPLE

“Generating Interest in Participation”

Lesson Five: Toolbox, Focus Group, and Jargon Exercises

Toolbox Exercise

Table exercise: participants will break up into their groups previously determined for each of the scenarios addressed in Lessons 2 and 3. Each group will be given a set of 10-15 laminated cards representing a variety of public involvement tools that could be chosen for a public involvement campaign. Each card will include the name of the tool and a brief definition. Several blank “wild cards” will also be included to allow the group to specify alternative methods not in the set they are given.

The groups will be asked to select several cards that represent the best applications of public involvement for their project. After recording their choices, they will have a chance to report back and briefly discuss their rationales with the other groups.

At this point, the instructors will impose changing constraints and they will need to adjust their choices accordingly. This process can be repeated several times. Use one or more of the following constraints (or invent others appropriate to the situation):

- A budget reduction forces you to put 2 cards back
- An expanded budget allows you to take 2 more cards
- A particular method failed. What will you substitute?
- Your project just had negative publicity. Your credibility is damaged. What now?
- A new governor (or mayor) was elected and the project is going back to “square one.” What can you do to maintain the momentum you’ve created?

Questions the instructor could ask:

- Do you think any essential tools were missing from your pile? What are they?
- How much emphasis did your group put on face-to-face interaction versus other means of involvement?
- Do you see these tools as easily being integrated within projects you are currently working on back home?
- Do you think any of these tools would not be approved for projects you are currently working on? Why?

Focus Group Discussion - User-Friendly Materials

Recruit 10 people to serve as a focus group for a 20-minute discussion of user-friendly reports and communications materials. One of the instructors facilitates the focus group and the other records. The rest of the class pretends to be behind a one-way mirror, observing the group and noting points of interest. (This exercise demonstrates the focus group technique as well as helping to raise some of the issues involved in creating engaging communications materials.) End by debriefing the focus group, first with the observers and then the participants.

Jargon Exercise

Table exercise: participants will break up into teams of two. Each team will receive a red pen and paper with four sample jargon passages on them. They will be asked to mark up the passages, circling all jargon or unclear terms. Then they will then have a chance to provide alternative language for the items circled. All substitute language should be written to adequately replace the circled text. Participants will be asked to share their findings along with any challenges they faced.

Optional element: conduct as a contest with a prize for the most successful editing duo. Tell participants to make the material clear enough for “Aunt Tilly, Uncle Wilbur, and nephew Zeke” to understand. Instructor serves as judge with props (wig, t-shirt).

Questions the instructor could ask:

- Do you think any of the jargon you highlighted was impossible to describe in layman’s terms? Why?
- Do you feel that changing the wording in any way diminishes the message? Why?

Examples of Jargon

Example 1:

A CMS: Single Occupancy Vehicle Capacity Increase Study is designed to document the way in which the requirements for programming federal funds for projects that increase SOV carrying capacity in the regional non-attainment areas are to be met. MPO subregional involvement and interagency consultation have played an important role in shaping the CMS appropriately for the region.

On April 28, 1998, the MPO Board adopted the Procedures for Operational Congestion Management System: Single Occupancy Vehicle (SOV) Capacity Increase Studies. The key components of procedures include: exclusions for further CMS Study, definitions of a CMS: SOV study, steps to determine applicability and to conduct a study if required, interagency consultation, and public participation. A project sponsor initiates CMS determinations. The adopted procedures establish a process that satisfies federal CMS requirements without delaying project advancement.

Example 2:

The intersection of Main Street and First Avenue serves as the focal point of operations on these roadways for up to one quarter of a mile back from the intersection, as nearby midblock and non-signalized intersection operations are less critical to operations of these approaches. It is deemed appropriate that the analysis of allowable lane closure hours at this intersection also apply to Main Street and First Avenue approaches within 1000 feet of this intersection.

Example 3:

Metal concentrations due to automobile emissions and deicing chemicals in storm runoff discharges to the creek (at exit 15) under the recommended alternative are estimated to be lower than under the future No Build condition (While the Build Alternatives would result in an increase in metal loadings, there would be a greater increase in peak discharge rates of stormwater runoff due to the increase in pavement area compared

to the No Build conditions. Therefore, the chemical concentrations would be lower under the Build Alternatives than under the No Build Alternative.). The Main River (located between exits 34 and 35) is protected from highway runoff contaminants by a retention basin that attenuates the chemicals washed during low and average flow events. During the design phase of the project, further control measures (such as pollutant control chambers) will be considered for the drainage and stormwater system in the vicinity of Exit 15.

Example 4:

In addition to ensuring that conformity requirements are met, The Metropolitan Planning Board (MPB) coordinates its activities with the air quality planning effort being conducted for the region by the Greater Regional Air Quality Committee (GRAQC). (Like the MPB, GRAQC is an independent organization staffed by MPO personnel.) In 1986, GRAQC worked with area governments to develop a required regionally coordinated air quality plan for the counties served by the MPO. Each county developed corresponding County Implementation Plans (CIPs) The CIPs show how the region plans to reduce VOC emissions by 10 percent by 1991, compared to baseline levels measured in 1982.

Some Final Thoughts on Promoting the MPO Mission....

Sometimes an MPO's public outreach efforts are weighed down by a feeling of isolation from the community. How does this happen? Consider the "Thanksgiving Test": An MPO staff member, face to face with a kindly aunt over the holidays, is asked to explain the job they do. Suddenly the thought of an acronym nested within a bigger acronym comes to mind, then the idea that an MPO is a government agency, but not really. Finally a concept like Section 134 of the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1973 pops up and it becomes too daunting. Out comes an answer like: "uh, I work with government agencies on transportation," and the subject moves on to simpler things.

Often, with the press of meeting deadlines, collecting data, and shaping planning documents, MPO Team Members can feel as if they're laboring in obscurity, serving a constituency that doesn't understand, appreciate, or even know about their work. This sense of isolation can affect the organization's approach to public involvement, and feed such assumptions as "nobody's interested in planning; they'll only come to a meeting when construction's about to start." It can even creep into the presentation style at public events, where the MPO representative, convinced that no one is really interested in the "technical stuff" doesn't bother to provide a wide context or glosses over procedural matters in a monotone. Similarly, written explanations of the MPO's purpose, bogged down by acronyms and technical language, can understate the relevance of the MPO's work to the daily lives of every person in the region, and not just professionals in the public sector.

The fact is, the technical and procedural context for an MPO's public involvement function can and should be a major selling point, but it needs to be expressed in clear, "neighborly" language. If efforts are made to cultivate an internal sense of organizational pride about the service an MPO provides, and that pride is extended into some simple actions to promote awareness of an MPO's role, it can defeat that sense of isolation and engage the community in a real way.

Your aunt might be interested to know, for example, that an MPO is a little known but very innovative policy-making mechanism, chartered by the government, but answerable to a independent Board of Directors with wide and diverse representation. She might be impressed to learn that the MPO, and not the state DOT, has the final approval on any major road, bridge or transit work in its area. And she would be happy to know that the MPO works very conscientiously in the public's interest, ensuring the transportation projects make sense for the local communities, both financially and from a quality-of-life standpoint, and that they serve all fairly.

Promoting the mission of the MPO need not be a separate job, but rather something to be incorporated in all future events and communication efforts. For example, all public meetings held by the MPO should begin with a presentation about what the organization does for the community, supported by simple graphics that show the relationship of the MPO to other entities, and explain its role in the project development process. All promotional materials—including the organization's website—should prominently feature this information in language that your aunt or your neighbor could easily relate to.

Section 508 Guidelines:

Making Electronic and Information Technology Accessible to People With Disabilities

An overview of the guidelines endorsed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C):

- 1. Provide equivalent alternatives to auditory and visual content** – Provide content, that when it is presented to the user, conveys essentially the same function or purpose as auditory or visual content. An example would be a text equivalent for an image. Voice synthesizers & Braille displays can easily translate text.
- 2. Do not rely on color alone** – Ensure that text and graphics are understandable when viewed without color. Color cannot be the only means for conveying information on a web site. If colors are too close to the same hue, there is not sufficient contrast when the content is viewed with a monochrome display.
- 3. Clarify natural language usage** – Use markup to facilitate pronunciation or interpretation of abbreviated or foreign text. This makes it easier for assistive devices to automatically switch to the new language. It also aids in searching for key words for identifying documents.
- 4. Create tables that transform gracefully** – Ensure that tables have necessary markup to be transformed by accessible browsers and other user agents. Tables can create navigation problems and should be used to mark up data information and should be avoided as layout pages.
- 5. Ensure that pages featuring new technologies transform gracefully** – Ensure that pages are accessible even when newer technologies are not supported or are turned off. Newer technology should be used, but designers must have the web site still work if older technology is being utilized.
- 6. Ensure user control of time-sensitive content changes** – Moving, blinking, scrolling or auto-updating objects or pages may be paused or stopped. Moving text is difficult to read for users with cognitive or visual disabilities.
- 7. Design for device-independence** – Use features that enable activation of page elements via a variety of input devices. Using text equivalents for image maps and graphics makes this possible. The web site cannot rely only on the use of a mouse or keyboard to work or access information. The user should be able to use a keyboard as a mouse alternative or voice input.
- 8. Use W3C technologies and guidelines** –PDF and Shockwave are not endorsed by the W3C are not accessible formats for the disability community.
- 9. Provide context and orientation information** – This assists users in understanding complex pages or elements. This is also useful for the user community that is not disabled.
- 10. Provide clear navigation mechanisms** – Use orientation information, navigation bars, site maps, etc. to provide clear and consistent navigation mechanisms. This increases the likelihood that the user will find the information they are seeking from the web site.
- 11. Ensure that documents are clear and simple** – Keeping a consistent page layout, recognizable graphics and easy to understand language benefits all users of a web site. This promotes effective communication, which is a requirement under the ADA.



EXAMPLE

ELECTRONIC-DEBRIEFING FORM

For Project Team Use Only - Not For Outside Distribution

Please complete and return via e-mail to _____ by _____. HSH will receive the responses, and enter them into a matrix that will be distributed back to the Project Team.

Questions:

- 1) Do you think the format of the Meeting was successful in advancing the public involvement goals of the project? ☐yes ☐no Please explain why or why not:

- 2) Do you think changes to the following would help to make a future Meeting run more smoothly?

- ☐ Different room configuration
- ☐ Different break-out groups
- ☐ Different handouts
- ☐ Different boards or presentation materials
- ☐ Wider notification of area residents
- ☐ Other _____

Please explain.

- 3) How do you think we could have prepared better for the meeting?

- 4) Do you believe that the residents who attended the meeting feel that their previously stated concerns were heard and addressed?

☐yes ☐no

Do you believe those in attendance generally support the IPA? ☐yes

☐no

Please explain your answers to these questions:

- 5) Do you think it would be better for the project to (*please choose one*):
- ☐ Hold follow up Focus Group meetings instead of creating a Community Action Group.
 - ☐ Hold no more Focus Meetings. Cultivate a strong stakeholder committee in the form of a CAG to serve as a conduit between the project team and the committee.
 - ☐ Use elements of both approaches: activate the Community Action Group and hold one or more Focus Meetings as appropriate to respond to issues that arise.

Please explain why you selected the answer you chose.

- 6) When should the next outreach meeting be held?

What should be the focus of the next outreach meeting?

Which format should be used? _____

- 7) Do you think our mailing list has sufficient coverage area? ☐yes ☐no

If not, how do you think the lists should be expanded, and what is your rationale?

- 8) Other than mailing lists what additional methods should we employ to publicize future outreach events?

End of questionnaire.

Fax responses will also be accepted at _____

Southwest Brevard Transportation Study (SWBTS) Follow-up Survey

Name:

The following questions about the Southwest Brevard Transportation Study are intended to get a sense of 'what did we learn?' from the SWBTS meetings and to evaluate the process in order to make improvements in the future.

Public Involvement

1. The citizens had ample notice of public meetings.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

2. The citizens had ample opportunity to comment.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

3. The citizens' concerns were adequately conveyed to you.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

4. The citizens were provided clear and adequate information about the study.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

5. The citizens understood the conflict between providing transportation facilities while preserving neighborhood quality of life.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Project Information

6. You received quality information about the project details.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

7. The quantity and level of detail of project information was:

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

8. Having FDOT's consultant (TEI) more actively involved during the Study Committee's deliberations would have been beneficial.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Study Committee

9. Using a Study Committee composed of elected officials representing the study area was effective.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

10. The meeting procedures (scheduling, agenda packages, etc.) were appropriate.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

11. Eliminating alternatives in order to reach consensus was appropriate.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

What can be done to improve the information provided to you to aid in the decision making process? (More or less information needed? Different type of information?)

What can be done to make the Study Committee a more effective advisory body?

What frustrated you the most about the SWBTS? What pleased you the most about the SWBTS?

What do you think we learned from the Southwest Brevard Transportation Study that should be applied to future studies?

Brevard MPO Public Involvement Evaluation

Improvement Strategies Form

Study or tool:
Date Evaluation Completed:
Improvement Strategies:
Date(s) of Implementation:

Table 1. Public Involvement Tools Evaluation

Public Involvement Tool	Evaluation Criteria	Performance Goal(s)	Methods to Meet Goal(s)
Project Specific Newsletters	Calls, letters, etc.; Number of persons reached	Minimum of 15% of meeting attendees/survey respondents indicated that they received a newsletter. -OR- Reaches a minimum of 85% of persons that <i>are</i> affected by a project.	Increase or decrease distribution to more accurately target an area that may be affected.
Other Newsletters (Cities, Homeowners Associations, etc.)	Calls, letters, etc.; Number of persons reached	If no project specific newsletter: Minimum of 15% of meeting attendees/survey respondents were reached. -OR- Reaches a minimum of 80% of persons that <i>are</i> affected by a project. If in addition to project specific newsletter: Minimum of 5% of meeting attendees/survey respondents were reached -OR- When combined with project newsletter reaches a minimum of 95% of persons that <i>are</i> affected by a project.	Provide information to the publishers of these newsletters in a timely fashion. Investigate all possible newsletters that may reach an affected area.
Direct Mailings	Calls, letters, etc.; Number of persons reached	Minimum of 15% of meeting attendees/survey respondents indicated that they received the mailing. -OR- Reaches a minimum of 85% of persons that <i>are</i> affected by a project.	Increase/Decrease mailing list to more accurately target affected areas. Use the most up-to-date information from the Brevard County Property Appraiser to maintain the mailing list.
Press Releases	Calls, letters, etc.	No standard. Format may be modified based on specific comments received.	Encourage publication of press releases by keeping the media informed.
TV Message Boards	Calls, letters, etc.; Number of persons reached	Minimum of 15% of meeting attendees/survey respondents indicated	Provide information to SCGTV as soon as it is available to increase the

		that they saw the meeting notice.	air time. Encourage SCGTV to make the announcements prominent.
Project Specific Web Sites	Calls, letters, etc.; Number of hit.	Minimum of 30 hits per month. Increase of at least 10% over the life of the project. Expectations may be higher depending on the size of the study area.	Use other public involvement tools to increase advertisement of the web site.
Project Specific Open Houses/Workshops	Calls, letters, etc.; Attendance	3% - 5% of affected population (based on study area) in attendance.	Schedule at convenient times and locations. Hold multiple workshops. Use other tools to increase awareness.
Small Group Meetings	Calls, letters, etc.; Met the expectations of the group.	N/A. These meetings are held at the request of affected groups.	MPO staff and any consulting staff should be available in a timely manner to hold small group meetings regarding any MPO activity or issue. The meeting should be formatted to provide specific information requested by the group and should highlight issues that are of interest to the group.
E-mail Announcements/ Internet Message Boards	Calls, letters, etc.; Number of persons reached	Minimum of 5% of meeting attendees/survey respondents indicated that they saw the announcement.	Increase e-mail list by advertising the availability of e-mail announcements using other public involvement tools.
Citizen Advisory Committees	Calls, letters, etc.; Attendance	N/A. These committees are part of most planning studies. Members are appointed by elected officials in the study area.	MPO and consultant staff should encourage appointed members to attend committee meetings.
Fact Sheets	Calls, letters, etc.; Number of persons reached	Positive comments.	

MPO Logo	Calls, letters, etc.;	Recognition of the logo.	The MPO logo should be used on all MPO products and publications, and on materials for all MPO sponsored activities.
Public Hearings	Calls, letters, etc.; Attendance	3% - 5% of affected population (based on study area) in attendance.	Schedule hearings at convenient times and locations. Use other public involvement tools to increase awareness of hearings.
Comment Forms	Calls, letters, etc.; Number of responses	60% of meeting attendees filled out a form -OR- 2% of visitors to a web site submitted a form -OR- 20% of mail recipients return the form	Encourage responses by explaining the importance of receiving comments.
Surveys	Calls, letters, etc.; Number of responses	60% of contacted persons participate in the survey -OR- 20% of mail recipients return the survey	Encourage responses by explaining the importance of receiving feedback. Offer incentives for returning surveys.
Space Coast Government TV	Calls, letters, etc.; Number of persons reached	Minimum of 15% of meeting attendees/survey respondents indicated that they saw the meeting notice.	Provide information to SCGTV as soon as it is available to increase the air time. Encourage SCGTV to make the announcements prominent.
Posters and Flyers	Calls, letters, etc.; Number of persons reached	Minimum of 15% of meeting attendees/survey respondents indicated that they saw a poster.	Increase distribution to common areas where posters will be more visible to the general public.

Richmond Area MPO March 26th Presentation

Feedback from CTAC during Facilitated Discussion:

Environmental Justice Issues

- It isn't about EJ –none of the public is involved
- There is no effective Public Involvement
- Need to be able to distinguish the work of the MPO from that of other government agencies
- Recommendations from the TAC are readily accepted by the MPO and are given priority; recommendations from the CTAC are viewed as circumstantial
- MPO does not hear what the CTAC says
- Expertise v. legitimacy
- CTAC is used as a “rubber stamp” for the MPO to feel they can say that they have the public's support on issues
- Web site may not help EJ communities –they don't have the computer equipment or skills
- MPO is not well understood –the public doesn't know who they are or what they do
- CTAC is even less understood as a subcommittee
- Understanding transportation is mind-boggling
- Too many acronyms; acronyms are hard to understand; some of the CTAC members were thrown off by acronyms in our report
- Maybe the MPO should change it's name to something that the public would better understand such as “Transportation Planning Commission”

Reaching People

- Communities don't think regionally
- Bus schedules are hard to read
- MPO is a stealth organization –they spend millions of dollars and make decisions that shape the spatial development and economy of the Richmond area, but most of their decisions are made behind closed doors; even CTAC doesn't know what they're doing
- The public doesn't have the sense that their input is important to the MPO; CTAC doesn't have the sense that their input is important to the MPO
- For most of it's history CTAC hasn't even have a member present at the MPO meetings – only in the last 2 years has there been a non-voting CTAC representative at the MPO meetings (CTAC Chairman)
- At the MPO meetings, the CTAC chairman gives his report, everyone is very polite and they move on with their agenda –no indication that they will act on issues important to the CTAC
- CTAC feels that the public's voice needs to be stronger to balance the MPO

Public Input

- Public doesn't have to go before the CTAC before going to the MPO; is the CTAC being bypassed?
- CTAC has daytime meetings, which may contribute to the lack of public participation (no member of the public attended the March 26th Meeting, although the Chairman asked if there was anyone present who wanted to speak and there are chairs set up to accommodate visitors)

- CTAC does hold some meetings from 4:00 – 7:00pm to discuss key projects
- Encourage MPO and CTAC to have a goal of knowing more about what other places do
- CTAC is treated politely by the MPO but they are the “Rodney Dangerfield” of subcommittees –they get no respect
- VDOT and MPO have little respect for the public’s concerns
- No real changes happen with regard to the outputs or process
- MPO Chairman has been meeting with the CTAC Chairman
- Money is spread out across the region to satisfy representatives of constituents who all want to see something happen near them; it would be nice to see a big impact in one area so that people could see that they can really change the transportation system, but it doesn’t happen because everyone claws for a piece of the money

Regional Priorities

- Environmental issues
- Consider regional perspective
- The correlation of mass transit, air quality, and land use are elements of the process that are confusing limits the public’s input
- Does the MPO need to even have a CTAC? “Why have a committee that the MPO doesn’t listen to?”
- The “Best Practices” report is the CTAC’s opportunity to give the MPO input on how things should be done
- The MPO and CTAC have some philosophical differences
- CTAC is only an advisory committee; the CTAC has some good ideas that aren’t always incorporated into the process

Document Review

- CTAC input into the LRP
- CTAC sends ideas up to the MPO but doesn’t get feedback back from the MPO on what they like or don’t like or how the ideas might be incorporated
- The MPO Chair used to attend CTAC meetings but doesn’t anymore
- The MPO is feeling the crush of the economy and has even less money to allocate this year

Stakeholders

- Looking at the stakeholders listed on the PowerPoint slide, the top 5 are important MPO stakeholders and the bottom 5 are stakeholders the CTAC reaches out to
- MPO questionnaire should be redeveloped so that it could be answered in 2-3 minutes by the general public at locations such as shopping malls to get real input from the general public
- CTAC wants to find out who the best MPOs are and get ideas from how they run things
- If the MPOs we interviewed have all the same problems as the Richmond MPO, maybe we need to interview someone else who’s doing it right (KR talked about the fact that our MPO surveys resulted in feedback on other MPOs to watch)
- We need to better track the money
- Is there a group that gives awards to the best MPO? The American Planning Association?

Written Comments (Copied verbatim):

- An email listserv (as you noted) can be very effective, and we should build one actively here. Targeted to neighborhoods.
- We also need a clear, specific “public participation” goal to be the best, the model for the rest of the country (This also implies adequate investment in public participation.)
- Tracking, measuring effects of outreach is necessary.
- Find the best outstanding leaders around the country.
- On page 18, it is stated that “the MPOs are uncertain about how to evaluate their own successes or failures.” If they are uncertain, why don’t they ask their Committees (CTAC, EDAW, TAC)? There needs to be a GIANT step by the MPO to interact and communicate between these organizations. Feedback on all levels is a major key to ANY organizations success. There are many public (elected officials) servants on the MPO and they are NOT serving the people properly!
- Page 3 –my title is “Director of Planning and Information Systems”. Christine Holt has been promoted to “Senior Planner”. Todd Rigler has been hired as our new “Associate Planner” (replacing Christine).

Verbal Comments

- If the City of Richmond wants the Main Street Station to be a vital part of the planning process they must include counties as voting members on the MPO.
- HSH should look at how transportation is being handled in northern Virginia near the Maryland line, they seem to be doing good things there.
- The new Conference Center downtown isn’t completely finished yet, but is fully booked through 2007.

Issues Log Example

Cnty Code	Category Code	First Name	Last Name	Title	Org.	Address 1	Address 2	City	ST	Zip	Ph.	Issue Code	Date of Source	Comments
9	G											FF	02/12/99	Does not support increasing tolls
9	C											AA	04/30/99	Proposed plan to reduce traffic by reducing bus-rider commute time
9	J											FF	06/04/99	Suggests more studies to see if variable tolls should be implemented
9	G											FF	06/25/99	Exasperated by lack of action on toll policy
9	H											FF	06/25/99	Suggests agency has not "come to the table" to take action on toll issues
9	J											FF	06/25/99	Editorial to Daily News asserting agency has stalled on toll issue for 3 yrs
9	O											FF	06/25/99	Supports roadway pricing as source of trans. finance/congestion-buster
9	T											AA	06/25/99	Concerned about rush-hour traffic

Code	County	Code	Category	Code	Issues/Major Concerns
1	Rockland	A	Advocacy/Professional Orgs	AA	Congestion
2	Westchester	B	Business Representation	BB	Transit Needs
3	Orange	C	Civic Groups	CC	Economic Development
4	Putnam	D	Community Centers	DD	Safety/Maintenance
5	Dutchess	E	Community Groups/Orgs	EE	Community Disruption
6	Bergen	F	Economic Development Corps.	FF	Financing/Tolling
7	Fairfield	G	Elected Officials	GG	Trust
8	Bronx	H	Government Entities	HH	Environmental/Health
9	Other	I	Hospital/Emergency Services	II	Other
		J	Individuals/Residents	JJ	Aging Infrastructure
		K	Libraries	KK	Community Ed/Public Outreach
		L	Media	LL	Suggested Alternatives
		M	Other Association & Agencies	MM	Security Measures
		N	Planning Groups	NN	Environmental Review Process
		O	Schools	OO	Emergency Response
		P	Transit Providers		
		Q	Transportation Groups		
		R	Trucking Associations/AAA		
		S	Social Services		
		T	Environmental Groups		

