

Transportation Planning Board Public Involvement Federal Certification Review Discussion Notes

TPB Process

Long-Range Plan Engagement: A variety of public involvement activities are integrated into the development of the region's federally required long-range transportation plan.

Participation Plan: This document states the TPB's commitment to transparent communications and engagement with the public and with relevant agencies. The document is scheduled for an update in 2024.

Community Advisory Committee (CAC): The CAC is an advisory committee that represents diverse, regional viewpoints on long-term transportation policy.

Access for All Advisory Committee (AFA): The AFA is an advisory committee that identifies issues of concern to traditionally underserved communities and how these issues might be addressed within the TPB process.

What's New

"Voices of the Region": Public Engagement for Visualize 2045 (Fall 2020-Fall 2022): In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the TPB engaged thousands of the region's residents for the update of Visualize 2045. Branded "Voices of the Region," this outreach included a survey, focus groups, and QR code poster campaign. The TPB also conducted comment periods and other opportunities to participate in the plan update. Full reports from the outreach activities are available on the plan's website: <https://visualize2045.org>.

- **Public Opinion Survey** - The TPB conducted a statistically valid public opinion survey in the fall of 2020 to collect responses from randomly selected residents. The survey asked about changes in travel habits during the pandemic and explored what the region's residents want the transportation future to look like over the next 25 years. It also asked about external forces such as climate change, driverless cars, and equity concerns. This effort obtained 2,407 completed surveys, greatly exceeding the target of 2,000. Respondents had the option of an English or Spanish survey and were also given the opportunity to complete the survey over the telephone.
- **Focus Groups** - Building on the survey, the TPB in the winter of 2021 conducted 11 virtual focus groups with 112 people from around the Washington region. As a form of qualitative research, the TPB conducted these focus groups to better understand people's beliefs, experiences, and perceptions about their daily travel. Each session was created with a specific demographic or geographic focus. The TPB staff prioritized recruiting and selected participants from historically underrepresented population groups to supplement those groups that were less responsive to the survey. The focus groups helped the TPB gather qualitative data on opinions related to three topics: equity, safety, and climate change.
- **QR Code Outreach "Aspiration to Implementation"** – In the summer of 2021, public engagement for Visualize 2045 moved into an open period for receiving public input. While earlier phases of outreach were invitation-only, this open phase sought input from anyone who wanted to contribute comments. This outreach used brightly colored posters with questions and QR codes. The QR code linked to a website where participants could provide thoughts on recently implemented transportation projects, programs, and policies. The TPB installed posters and signs in over 40 locations in all the region's jurisdictions. These strategically chosen locations highlighted new projects such as a BRT line or trail that illustrated one of the TPB's seven Aspirational Initiatives.

- Public Comment Periods -- In addition to Voices of the Region activities, the TPB solicited public comment during two periods: The review the technical inputs for the air quality conformity analysis and the final results of the analysis, along with the draft update to Visualize 2045.

TPB Participation Plan (October 2020): The latest update was in 2020, fulfilling the 2019 federal certification review recommendation. Staff worked closely with the public, internal staff, the CAC, AFA, and Technical Committees. Notable changes include the development of staff, public, and federal guides; strengthened participation policy with greater emphasis on equity; and clarification on the purpose of public participation in TPB’s process. Participation plan link:
<https://www.mwcog.org/file.aspx?D=3TggQBdEC5Mnlz0VT5UX6dEGJCUNv18kf5DE6Hhs9%2b4%3d&A=QStiBBxEAZSTA%2bXXPj%2bXWd81Ae7WWZmCyGA4xPf7n30%3d>

Community Advisory Committee (CAC): The CAC (formerly the Citizen’s Advisory Committee) updated its operating procedures, name, and mission based on recommendations from stakeholders, the 2018 Public Participation evaluation, the 2019 federal certification review, and guidance from the 2020 update of the TPB Participation Plan. The TPB approved the CAC restructure on November 18, 2020. CAC restructuring memo link:
<https://www.mwcog.org/file.aspx?&A=tl0n%2b67w0XiT1NHlh5lthR6ZMqWav8TSkoZNu0Lqs1s%3d>

Public Participation Implementation Evaluation (November 2022): The TPB evaluation incorporated focus group and questionnaire findings from TPB committees and consultants involved with the Visualize 2045 long-range transportation plan update. TPB staff has begun implementing recommendations including enhancing committee member orientation with additional information about public comment opportunities and events, updating COG/TPB website content, and focusing on plain language writing in reports and outreach/social media. Evaluation link:
<https://www.mwcog.org/documents/2020/10/21/tpb-participation-plan-outreach-public-comment-tpb/>

Outreach Example - Videos to feature TPB technical assistance programs (February 2023): TPB social media accounts and the TPB website shared four videos highlighting local transit, accessibility, and Road Safety Audit projects supported by the TPB’s Transportation Land-Use Connections and Regional Roadway Safety Program. Video link:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M1Q6gEQnZGM>

Products/Studies/Process

- Voices of the Region reports on three activities: Public opinion survey report, February 2021; focus groups report, November 2021; “Aspiration to Implementation” report (QR code outreach),
- Public Participation Plan Implementation Evaluation Report, November 2022
- 2024 Public Participation Plan Update in Fall 2023
- 5 AFA meetings per year/11 CAC meetings per year