Photo: Sliding Hill Road, Hanover County

PlanRVA - RRTPO Equity Working Group

NOTES

This meeting is open to the public. Members of the public are invited to attend virtually. Please alert PlanRVA staff at **PlanRVA@PlanRVA.org** if electronic transmission of this meeting fails for the public. Please refer to our **Statement Regarding Virtual Meeting Participation by Members of the Public** for more information.

Check out our complete **Public Participation Guide** online to learn about the different ways you can stay connected and involved.

Meetings are also live streamed and archived on our YouTube Channel at **Plan RVA - YouTube**.

Members of the public are invited to submit public comments either verbally or in writing. Written comments can be submitted through the Q&A/Chat function on Zoom by email to **PlanRVA@PlanRVA.org**.

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PlanRVA is where the region comes together to look ahead. Established in 1969, PlanRVA promotes cooperation across the region's nine localities and supports programs and organizations like the Richmond Regional Transportation Planning Organization, Central Virginia Transportation Authority, the Emergency Management Alliance of Central Virginia, Lower Chickahominy Watershed Collaborative and Don't Trash Central Virginia.

AGENDA
PlanRVA/RRTPO Equity Working Group
February 28, 2025, 11:30 a.m.
PlanRVA James River Board Room, 424 Hull Street, Suite 300,
Richmond, VA 23224

If you wish to participate in this meeting virtually, please register via Zoom at the following link:
https://planrva-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_hTwcbYtiR6GCQb8UIht6FA

1. **Welcome and introductions**
   Facilitator: Martha Shickle
   Estimated topic time: 5 minutes

2. **Development of compensation policy** – page 3
   Objective: working group members will discuss and develop initial outline of compensation policy.
   Facilitator: Martha Shickle/ Ken Lantz
   Estimated topic time: 30 minutes

3. **Solutions to address barriers: including but not limited to monetary compensation**
   Objective: working group members will continue discussion from last meeting about identified barriers and identify solutions.
   Facilitator: Martha Shickle/ Ken Lantz
   Estimated topic time: 15 minutes

4. **Current engagement efforts and best practices** – page 6
   Objective: working group members will review PlanRVA's current engagement plan, the LRTP engagement strategy and best practices.
   Facilitator: Martha Shickle/ Ken Lantz
   Estimated topic time: 15 minutes

Adjourn

PLAN RVA/RRTPO Advisory Committee Member Compensation Policies

February 2025

Purpose

Robust community engagement efforts ensure that residents are able to provide meaningful input on policies and programs. Fair compensation practices demonstrate a commitment to engaging community voices and recognizing the value those with lived experiences can add. Valuing residents as experts and compensating them for their time is a crucial facet of an effective community engagement model. Partnering with community members and people with lived experiences during research, policymaking and planning practice presents opportunities to enrich the work, incorporate perspectives that are often excluded from decision-making, and advance equity.

Benefits

The benefits of using compensation in community engagement include that it:

- Ensures that individuals from diverse socio-economic backgrounds are actively engaged in community activities without facing financial barriers
- Encourages individuals from marginalized communities to participate
- Acknowledges the time, efforts and expertise contributed by community members
- Enables individuals to prioritize and dedicate time to meaningful and sustained engagement

Recommendations

- Compensation in the amount of $50 per meeting will be paid directly to Citizen Appointees and Alternates to CTAC in attendance at CTAC meetings
- Compensation in the amount of $50 per meeting will be paid to the following organizations when their representatives are in attendance at CTAC meetings:
  o Chamber RVA
  o Richmond Area Bicycling Association
  o Senior Connections
  o League of Women Voters
  o Virginia Conservation Network
  o RVA Rapid Transit
  o NAACP, Richmond Branch
  o Virginias for High-Speed Rail
- Because they are government entities, compensation will not be provided to representatives of VCU or the Richmond Office of Equitable Transit and Mobility
- Compensation will be provided <u>after</u> each meeting. The meeting attendance list will serve as the basis for determining which individuals and organizations are eligible for compensation.
- Individuals attending virtually will also be eligible for compensation.

- In addition to regular meeting attendance, other factors that will be considered in compensating individual attendees will include:
  - Resides within the region
  - Has no conflicts of interest
  - Is willing to serve a full term
  - Possesses knowledge of the topic
  - Offers a unique perspective
  - Clearly articulates ideas, is experienced with group discussions, demonstrates understanding of equity issues, and is willing to consider different viewpoints
  - Willingness to participate in program orientations
- Payments will not be provided to other individuals who are being compensated as part of their regular job responsibilities, or if they are not required to use paid time off provided by their employer in order to participate.
- Where possible, payment will be made in the form of direct deposit. Individuals must furnish a Social Security Number and bank account number to receive direct deposit payments. For individuals not having a bank account, arrangements will be made for another form of payment.
- Payments will be provided on a trial basis, beginning _____ and ending_____, and will be subject to continuation or cancellation depending upon PlanRVA's and CTAC's evaluation of the payment program's effectiveness in increasing and enhancing participation. Program impact assessment metrics may include but are not limited to the following:
  - Reduction in barriers to participation
  - Increased number of individuals indicating their willingness to participate
  - Improved attendance
  - Better retention rates
  - More diverse membership
  - Increased engagement levels
  - Greater demographic diversity of participants
  - Broader geographic representation
  - More varied perspectives
  - Better community connections
  - Enhanced quality of feedback
  - Better program and project outcomes
  - Stronger community trust
- Individuals will be responsible for reporting their compensation payments on their state and federal income tax returns. Plan RVA will provide documentation of payments provided to each individual for tax filing purposes
- Individuals should be aware that receipt of compensation may affect their eligibility for certain income-based services and programs, and/or change their tax return filing status
- Participation in the compensation program is voluntary, and individuals not electing to receive payments must notify PlanRVA staff

- The receipt of compensation will be in addition to any other forms of payment PlanRVA may provide for meeting participants, such as meals, parking validation, program registration, etc.
- The program will be subject to continuation based on the availability of funds
- Persons under the age of 18 are eligible to receive compensation at the same rates as adults provided state labor laws regarding minors are followed
- College applicants and students should be aware that any compensation received should be disclosed as part of yearly earnings financial aid applications such as FAFSA, Pell Grants, etc.
- Non-US citizens and US Nationals may be eligible to receive compensation depending on their circumstances. Participants should contact a personal immigration attorney regarding whether receipt of payment would impact their immigration status
- Compensation will be provided for both recurring as well as one-time events or project activities. In addition to meetings, participants will be compensated for such activities as
  - Reviewing and commenting on a plan or document
  - Producing or reviewing written comments
  - Meeting preparation time
  - Attending a conference or training
  - Completing surveys
  - Participating in discussions via e-mail
- Payment by direct deposit to the participant's financial institution's account or organization's account will be the preferred means of payment, but upon request other forms of payment such as issuance of a check, prepaid card or gift card will be considered.
- There is no limit on the total number of payments or their cumulative value
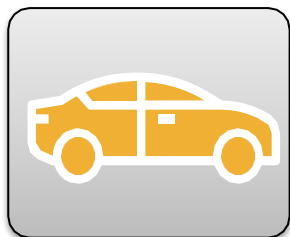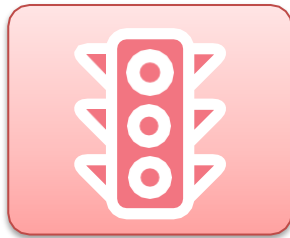
Richmond Regional Transportation Planning Organization

Public Engagement Plan 2024

Richmond Regional Transportation Planning Organization

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PlanRVA
Where **the region** comes
together to look ahead.

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Table of Contents

What is Public Engagement?

Overview

The Public Engagement Plan for the Richmond Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RRTPO) aims to outline how, at a broad level, the RRTPO will plan to engage the community to

1) better understand the RRTPO's role in the region.

2) see themselves reflected in the plans and participate in public engagement for transportation initiatives.

3) better shape the region's shared future.

The Public Engagement Plan is a living document, in which the RRTPO strives to update and improve upon.

The RRTPO is committed to being open and accessible to all people in the Richmond region and believes successful planning that works for everyone relies on effective public engagement, which includes the following principles:

- transparency and integrity
- coordination
- information
- appropriateness
- responsiveness
- inclusiveness
- monitoring and evaluation
- learning and sharing

The RRTPO recognizes that meaningful citizen planning requires (1) effective citizen involvement activities, (2) open and accessible information, and (3) opportunities for engagement.

While broad citizen input and representation have long been the goal, the RRTPO recognizes that not all interested citizens and groups have had their voices heard in the planning process. This philosophy guides RRTPO engagement with the region.

The following section outlines the laws and regulations that shape the RRTPO engagement framework. This is followed by the goals, strategies, and evaluation methods identified to build broad public engagement that considers every individual in the Richmond region, regardless of their background or ability. In addition to individual citizens, the RRTPO aims to develop partnerships with local governments, agencies, and other interested parties, including community and neighborhood groups.

What is an MPO?

A Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is an organization in charge of transportation planning and policy for areas with a collective population of 50,000 or more. The responsibility of an MPO is to provide comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing transportation planning for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods throughout the region. The policies created through the MPO are consistent with the region's overall economic, social, and environmental goals and seek to provide equal access to a variety of transportation choices.

What is the Richmond Regional Transportation Planning Organization?

The Richmond Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RRTPO) coordinates transportation plans and polices as the MPO for the Richmond region. The RRTPO covers nine local jurisdictions including the Town of Ashland, the counties of Charles City, Chesterfield, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, New Kent, and Powhatan, and the City of Richmond.

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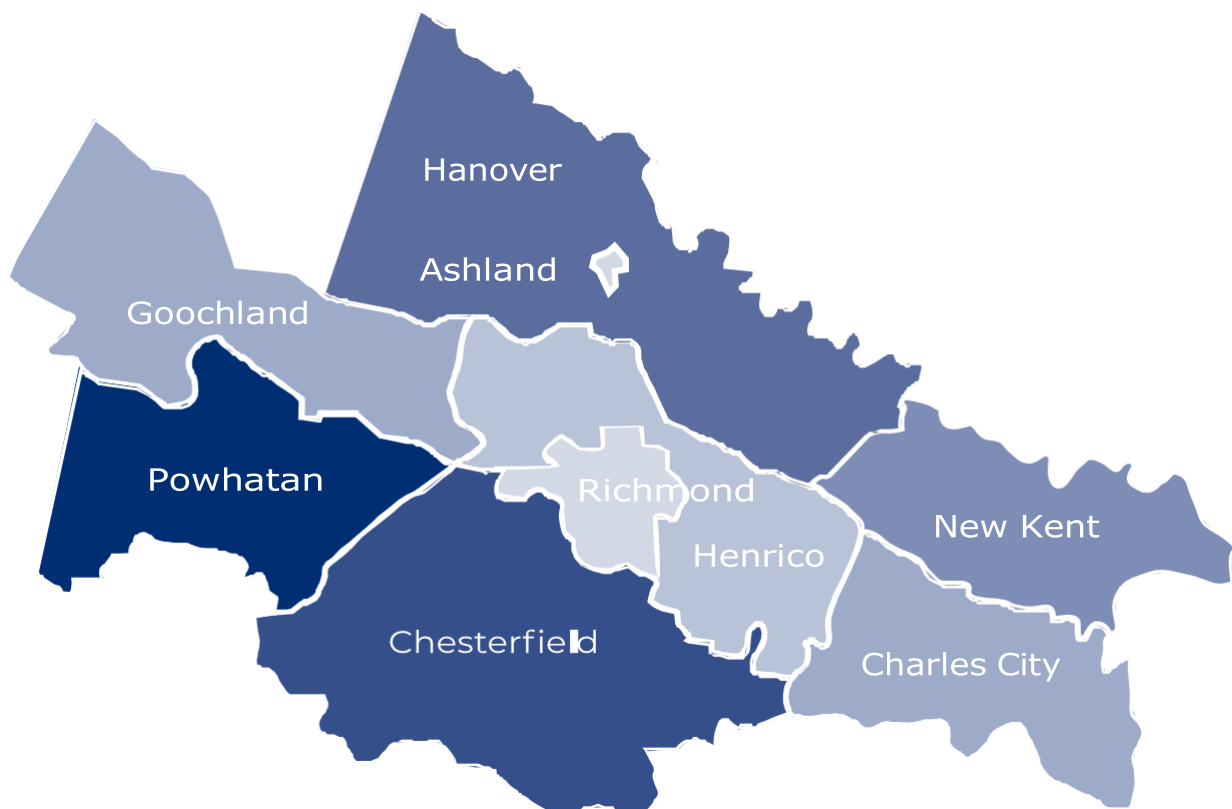
The RRTPO includes:

- A **governing board** made up of elected officials from each of the nine jurisdictions as well as representatives from the Capital Region Airport Commission, GRTC Transit System, Richmond Metropolitan Transportation Authority, and the Virginia Secretary of Transportation. The governing board also includes the following nonvoting member agencies and organizations: Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, RideFinders, Virginia Department of Aviation, Department of Rail and Public Transportation and the RRTPO Community Transportation Advisory Committee chair.

- A **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)** made up of technically qualified representatives of member localities and agencies responsible for planning, maintaining, controlling, developing, and improving the transportation system within the Richmond region.

- A **Community Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC)** made up of citizen representatives of RRTPO jurisdictions and community organizations as designated by the RRTPO board with a focus on equity, inclusion, and community engagement.

What does the RRTPO do?

Transportation planning affects everyone. How well a person can travel throughout the region affects their safety and quality of life. The RRTPO provides an independent yet cooperative forum for regional planning and directs the allocation of annual federal transportation funding. Creating transportation plans is the first step in a multi-year process to fund, design, purchase land for, and ultimately construct a transportation project.

In the short-term, the RRTPO maintains a list of funded transportation projects called the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Additionally, a far-reaching Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) looks 20 years into the future to supply a common vision for regional transportation needs and guides the investment of public funds for transportation facilities for people and goods in vehicles, on trains, on bikes, on buses, and on sidewalks.

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Legal Mandates

The following section outlines the laws and regulations that shape the RRTPO engagement framework. This is followed by the goals, strategies, and evaluation methods identified to build more complete public engagement that considers every individual in the Richmond region, regardless of their background or ability. In addition to individual citizens, the RRTPO aims to develop partnerships with local governments, agencies, and other interested parties, including community and neighborhood groups.

Beyond the RRTPO philosophy, there are several federal laws and regulations that relate to engagement and transportation planning. The following section briefly outlines RRTPO obligations and how they affect engagement efforts.

Civil Rights Act of 1964

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act prohibits discriminating against people based on their race, skin color, or country of origin. The RRTPO has adopted a Title VI Plan which details the steps we take to prevent discrimination in our planning work. The RRTPO is committed to treating everyone fairly and ensuring everyone has a voice in shaping our region's future.

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

The Americans with Disabilities Act protects people with disabilities from being excluded from public programs and from other discrimination by public organizations. This includes physical accessibility in terms of meeting and events spaces, but also includes things such as ensuring webpages are fully usable for people who are colorblind or providing closed captioning on videos for those who cannot hear. The RRTPO strives to create an inclusive environment which offers everyone the chance to be involved, regardless of ability.

Executive Order 12898 – Environmental Justice

Executive Order 12898 requires agencies that receive federal money ensure minority and low- income communities are not disproportionately affected by the organization's decisions. The Title VI plan details the RRTPO's commitment to making concerted efforts to engage minority and low-income communities and to ensure that the effects of our transportation projects do not negatively impact them more than others.

Executive Order 13166 – Limited English Proficiency

Executive Order 13166 requires the RRTPO to ensure all people can access the services and programs that we provide, regardless of English ability. This includes offering interpretive services for meetings (with advanced notice), providing workshops in other languages, and creating handouts in more than one language. The RRTPO policy on Limited English Proficiency is included in the Title VI plan.

Executive Order 13175 – Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments

Executive Order 13175 commits the federal government to consulting and coordinating with tribal governments when making decisions that could affect native communities. In January of 2018, the Chickahominy and Eastern Chickahominy tribes were formally recognized by the federal government. These tribes are in Charles City and New Kent counties. The RRTPO recognizes the importance of including tribal governments in decisions which may impact them. The RRTPO commits to working with the Chickahominy and Eastern Chickahominy tribes to create a consultation process.

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), most known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), (H.R. 3684), is a United States federal statute signed into law on November 15, 2021. This bill provides new funding for infrastructure projects like federal highway aid, transit, highway safety, hazardous materials, rail, broadband access, clean water, and electric grid renewal.

Our Approach to Public Engagement

The following section outlines goals for public engagement as shaped by RRTPO philosophy and legal mandates. Each goal is divided into three sections.
"What will we do?" covers recommended strategies and actions to be taken.
"What will we measure?" covers metrics used in evaluating our success.
"What is success?" defines the trends or metrics which are consistent with a robust community engagement process.

Goal 1 – Robust and Creative Opportunities to Engage

Provide robust and creative opportunities for all residents to engage in planning for transportation, including people in the region who are not easily engaged because of their age, ability, language, lack of financial resources, lack of access to technology, or other reasons.

What will we do?

1. Public Meetings
   - Hold engagement meetings at convenient, accessible, times and locations.
   - Use maps, charts, graphs, and other tools to visually convey information presented.
   - Host streamed and recorded videos of all RRTPO committee meetings on the RRTPO website.
   - Create a digest of actions taken at RRTPO committee meetings for interested parties.

2. Engaging Traditionally Underserved Communities
   - Offer interpretive services for public meetings and events (with advance notice).
   - Host workshops and events in underserved communities when updating the Long- Range Transportation Plan.
   - Partner with civic organizations that represent people who are not easily engaged to hold workshops and to share opportunities to be involved.
   - Consider offering compensation to attendees.

3. Project-specific Engagement Strategies
   - Develop a public involvement strategy for the Long-Range Transportation Plan and any other plan as needed.
   - Select the best tools from the engagement toolkit (Appendix B) based on the target audience and desired outcome.
   - Use digital surveys, maps, and other tools to make engagement convenient for residents of the region.
   - Publish a guide to public involvement for the LRTP (and any other plans as needed) before starting public engagement.
   - Coordinate the public involvement process with statewide public review processes to maximize citizen engagement wherever possible.
   - Supply food at RRTPO hosted events to encourage attendance and promote an informal atmosphere when appropriate.
   - Collaborate with local community organizers to engage and mobilize their constituents around planning topics.

4. Public Comment
   - Provide a comment period at every RRTPO committee meeting.
   - Offer periods for review and comment before adopting any plan or allocation decision.
   - Create a comment page on the website with instructions on how to submit comments via email, mail, or in person.
   - Include comments received with proposed item in RRTPO committee agenda packet.
   - Summarize comments received when presenting proposals to RRTPO committees.

What will we measure?
- Attendance at RRTPO committee meetings.
- Website visits.
- Subscribers to email digest.
- Attendance at public workshops and other events.
- Number of public comments received on proposed plans and regional transportation issues.
- Number of meetings held in underserved communities.
- Number of meetings held with hard to engage groups.

What is success?
- Increased attendance at public meetings.
- Increased website visits.
- Increase in public comments received.
- Growing subscriber mailing list.
- The percentage of meetings held in underserved communities equal to the share of population.

Goal 2 – Informing and Educating the Public

Inform and educate the public so they can purposefully engage and provide feedback in the transportation planning process.

What will we do?

1. Media engagement
   - Actively reach out to a variety of regional media outlets with press releases about significant initiatives.
   - Develop a working relationship with the press for coverage of events, plans, or public meetings.
   - Continue to expand and consistently update social media accounts to build following and promote public engagement opportunities.
   - Take advantage of social media marketing through social media ads to promote the RRTPO and upcoming public meetings.

2. Notice of Meetings
   - Use our communication channels to share notices for upcoming meetings.
   - Ensure agenda is posted on website when sent to RRTPO committee members.
   - Share meeting notices with partner localities for posting on their website and public spaces, including government offices and libraries.
   - Develop a stakeholder database to inform constituents of timely events and opportunities.

3. Engagement in Regional Events
   - Be present at a wide range of community events and festivals to share RRTPO projects and engage attendees.
   - Provide resources on current projects and public comment.
   - Partner with surrounding universities and community colleges to host events focused on engaging younger residents of the region.
   - Work through member governments and partner agencies to provide regional planning resources for local events.

4. Website
   - Create a separate page for the Long-Range Transportation Plan process and other significant projects.
   - Ensure all pages and content are accessible.
   - Audit the website regularly to check for dead links and pages.

5. Visualization and Document Design
   - Branding, including logos, for plans requiring public input.
   - Create visually appealing and easily navigable documents.
   - Use plain language in all public documents.

What will we measure?
- Media hits or mentions in newspapers or magazines, online and in print.
- Analytics for social media engagement: clicks, impressions, mentions, etc.
- The number of people engaged at regional events.

What is success?
- Increased mentions in local press.
- A working relationship with journalists or reporters.
- Increased social media impressions, shares, and mentions.
- Steady rate of email opens.

Goal 3 – Continuous Evaluation and Improvement

Continuously evaluate our progress toward our public engagement goals and amend this plan's strategies and metrics as needed to increase public involvement.

What will we do?
• Continue to use metrics to track progress toward plan goals.
• Publish an annual report on progress toward plan strategies and metrics.
• Review and update this plan before developing the public involvement strategy for the Long-Range Transportation Plan.
• Maintain openness to public feedback and input on improvements to our engagement process.

What will we measure?
• On-time publication of annual report.
• On-time review and update of plan.
• Number of comments or feedback received.
• Changes implemented.

What is success?
• Annual report posted to website by end of July each year.
• Plan reviewed and updated at least two (2) years before Long-Range Plan adoption.
• Increased feedback on how to improve public outreach.

Regular Planning Timelines

As a resident of the Richmond region, you have a say in planning the transportation infrastructure that gets built. The chart below summarizes the general approval timeline for each planning process and highlights opportunities for you to be involved. Each major program will have more detailed events and opportunities to engage. A more detailed look at each process follows.

Process	Approval	Amendment	Where to find information?
Long-Range Transportation Plan	30 days	15 days	Press; website; social media
Transportation Improvement Program	30 days	15 days	Press; website; social media
Unified Planning Work Program	15 days	15 days	Website; social media
Regional Funding Decisions	15 days		Website; social media,
Public Engagement Plan	45 days	45 days	Website; social media
Other Studies and Plans	15 days		Website; social media

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Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

The RRTPO updates the long-range transportation plan every five (5) years, though the work for the update takes place over several years. This process begins with a count of the number of people, jobs, and cars in the region before developing a projection for the future based on statewide estimates and expected development. This information is used to create a plan to manage and maintain a transportation system for people on transit, in cars, on foot, and on bikes over the long term. This plan is fiscally constrained, meaning that the cost of the proposed projects in the plan is limited by the funds reasonably expected to be available over the next 20 years.

During this planning process, the RRTPO offers several chances for you to be involved. The exact format and timing of these opportunities changes with each cycle as we learn from earlier plans. A guide to taking part in the LRTP will be created at the beginning of each process and posted to the RRTPO website. You can also get information on our website and social media pages, or by signing up for our email notices.

When the draft plan is completed and posted to the website, the RRTPO will offer a **30-day public comment period**. During this time, RRTPO staff will hold public meetings throughout the region to discuss the document and gather more feedback. All comments will be reviewed by staff and will receive a response. The comments and responses will be provided to the RRTPO policy board before action on the plan. If the comments raise concerns which lead to a significant change in the plan, the RRTPO will open a new **15-day public comment period** to receive input on the changes.

On occasion, the long-range transportation plan may need to be changed to reflect new projects and changing priorities. Whenever an amendment is needed, the proposed changes will be open for public review and comment. The RRTPO will offer a **15-day public comment period** for all amendments to the plan. The changes will be posted on the website and all comments will be shared with the RRTPO policy board before it acts.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The Transportation Improvement Program details planned transportation spending over the next four (4) years. Project phases in the TIP are generally expected to occur within the four- year period. The TIP is updated every three (3) years following a schedule set by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT).

Developing the TIP takes most of a year, with work beginning in the late summer and concluding the next year in early summer. Existing projects are reviewed, and new projects are added where needed.

The draft of the TIP is opened for a **30-day public comment period**, generally around mid- February. All comments are reviewed by staff and will receive a response. If the comments raise concerns which lead to a significant change in the plan, the RRTPO will open a new **15- day public comment period** to receive input on the changes. All

comments are provided to the RRTPO policy board with the final draft before action on the document.

If the TIP needs to be amended, you will have the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed change. The RRTPO will offer a **15-day public comment period** for all amendments to the TIP. The changes will be posted on the website and all comments will be shared with the RRTPO policy board before their meeting. Minor administrative modifications will not have a formal public comment period.

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
The Unified Planning Work Program is the RRTPO list of plans and studies to be completed in the year. The UPWP is also a budget document and describes the sources of funding and timeframes for completing the work.

The UPWP covers a period from July 1 until June 30 of the next year and must be updated every year. Each winter, the RRTPO begins work on the next budget year's UPWP. Before adopting the UPWP each May, the RRTPO will provide a **15-day public comment period** on the work program and any amendments. Staff will send all comments to the RRTPO Policy Board along with the proposed UPWP before its meeting.

Regional Funding Decisions
One of the jobs of the RRTPO is to decide how to spend regional transportation money. Some funding programs need decisions every year, while others only need decisions every other year. The RRTPO has adopted guidelines to rank potential projects and promote regional goals when deciding where to spend these funds.

Before funding any new projects, the RRTPO will provide a **15-day public comment period** on the project list, generally around March or April every year. The proposed list, with schedule and funding will be posted on the RRTPO website. All comments received will be provided to the RRTPO policy board before action on the item.

Other Studies and Plans
In addition to these plans, the RRTPO also leads studies of transportation issues affecting the region. These studies are not directly tied to projects or funding sources but are often the first step in making regional decisions. The need for public involvement is determined on a case-by-case basis for each study. Before accepting the findings of a consultant-led study, the RRTPO will provide a **15-day public comment period.** Staff will send all comments to the RRTPO policy board along with the draft of the study before its meeting and all comments will be summarized in the final document.

RRTPO Committee Meetings

Beyond specific planning processes, all committees of the RRTPO hold regular meetings which include time for public comment. These meetings are a chance to learn about upcoming projects and conversations taking place in the region. Meetings are held at the RRTPO offices which are accessible and open for all to attend. The general meeting schedule for each committee is summarized below. The agenda is generally posted on the RRTPO website a week before the meeting.

Committee	Meeting (subject to change, check site for updates)
RRTPO Policy Board	1st Thursday of the month
Executive Committee	1st Thursday of the month (before RRTPO policy board meeting)
Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)	2nd Tuesday of the month
Community Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC)	3rd Thursday of every other month (Jan, Mar, May, July, Sept, Nov)

Appendix A: Glossary of Terms

We try to avoid using technical jargon and acronyms without explanations. In case we missed any, here are some commonly used acronyms and terms in transportation planning.

CTAC – Community Transportation Advisory
Committee LRTP – Long-Range Transportation Plan
MPO – Metropolitan Planning Organization
RRTPO – Richmond Regional Transportation Planning
Organization TAC – Transportation Advisory Committee
TIP – Transportation Improvement Program
UPWP – Unified Planning Work Program

Appendix B: Public Engagement Toolkit

This appendix is a summary of the tools that could be used to raise awareness of planning efforts and to engage the public in the process. Tools are classified by potential use.

Educate means the tool can be used to share information.

Promote means the tool can be used to share opportunities to be involved.

Engage means the tool can be used for gathering input and feedback.

	Educate	Promote	Engage
Brainstorming/Visioning			X
Briefings	X		
Charettes	X		X
Conferences	X	X	
Fairs and Events		X	X
Focus Groups			X
Games and Contests	X	X	X
Instant Polling Technology			X
Interactive Kiosks	X	X	X
Key Informant Interviews			X
Mailing/Email Lists	X	X	X
Media Relations/Press Coverage	X	X	
Engagement Meeting in a Box			X
Open Houses	X	X	X
Paid Advertising		X	
Public Deliberation			X
Public Meetings	X		X
Public Service Announcements		X	
Role Playing			X
Site Visits	X	X	X
Small Group Technique			X
Social Media	X	X	
Surveys			X
Tailored Outreach	X	X	X
Video and Webcasts	X	X	X
Websites	X	X	X
Workshops	X		X
Youth Outreach	X	X	X

Appendix C: Public Comments and Responses

Comment 1 — February 16, 2024
Sorry, it looks like the first section may have been edited a bunch of times and words are now left out/added. Overview: The Public Engagement Plan for the Richmond Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RRTPO) aims to outline how, at a broad level, the RRTPO will plan to engage the community to
1) better understand the RRTPO's role in the region
2) see [the plans for] themselves and participate in public engagement for transportation initiatives
3) better shape [remove: for] the region's shared future.
Staff Feedback – 3/19/2024.
Changes Made - 3/20/2024 to clarify our intent:
2) see themselves reflected in the plans and participate in public engagement for transportation initiatives
3) better shape the region's shared future.

Comment 2 — February 16, 2024
P. 9 "Collaborate with local community organizers to engage and mobilize their constituents around planning topics." - I encourage you to reach out to PTAs and sports leagues. They can provide efficient ways to reach your community through connected members!
Staff Feedback – 3/19/2024.
Thank you for that suggestion.

Comment 3 — February 18, 2024
My entire family and I choose to bike to get around. Please keep the cycling community safe by adding more protected bike lanes. A white bike painted in the middle of a vehicle lane is not enough.
Staff Feedback – 3/19/2024.
Thank you for that suggestion. We will consider your input.

Comment 4 — March 13, 2024
Paying people to attend a meeting is probably the lamest way to get attendance. Whom do you think will show up because of money?? Start with educating the public on benefits.
Staff Feedback – 3/19/2024.
We are operating under best practices for equitable engagement that acknowledges that participation from community members demands their time, skills, and knowledge—and asks them to share highly personal life experiences, and we should consider equitable compensation strategies that value such contributions. More on this resource at the Urban Institute.

Comment 4 — March 13, 2024
Im all for any support of walking or transit. Multimodal urban planning is a must in a changing and growing world. Increased density and a commitment to justice and accessibility are extremely important. No specific comments about specific pages. Just a general show of support, and a hope for further development.
Staff Feedback – 3/19/2024.
Thank you for the support, we will consider that perspective.

Appendix D: Title VI and Non-Discrimination

The Richmond Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RRTPO) fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes, executive orders, and regulations in all programs and activities. The RRTPO operates without regard to race, color, national origin, income, gender, age, and disability. Any person who believes him/herself or any specific class of persons, to be subjected to discrimination prohibited by Title VI may by him/herself or by representative file a written complaint with the RRTPO Title VI Coordinator. A complaint must be filed no later than 180 days after the date of the alleged discrimination. Please contact the Title VI Coordinator via phone at 804-323-2033 for more information. The RRTPO meetings are conducted in accessible locations and materials can be provided in accessible formats and in languages other than English. If you would like accessibility or language accommodation,
please contact the Title VI Coordinator at 804-323-2033. If you wish to attend a RRTPO function and require special accommodations, please give RRTPO one week's notice in advance.

No Discriminación
El Organización de Planeación Regional de Transporte de Richmond (RRTPO) cumple plenamente con Título VI de la ley de Derechos Civiles de 1964 (Civil Rights Act of 1964) y con estatutos relacionados, órdenes ejecutivos, y reglamentos en todos las programas y actividades. El RRTPO opera sin distinción de raza, color, origen nacional, ingresos, género, edad, y discapacidad. Cualquier persona que cree que él /ella o cualquier clase específica de las personas, hayan sometido a una discriminación prohibida por el Título VI puede por él /ella mismo o con un representante puede presentar una reclamación por escrito con el Coordinador del Título VI de RRTPO. La reclamación debe ser presentada no más tarde de 180 días después de la fecha de la supuesta discriminación. Por favor hace contacto con el
Coordinador del Título VI por teléfono en 804-323-2033 para más información. Las reuniones se llevan a cabo en lugares accesibles y los materiales pueden ser proporcionados en formatos accesibles y en otros idiomas aparte de Inglés. Si usted desea alojamiento u otra idioma, por favor hace contacto con el Coordinador del Título VI en 804-323-2033. Si desea a asistir a una función de RRTPO y si requiere acomodaciones especiales, por favor dé RRTPO una semana previo aviso.

Appendix E: Resolution of Adoption

Richmond Regional Transportation Planning Organization

POLICY AGENDA 4/4/2024; ITEM B.-4.

Public Engagement Plan Update

Richmond Regional Transportation Planning Organization

On motion by Jessica Schneider, seconded by Roscoe Cooper, the members of the RRTPO Policy Board voted to adopt the following resolution (voice vote):

WHEREAS, the Public Engagement Plan (PEP) is the guiding document that establishes consistent procedures to ensure people have reasonable opportunities to be involved in the planning process and provides the framework for developing outreach strategies for individual plans and projects; and

WHEREAS, the Richmond Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RRTPO) has committed to reviewing and updating the PEP before starting updates to the long-range transportation plan; and

WHEREAS, the Community Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC) has reviewed and recommends approval of the proposed changes;

WHEREAS, the draft PEP has undergone a 45-day public review period;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Richmond Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RRTPO) policy board adopts this update to the Public Engagement Plan (PEP) as proposed.

••

This is to certify that the Richmond Regional Transportation Planning Organization Policy Board approved the above resolution at its meeting held April 4, 2024.

WITNESS: BY:

_____   _____
Janice Scott   Myles Busching
Board Relations Manager   Secretary
PlanRVA   Richmond Regional Transportation
                                                         Planning Organization

Public Engagement Plan Annual Update

Fiscal Year 2024

Richmond Regional
Transportation
Planning
Organization

Powered By:

PlanRVA
Where the region comes
together to look ahead.

Introduction

The Public Engagement Plan for the Richmond Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RRTPO) aims to outline how, at a broad level, the RRTPO will plan to engage the community to

      1) better understand the RRTPO's role in the region

      2) see themselves reflected in the plans and participate in public engagement for transportation initiatives

      3) better shape the region's shared future

The Public Engagement Plan is a living document, in which the RRTPO strives to update and improve upon. It will have an annual update to the progress yearly at the end of the fiscal year.

Performance Measures

Goal 1 - Robust and Creative Opportunities to Engage

Provide robust and creative opportunities for all residents to engage in planning for transportation, including people in the region who are not easily engaged because of their age, ability, language, lack of financial resources, lack of access to technology, or other reasons.

What do we Measure?	This Year
Attendance at RRTPO committees	30-50
Website Visits	unable to capture
Subscribers to Email Digest	430
Presence at Public Workshops / Events	31
Number of public comments received on proposed plans and regional issues	1624
Meetings Held in Underserved Communities	6
Meetings Held with Hard-to-Engage Groups	12

Goal 2 - Informing and Educating the Public

Inform and educate the public so they can purposefully engage and provide feedback in the transportation planning process.

What do we Measure?	This Year
Mentions in newspapers, or magazines, online or in print	46
Social media clicks, impressions, shares and mentions	See Appendix A
Number of people engaged at regional events	1325

Goal 3 - Continuous Evaluation and Improvement

Continuously evaluate our progress toward our public engagement goals and make changes to this plan's strategies and metrics as needed to increase public involvement.

What do we Measure?	This Year
On-time publication of annual report	yes
On-time review and update of plan	yes
Number of comments or feedback received regarding public engagement efforts	5
Changes implemented	None at this time

2

Selected Media Mentions

Media mentions can include any reference to PlanRVA's overall work, the Richmond Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RRTPO), or the Central Virginia Transportation Authority (CVTA),

FY 2024

4/23/2024	Richmond Times-Dispatch	[Executive Director of the Central Virginia Transportation Authority Chet Parsons talks about the Fall Line Trail](#)	CVTA Fall Line Trail
3/19/2024	Good Morning RVA	[Good morning, RVA: Richmond Connects, another transportation plan, and bamboo](#)	Transporation Forum
3/18/2024	VPM	[PlanRVA's regional forum lays groundwork for 2050](#)	Transporation Forum
2/8/2024	WRVA (News Radio)	[Central Va. Transportation Authority Accepting Public Comments on Proposed Projects](#)	CVTA Public Comment

1/26/2024	RIC Today	[PlanRVA gets $1 million for pollution reduction efforts](#)	CPRG Grant
12/6/2023	Richmond Times-Dispatch	[Work set on two Richmond-area traffic bottlenecks: Route 288 and Staples Mill](#)	CVTA constructing new lanes
12/6/2023	Richmond Times-Dispatch (print)	[Letter: Remembering New Kent supervisor](#)	New Kent Supervisor

10/24/202	Richmond Magazine	[Hitting the Road](#)	CVTA elects president
9/20/2023	RVA Hub	[Key part of Fall Line Trail construction set to begin in October](#)	Fall Line Construction
7/27/2023	VPM	[Hanover, Henrico discuss road and infrastructure needs](#)	Road and Infrastructure needs

Appendix A: Social Media Statistics

Facebook (@planrva)

	Reach	Content Interactions	Followers	Page Visits
Totals	35.5K	1.1K	822	2.8K

3

LinkedIn (@planrva)

	Impressions	Reactions	Comments	Page Views	Reposts
Totals	57K	1832	48	301	60

Instagram (@planrva) Launched in November 2023, began regular posting in January 2024.

	Reach	Content Interactions	Followers	Page Visits
Totals	19.3K	647	377	1K

Reach and impressions are a better gauge of overall reach since most folks aren't visiting the page itself to see content—it shows up in their feed.

4

Long Range Transportation Public Engagement Plan

Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of the Public Engagement Plan for the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), ConnectRVA2045, is to outline strategies to garner meaningful input from the community on the future transportation and connectivity needs for the region.

Background

The LRTP is a particularly significant decision tool meant to guide how the Richmond Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RRTPO) and its partners will meet the transportation needs of the Richmond region over the next 20+ years. Through outreach during all phases of plan development, the RRTPO will aim to help all stakeholders including the public, understand, follow, and participate in developing this important policy, planning and programming document. Federal regulation requires MPOs "to provide meaningful citizen input for the metropolitan transportation planning and programming process through effective citizen involvement activities, open and accessible information, and opportunities for participation."

Audience

The 2045 LRTP update will be informed by input from individuals and groups including, but not limited to, the following:

- Citizens
- Affected public agencies
- Representatives of public transportation employees
- Freight shippers
- Private providers of transportation
- Representatives of users of public transportation
- Representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities
- Representatives of the elderly and individuals with disabilities
- Agencies or entities responsible for safety/security operations
- Providers of non-emergency transportation services receiving financial assistance from a source other than title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53
- Other interested parties

Public engagement for ConnectRVA2045 will include a concerted effort to reach out to previously underserved populations or those persons with unique transportation needs and challenges, such as:

- People with low incomes
- People of minority populations
- People with limited English proficiency (LEP)
- People of zero car households

Goals

The goals for this public engagement plan will be to:

1. Engage the public at all levels and throughout the development of ConnectRVA2045.
2. Ensure that a variety of engagement strategies are implemented to establish inclusive public input.
3. Strengthen relationships with local governments, agencies, and stakeholder groups to ensure equal outreach to all regional jurisdictions.

Organizational structure

- PlanRVA staff
- Advisory committee
- Elected officials
- Stakeholder groups
- Other interested parties

Public Engagement Strategy

Public engagement will be vital to the success of the ConnectRVA2045 plan. Throughout the entire planning process the RRTPO board and staff will be reaching out to the public through meetings, workshops, and surveys to receive feedback on each section of the plan. The general process flow is included below. Each point of public outreach will be thoroughly advertised across multiple mediums to ensure that all citizens and stakeholders are given the opportunity to participate in the planning process.

Pre-Planning

Promotion and Awareness

Before beginning the first phase of public engagement PlanRVA staff, advisory members, and stakeholders will be tasked with promoting all the upcoming public engagement events through any channel they have available. ConnectRVA staff will promote the engagement process through:

Website: RRTPO has established a dedicated website for the development of the plan, www. connectrva2045.org, to serve as the "front door" where information and updates on the plan and engagement opportunities can be found.

Media coverage: Press releases, meeting notices, and ads. PlanRVA has an existing list of regional media contacts and ad specs for various publications. All notices should be designed to reflect the look and feel of the ConnectRVA2045 brand and be used to inform the public about upcoming participation events.

Email notices: PlanRVA currently has an email list of approximately 200 subscribers.

Social media: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn are the primary channels PlanRVA will use to promote meetings, surveys, and public comment periods. Members of the advisory committee will be encouraged to share posts on their personal or locality accounts.
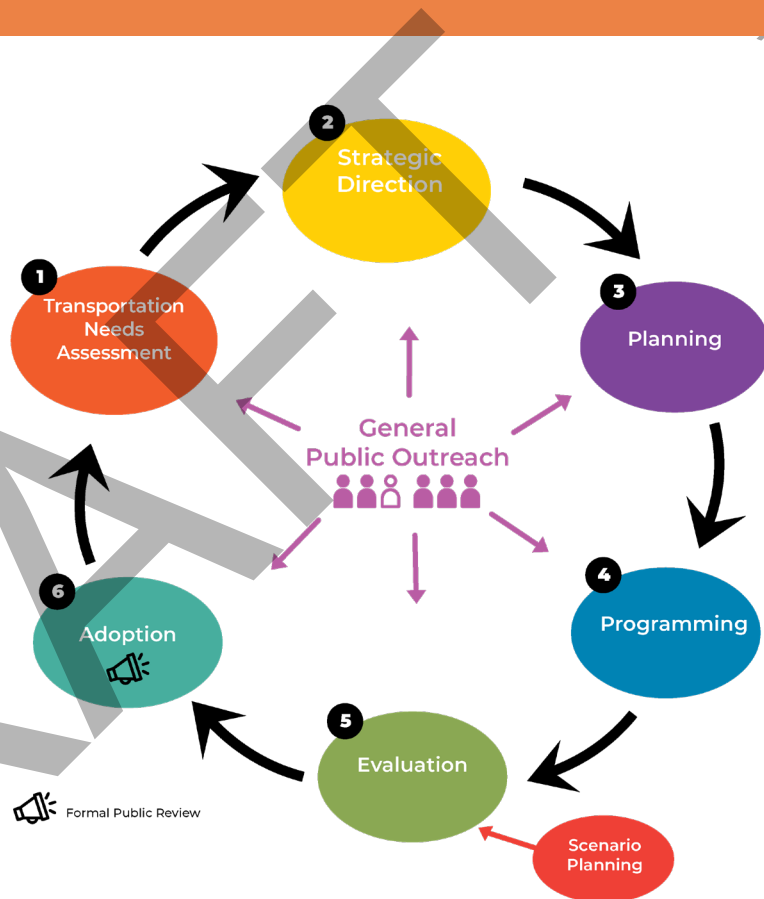
Phase One: Vision

The first phase of the ConnectRVA2045 public engagement process will focus on assessing what the community feels are the current needs for transportation and their vision for future regional transportation. This initial round of community feedback will take place in two different formats: Community living rooms and visioning open houses. Initial education and participation-building will take place by meeting community organizations and groups where they are. Organized conversation and feedback will take place at multiple "visioning" open houses held at different geographically accessible locations in the region (exact locations to be determined by the Advisory Committee). These open houses will have a similar format and will be the starting point for all future public engagement efforts. The visioning open houses will have five stations.

Community Living Rooms

In order to provide opportunity to as many people as possible in our region, the PlanRVA staff will utilize regional stakeholders, local interest groups, and nonprofit organizations to solicit input on the development of ConnectRVA2045. These forums will complement larger, region-wide workshops or meetings and stand as an opportunity for the PlanRVA staff to meet with the public where they live. These sessions can either be facilitated by PlanRVA staff or local ambassadors.

Open House

1. **Registration:** Each attendee will be asked to provide some basic demographic information to give a sense of the diversity of participants. Demographic information will be optional. Participants will also have the option to provide an email address to stay informed about the ConnectRVA2045 planning process.

2. **Background Information:** This station will provide participants some basic information about the LRTP process, past plans, regional data, and the RRTPO.

3. **Big Ideas:** In this station participants will be asked to share their grand visions for the region or for their locality. Since the focus of ConnectRVA2045 is how our region will change and adapt over the next 20+ years, participants will also be asked to think about the future of our region. Visuals such as icons, maps and photos will display various topic areas related to transportation: Congestion, Safety, Interconnectivity, Multi-Modal Transport, Bicycle and Pedestrian Connectivity, Accessibility, and Environmental Impact.

4. **Issues Identification:** This station will focus on identification of current and projected transportation issues that are important to participants. The goal is to verify issues provided by RRTPO staff and to identify additional concerns that need to be assessed through the planning process. Using a variety of maps, participants will be able to identify specific problem areas related to the big picture topics in the previous activity. Tools (sticky notes, push pins, stickers) will be available for participants to note their concerns.

5. **Evaluation:** The final station will ask participants to give feedback on the meeting and any additional comments. Fliers with information on the next public engagement event or surveys will also be distributed at this station.

Bonus: There will also be an online tool available for anyone who is not able to attend the meeting(s) in person so that vision concepts and issue identification can be recorded remotely.

Phase Two: Strategic Direction

After gathering the vision statements and issues for the region from the first phase of public engagement, PlanRVA staff will combine this public feedback with ongoing research and data analysis to establish the vision, goals and objectives for the 2045 plan. Using the identified issues and their location, staff will develop a set of regional needs geocoded to particular locations when possible.

During this phase of public engagement, the community will be asked to share their reaction to the drafted vision, goals and objectives and to validate the regional needs through face-to-face meetings, online engagement tools, and stakeholder outreach.

- **Stakeholder meetings:** Using established community organizations, PlanRVA staff will solicit direct feedback on the plan.

- **Advisory committee meetings:** Throughout the ConnectRVA2045 process the ConnectRVA advisory committee will meet regularly to provide feedback on the plan thus far. During these meetings PlanRVA staff will encourage members to share any community feedback they have received from their localities or stakeholder groups.

- **Surveys and online tools:** Citizens will be engaged online during this phase of the Connect RVA process. Depending on the feedback required, surveys may include a mapping exercise, a questionnaire, and/or an open-ended prompt.

Phase Three: Planning and Programming

The third phase of public engagement will be the culmination of all the outreach and research gathered by PlanRVA staff. During this phase the transportation needs and deficiencies, defined in the previous phases, will be converted into projects by staff and the advisory committee and broken down into categories with expected project cost. The public will be asked to help determine if this universe of projects addresses the identified needs. Engagement during this phase will be done in geographically diverse workshops.

Planning Workshops

1. **Registration:** Each attendee will be asked to provide some basic demographic information to give a sense of the diversity of participants. Demographic information will be optional. Participants will also have the option to provide an email address to stay informed about the ConnectRVA2045 planning process.

2. **Universe of projects:** PlanRVA staff will give a presentation on what has been accomplished so far in the ConnectRVA2045 plan and briefly introduce all the regional projects identified by staff and the public.

3. **Maps**: Attendees will review large scale maps and place markers on areas where projects have not been identified or where there is a need for intervention.

4. **Evaluation:** Participants will be asked to give feedback on the meeting and any additional comments. Fliers with information on the next public engagement event or surveys will also be provided.

Note: Opportunities to provide feedback online will be made available for those not able to attend the face-to-face workshops.

Phase Four: Evaluation and Prioritization

The fourth phase of public engagement will be held solely online except for any regularly scheduled advisory committee meetings. During this phase, the public will be asked to evaluate the universe of projects selected during the planning and programming stage (Phase 3) of the ConnectRVA2045 plan. The outcome of this engagement effort will be to determine which of the broad range of regional transportation projects the public feels are most important to achieve the vision for our region. This feedback will be shared with the advisory committee to supplement the technical evaluation and project scoring that PlanRVA staff performs.

The public will be asked to provide feedback through surveys distributed by email and social media, and available on the ConnectRVA2045 website.

Phase Five: Final Formal Public Review and Plan Adoption

The final phase of public engagement for the ConnectRVA2045 plan will combine all the research, analysis, and evaluation conducted by PlanRVA staff into one well designed and accessible document. This last stage of the engagement process will be the final public check and approval of the vision, goals and objectives for our region and the projects that will achieve that vision. Public engagement will be through a series of similar public meetings geographically dispersed throughout the Richmond region in an open house format. During the open house, ConnectRVA2045 staff will present all five phases of the plan through maps, graphics, visuals and the draft document. For those who cannot make the public meetings, a draft copy of the ConnectRVA2045 plan will also be available online and in a hard-copy format available in public libraries across the region.

The formal public hearing and adoption process will be held through the RRTPO advisory committees and Policy Board. The hearings will be coordinated with the regularly scheduled monthly meetings of each committee unless committee leadership determine that special meetings should be held. For regular meeting schedules, refer to the RRTPO website at https://planrva.org/transportation/meeting-agendas-minutes-and-presentations-tpo/

Public Engagement Tools

Meeting in a Box

A critical part of effective public outreach is meeting people where they are, however it is not always possible for PlanRVA staff to attend every stakeholder meeting or event throughout the region. The Connect RVA meeting in a box will provide all the necessary tools and resources for local groups to hold their own meetings regarding the LRTP process. The items in each box will be the same and can be updated to reflect the current phase of public involvement. Boxes will contain:

1. A large-scale regional map: where citizens can refer problem areas.

2. Public comment cards: where citizens can write down their feedback or concerns.

3. Advertising materials: fliers or handouts with information about the next public workshop or links to current surveys

4. Discussion questions: depending on which phase of the LRTP process the meeting takes place these discussion questions will vary but questions should be used to guide public discussion.

Key Communication Tools

- Social media: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn
- ConnectRVA2045 website
- Newspaper ads: public notices for community engagement opportunities
- Digital banners: posted on regional news websites
- Email listserv: generated emails for upcoming events or action items

Long Range Transportation Plan 2050
Public Engagement Strategy

Pathways to the Future
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PlanRVA — *Where the region comes together to look ahead.*

Richmond Regional **Transportation Planning Organization**

A central goal of this engagement process is to ensure that diverse stakeholders from communities across the region have opportunities to inform and review multiple phases of the planning process. Forward-looking, intentional touchpoints include include returning to identified groups to share the results of their feedback along the way.

The Richmond Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RRTPO), powered by PlanRVA, produces this plan every 5 years for the regional transportation and connectivity needs for a 20+ year horizon.

Visioning : *What matters most for the future of the region?*

Presenting opportunities for the public to help shape strategic goals and objectives of the plan.

Identifying Needs: *What are the transportation issues to address?*

Engaging the public to identify needs in the Richmond region with a special emphasis on equity.

Universe of Projects: *What are the possible solutions?*

Here's what we heard about your vision and needs.. Here are possible regional solutions. Formal public comment on the Universe of Projects.

Prioritizing Investments: *How can we realistically get there?*

Inviting the public to weigh in on costs, investment scenarios, and impacts and indicate preference.

Plan Impact: *How does impact data affect perception of the plan*?

Presenting expected impact (air quality, equity) of proposed projects with goal to learn what considerations the public desires in future approaches and design.

Presenting the Plan: *How does the public feel about the way forward?*

Returning to the public to share the final plan, highlighting the ways their input is reflected in the proposed vision for the future of transportation in the region.

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Goals:

Public Engagement Strategy for the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP):

1. **Engage** the public at all levels and throughout key phases of the regional strategic planning process.
2. **Ensure** that a variety of multi-modal engagement strategies are implemented to establish inclusive input, with an emphasis on hard to engage populations.
3. **Strengthen** relationships with local governments, agencies, and stakeholder groups to ensure equal outreach to all regional jurisdictions.

Audience:

The 2050 LRTP will be informed by input from individuals and groups from each member locality, and across diverse strata of the regional population. This will include required, federally mandated groups, as well as strategic and collaborative efforts to engage underserved populations or those persons with unique transportation needs and challenges.

Our aim is to focus more intently on **increasing participation with these groups**, not as a one-time invitation, but as an **ongoing effort to build relationships, and trust** and to ensure their interests and ideas are reflected in the Pathways to the Future regional strategic planning process.

Aligning Engagement to the Phases of the Process

Essential to the success of this public engagement strategy is the **alignment with key outreach phases of the LRTP plan**, where public input is critical to ensure stakeholder voice is heard and to promote public investment in the process. **In the timeline matrix (attached)**, each of these action phases leads with a process question intended to guide the focus of our work, and selection of tools to achieve meaningful engagement levels.

Ongoing throughout the process, broad education and engagement outreach will occur with **milestone assessments on stakeholder voices underrepresented in the data**.

Intentional Feedback Loop Design
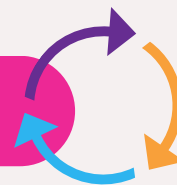
New to the 2050 LRTP engagement process is an intentional design **to return to update and re-engage stakeholder groups at designated points in the plan development.**

We will schedule three focused touchpoint engagements with identified stakeholder communities throughout the process with the following objectives**:**

1. Introduce the plan concept and collect input on vision and transportation issues.
2. Share back about how their input informed plan goals and obtain new feedback on investment scenarios and the Universe of Projects.
3. Present the final plan and its impact with opportunity for comments.

A multi-modal and equity-focused approach to outreach will use print and digital mediums, activity-based engagement tools, alongside in-person and asynchronous presentations.

Building on Locality Engagement

Data capture begins with review of the nine RRTPO member localities' prior work in these areas, to build on the input data reflected in comprehensive plans.

PlanRVA's position as a regional convener allows us to zoom out and consider needs to best inform the plan for issues of regional significance.

Measuring Engagement Success

Our focus on equitable and inclusive engagement practices means that, while specific event participation, activities, and language used may be customized for unique audiences, the core messaging and opportunities to provide individual and community input will be the equal.

We will track milestones.

Organizational Structure

- PlanRVA staff
- RRTPO Advisory Workgroup
- RRTPO Community Transportation Advisory Committee
- RRTPO Board
- Locality staff and elected officials

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
Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates, Inc.

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.

Table of Contents

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

Under-represented Community Outreach	*Pro-active Planning Education*
❑ 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	❑ 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
Improving Web Site	*Outreach Evaluation*

❑ 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
  - Interactive mapping
  - Photo simulations
  - Video clips
  - Games
  - Chat room or LISTSERV
❑ ADA compliance
	❑ Evaluate outputs
	  - Elements that comprise citizen participation outreach techniques
	  - Qualitative and quantitative
	❑ Evaluate outcomes
	  - 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

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:
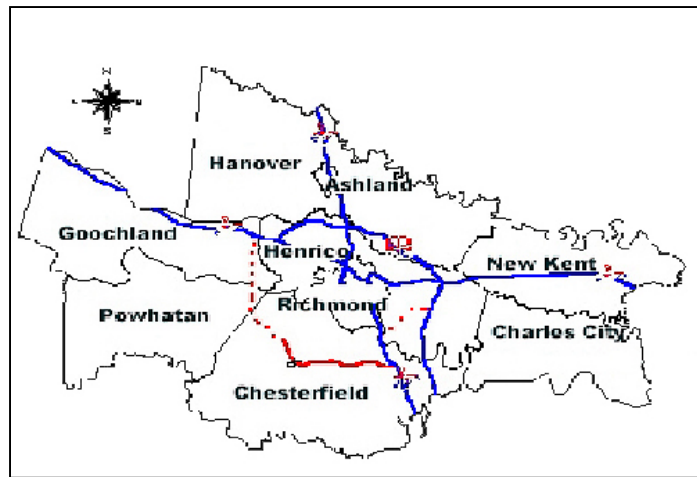
What is the Richmond MPO?

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).

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

Richmond Regional Planning District Commission Agency Staff:
Paul E. Fisher, Executive Director
Jo A. Evans, Assistant Executive Director
Peter M. Sweetland, Finance/Contract Administrator
Patricia A. Villa, Communications Coordinator

Daniel L. Lysy, Director of Transportation
Daniel E. Rudge, Principal Planner
Jin H. Lee, Senior Planner
Bradley R. Shelton, Associate Planner

Jacqueline S. Stewart, Director of Planning and Information Systems
Alan W. Gregory, Principal Planner –GIS Coordinator
Leigh R. Medford, Planning technician –GIS
Joseph M. NDanga, Senior Planner
Christine D. Holt, Senior Planner
R. Todd Rigler, Associate Planner

Katherine E. Barrett, Executive Secretary
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.
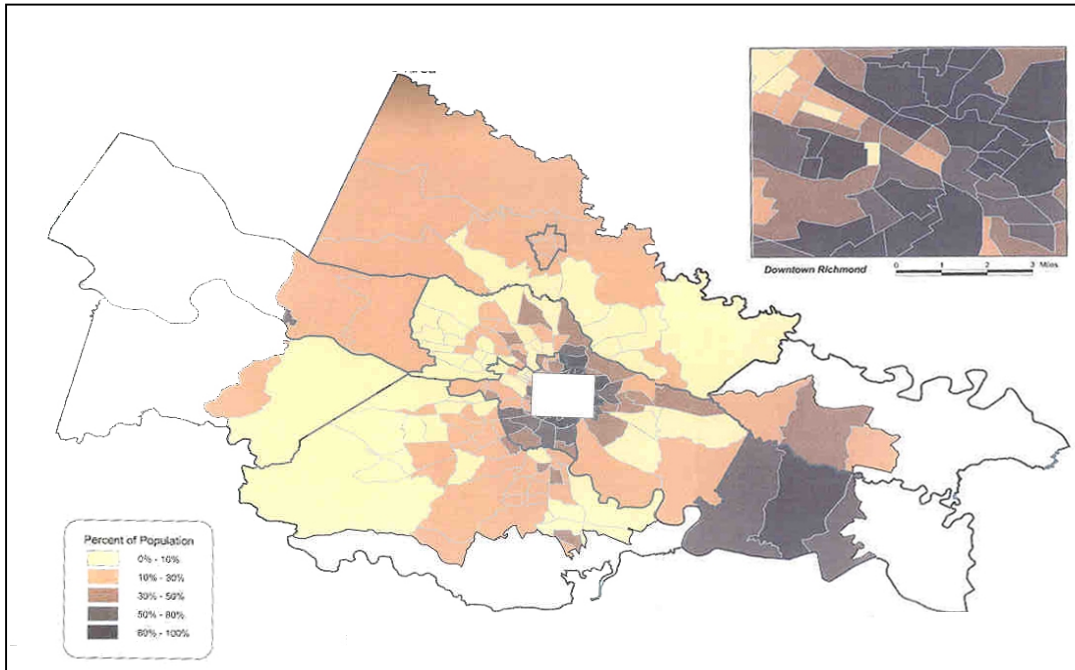
Richmond Regional MPO Area – 1990 Minority Population by Census Tract

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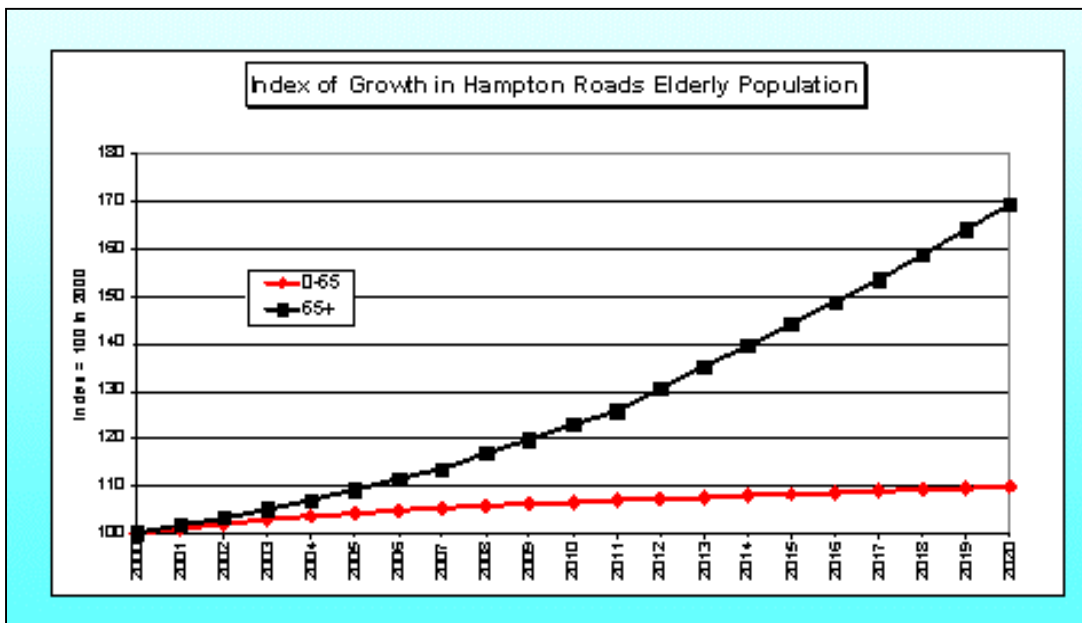
Hampton Roads faces demographic issues similar to Richmond, as its elderly population is projected to climb.

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- 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 polices and procedures in cohort MPOs.

GIS mapping to show where lower income and minority people live
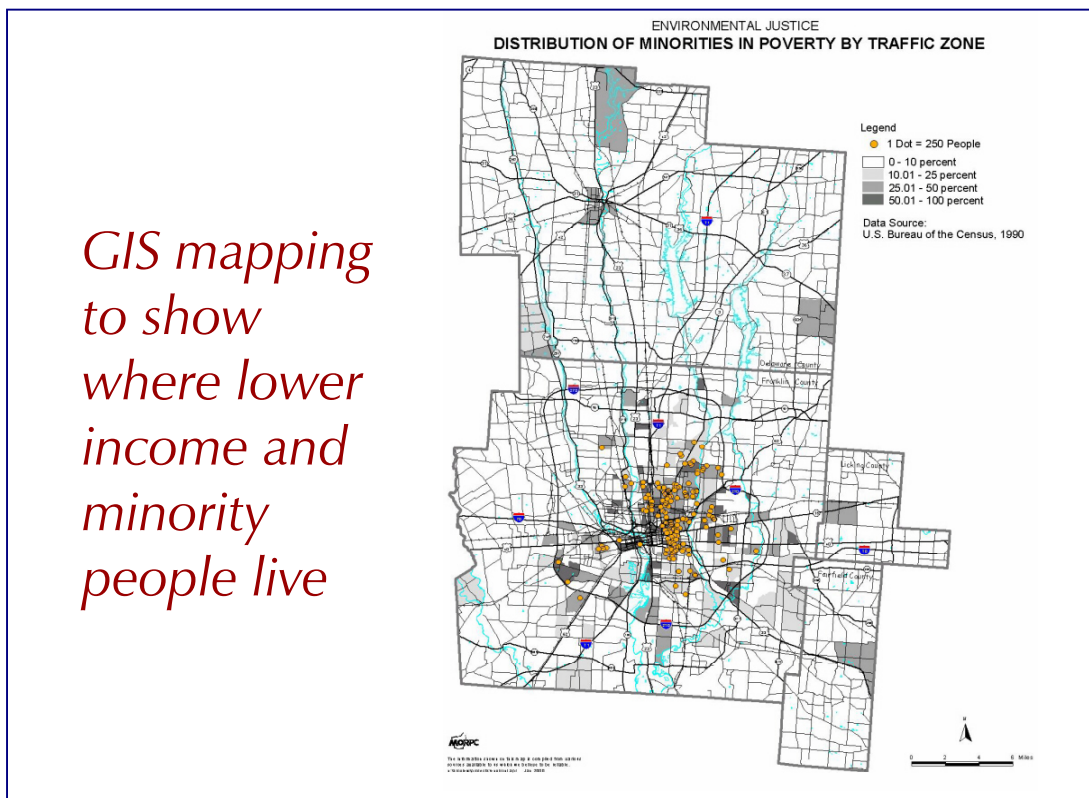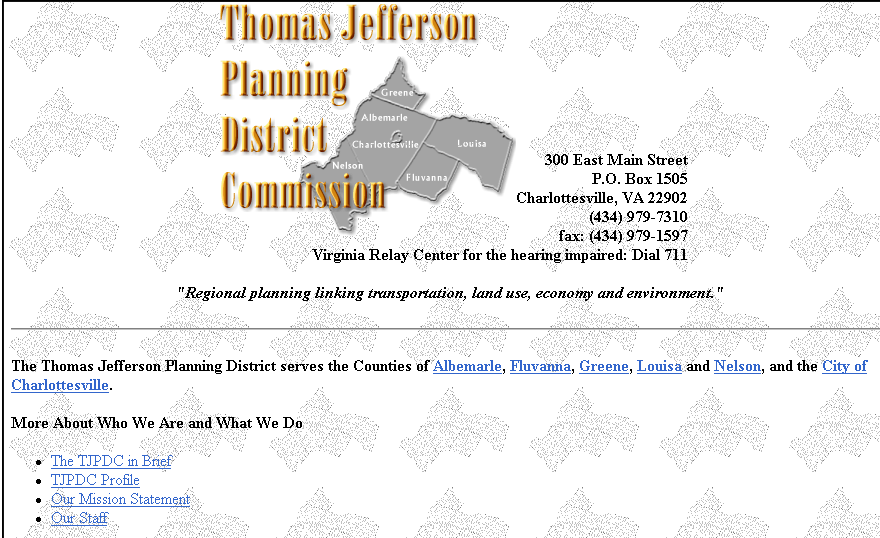
Review of Cohort MPO Citizen Participation Policies and Procedures

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.tjpdc.org/

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

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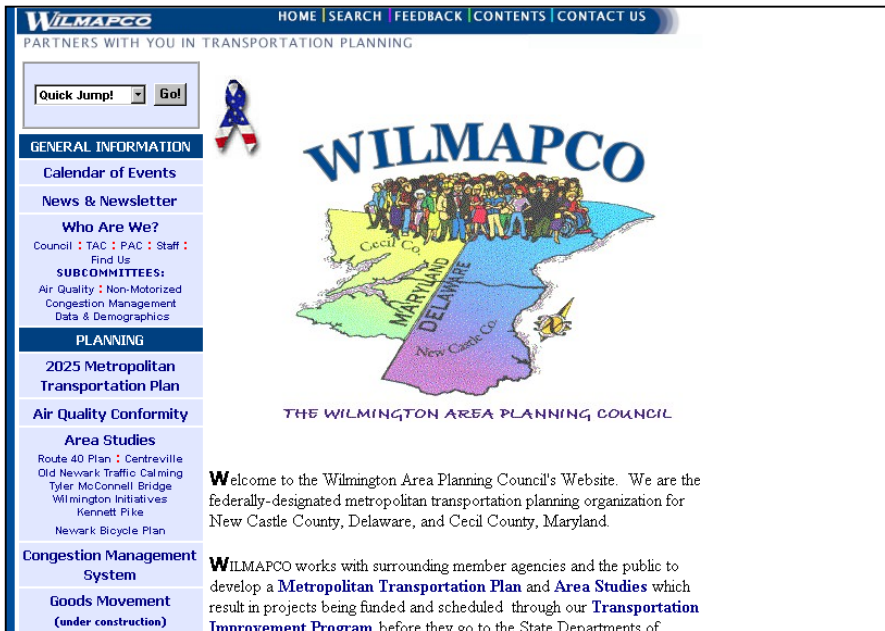
In March, 2002, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) will conduct a certification review of the transportation planning process for the Wilmington Metropolitan Area.

Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study, NY (BMTS)
http://www/gobroomecounty.com/departments/BMTS.php
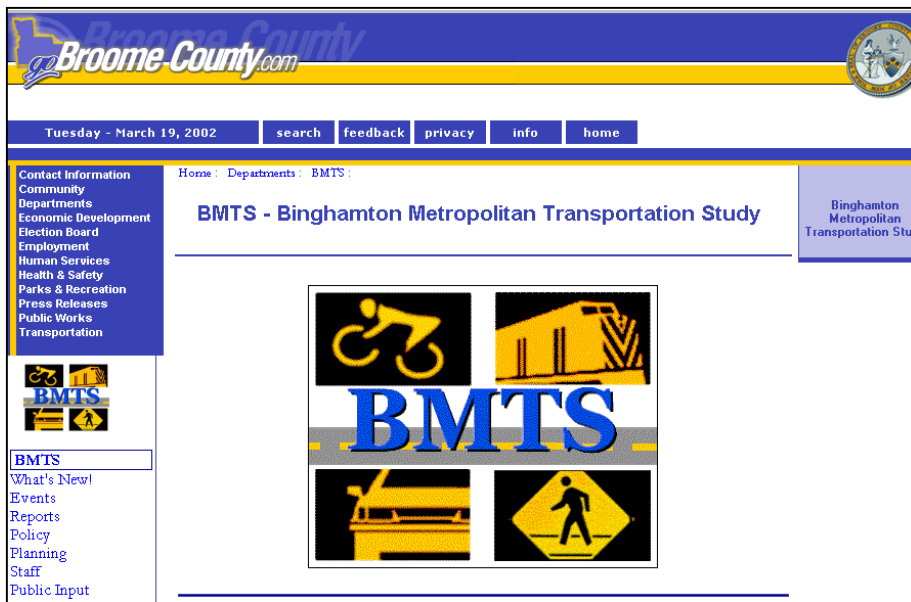
Members of BMTS include professional staff of member municipalities, engineers, planners, and public works officials

Capitol Region Council of Governments in Hartford, CT (CRCOG)
http://www.crcog.org/
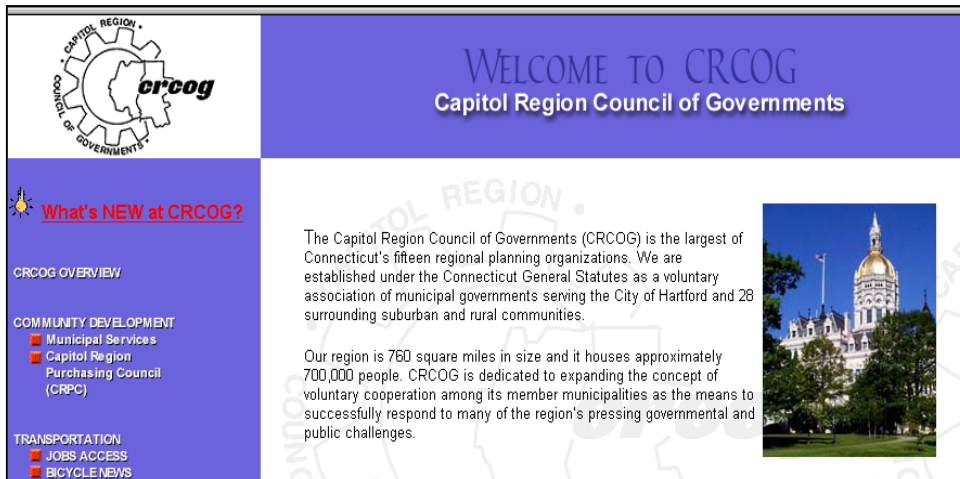
CRCOG recently adopted an action plan to address six major areas: regional vision and community, services to local governments and shared services, inter-municipal collaboration and cooperation, strengthening the City of Hartford as the core of a strong region, advocating for the region and its municipalities 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.
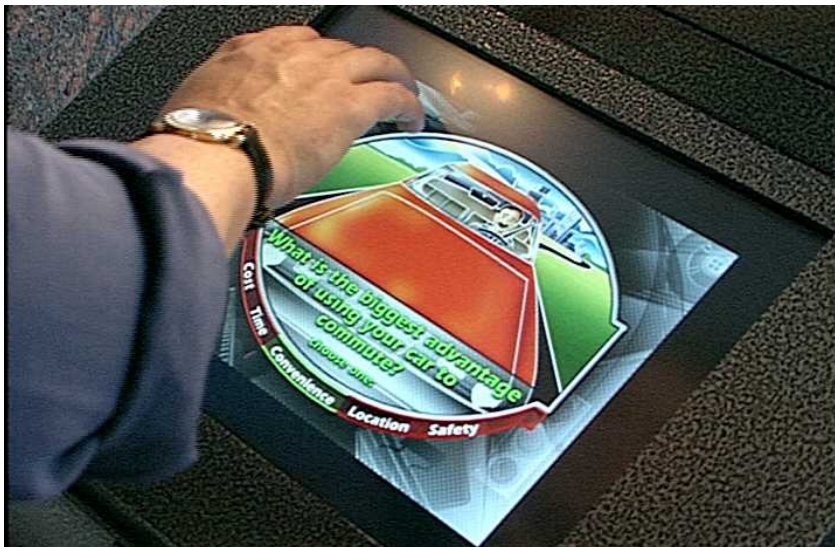
Hampton Roads Planning District Commission's Kiosk

"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)

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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.
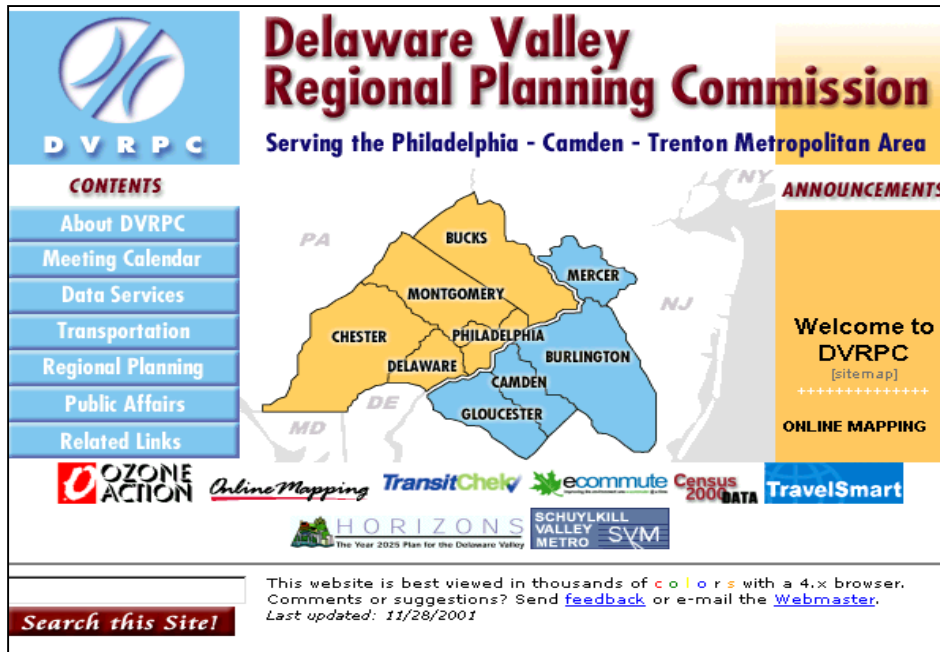
Delaware Valley Regional Website

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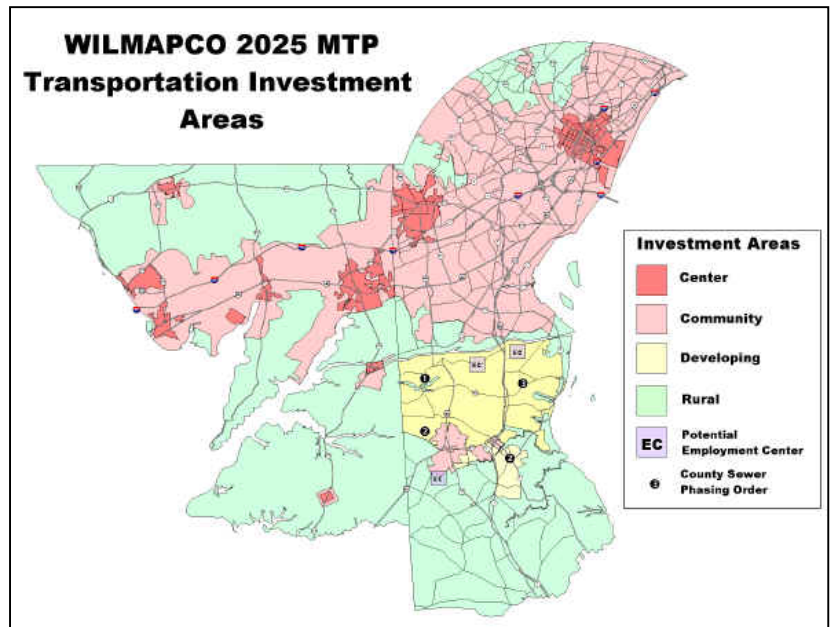
Generally the public does not know what TIA they are located in.

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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.

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.

Churchhill

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.

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[*] 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

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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.

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[*] 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.
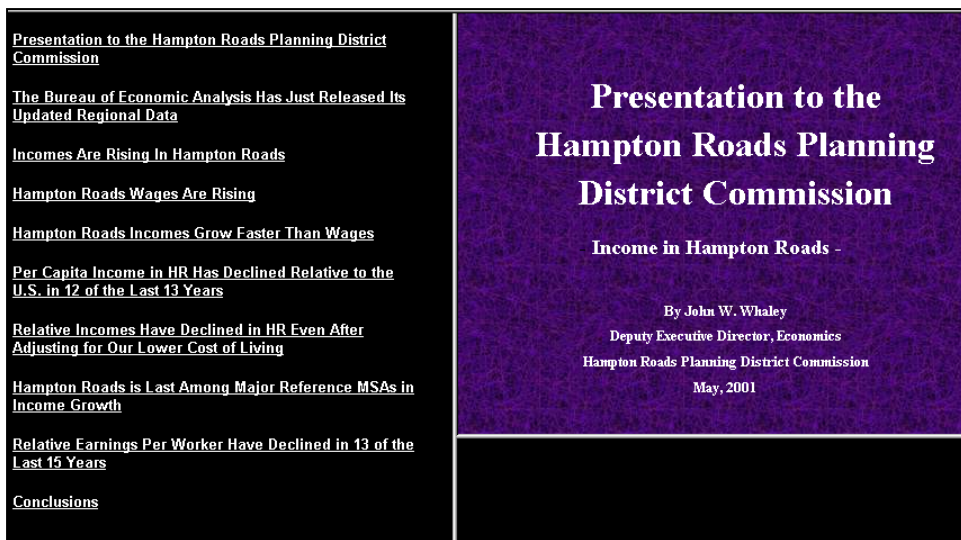
Explain the MPO's Function and Purpose
Downloadable pages that describe what the MPO does would help stress why it is significant to the Richmond community. Project team information pages could include more contact numbers, emails, and biographies, and a page containing electronic and downloadable feedback 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.

Presentation to the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission

The Bureau of Economic Analysis Has Just Released Its Updated Regional Data

Incomes Are Rising In Hampton Roads

Hampton Roads Wages Are Rising

Hampton Roads Incomes Grow Faster Than Wages

Per Capita Income in HR Has Declined Relative to the U.S. in 12 of the Last 13 Years

Relative Incomes Have Declined in HR Even After Adjusting for Our Lower Cost of Living

Hampton Roads is Last Among Major Reference MSAs in Income Growth

Relative Earnings Per Worker Have Declined in 13 of the Last 15 Years

Conclusions

Presentation to the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission

Income in Hampton Roads –

By John W. Whaley
Deputy Executive Director, Economics
Hampton Roads Planning District Commission
May, 2001

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.

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.tjpdc.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.ampo.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.

Appendix

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

Under-represented Community Outreach ❑ 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	*Pro-active Planning Education* ❑ 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

Improving Web Site
 	
 ❑ 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
    - Interactive mapping
    - Photo simulations
    - Video clips
    - Games
    - Chat room or LISTSERV
 ❑ ADA compliance
	Outreach Evaluation
	
	 ❑ Evaluate outputs
	    - Elements that comprise citizen participation outreach techniques
	    - Qualitative and quantitative
	 ❑ Evaluate outcomes
	    - 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)

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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:
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Sample Comment Card

SAMPLE COMMENT CARD

PROJECT
LOGO
HERE

PROJECT
TITLE

We Welcome Your Comments!

Please write your questions or comments
on this sheet and leave it with
a member of the Study Team.

Or mail or fax to: Name
                     Organization
                     Street Address
                     City, State, Zip
                     Fax:

PROJECT
LOGO
HERE

PROJECT
TITLE

We Welcome Your Comments!

Please write your questions or comments
on this sheet and leave it with
a member of the Study Team.

Or mail or fax to: Name
                     Organization
                     Street Address
                     City, State, Zip
                     Fax:

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 to 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 lay out 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

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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

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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

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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 *are* 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 *are* 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 *are* 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 *are* 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

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		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 philisophical 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 <u>actively</u> 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 <u>investment</u> 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 <u>GIANT</u> step by the MPO to interact and communicate between these organizations. Feedback on all levels is a major key to <u>ANY</u> organizations success. There are many public (elected officials) servants on the MPO and they are <u>NOT</u> serving the peopele 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 Chirstine).

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		

Responses According to Groups

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