



MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Public Participation Plan Stakeholder Advisory Group
Meeting Summary
LOCATION: 505 Barton Springs Road, #500, Austin, TX 78704
DATE: May 20, 2011, 1:30 pm

Attendees: Judith Aronow, Allan Cole, Jennifer Golech, Shiela Holbrook-White, David Skeen, Jim Skaggs, Alissa Schram for Juan Wah, Mia Zmud

Staff: Greg Griffin (CAMPO), Joe Willhite (Kimley-Horn)

Introduction

Griffin provided an overview of CAMPO and the Public Participation Plan project, including the need to involve the public in the process. So far, CAMPO has identified needs to differentiate public participation methods for major versus minor transportation improvements, how to best use social media, and how to make public's time investment most effective.

Willhite described the consultant's work so far, resulting in the Best Practices Participation Method Peer Review Report, which evaluates methods from the Dallas (NCTCOG), Miami and Sacramento regions.

Selected Stakeholder Questions and Comments

Zmud-What are CAMPO's staffing and resources for public involvement? Griffin responded that staff share the responsibility, but that about one third of Griffin's time is devoted to public involvement. CAMPO's financial resources for public involvement change annually for needs, and are reflected in the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

Cole-What entity or group is most effective at influencing transportation plan? Griffin responded that CAMPO Transportation Policy Board members, county commissioners, city council members, Capital Metro and Texas Department of Transportation staff; also non-profit and business organizations.

Cole-Which region's plans are considered best? Willhite responded that each have valuable practices considering local constraints. Each region is somewhat similar to Austin. NCTCOG is good at working with TxDOT, Miami is detailed and well-rounded, Sacramento does a lot for its smaller size.

Zmud-Noted performance measures for public participation vary widely. CAMPO's are prescriptive; Miami and NCTCOG are good examples.

Zmud-When have public meetings required transcripts? Griffin replied that full transcripts are not usually required, but were developed for some major public hearings. Video recording of Transportation Policy Board meetings are now regular, and Spanish translation of some materials.

Skaggs-Noted regional processes deal more with checking a box than achieving useful information from the public. Public hearings include usual suspects, not representative of the community. Surveys are targeted to achieve

an outcome defined by staff. Not enough information is given to the public for them to effectively respond. Consider asking organizations to select volunteer representatives. Willhite responded that Sacramento has a committee that is used to balance input.

Holbrook-White-Lay out a logical model of involvement. Communicate in plain English. Provide an 'express lane' for public comments, with a quick comment card to allow people to contribute and go home. Good public involvement efforts should answer: Why am I here? What is the proposal? What will be done with my comments? How will it affect the future? NCTCOG lets people self-identify if they have a disability, are elderly, minority and zip code. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) meetings could be separated by mode of interest. Specify the magnitude of improvement considered; tell people ahead of time to allow them to decide whether to participate.

Golech-Important to include social media components. Develop a best practices toolkit for public involvement.

Open house formats are helpful, as is saturating staff to provide as much 1-to-1 conversation as possible.

Skaggs-Noted that proposals never consider cost-effectiveness, which is needed.

Next Steps

The CAMPO website will be updated with new information. The next meeting planned mid-late summer; evening or weekend timing seemed to be preferred.

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