
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MONTHLY REPORT

June 15, 2022
Ashley Hutson, CAC Chair

The TPB Community Advisory Committee (CAC) met on Thursday, June 9, for an online-only meeting. The committee discussed the finalization of the Visualize 2045 long-range plan update, public engagement for the plan update, and an upcoming joint meeting in July between the members of the TPB and CAC.

Update on the Finalization of Visualize 2045

Stacy Cook of the TPB staff gave a briefing on the finalization of the Visualize 2045 long-range transportation plan. She provided an overview of the plan, including its purpose and development process, and also spoke about the incorporation of public comments into the final plan document.

Over the last two years, the CAC has received periodic presentations on the plan update. Drawing upon these briefings, CAC member comments and questions included the following:

- ***It's important to understand how the plan ties together state- and local-level processes.*** A member said she found it very important to understand that the long-range plan pulls together projects that have gone through state- and local-level processes that are quite different from each other. She said the TIP briefing, conducted in April, was helpful in explaining these different processes.
- ***Equity Emphasis Areas are an effective tool.*** A member said she appreciates the use of EEAs in the long-range plan. She said they are effective, geographically based way to look at equity.
- ***Data are helpful.*** A member said she welcomed the use of data in the plan and she would like to see it used even more. Data should not exclusively determine outcomes, she said, but data are helpful in supporting narratives and policies that underlie the plan.

Briefing and Discussion About Public Engagement for Visualize 2045

John Swanson of TPB staff briefed the committee about public engagement for the long-range plan update, which was branded *Voices of the Region*. He said these efforts included three major activities: a public opinion survey, focus groups, and outreach via QR codes. Mr. Swanson probed the committee's impressions of these activities: What seems to have worked? What didn't? What lessons can we learn for the next plan update?

CAC member and observer questions and comments included the following:

- ***Voices of the Region effectively used a variety of tools.*** Members complimented the TPB staff's use of different tools to reach different audiences and seek different types of input. They had the following specific comments about the approaches used:
 - ***The survey should be repeated.*** Several members said that it would be interesting and useful to repeat the public opinion survey in the near future, particularly once the pandemic is over.

- ***Consider releasing the results of public outreach earlier in the planning process.*** An attendee suggested the TPB should make the results of public opinion research available to decision makers earlier in the planning process so that the information has more opportunity to actually influence the content of the plan while it is under development.
- ***Don't forget the importance of education as part of public involvement.*** A member suggested the TPB might do more to educate the public about the impacts of local decisions on regional outcomes. For example, he said, the public should better understand how decisions about zoning or development, which often appear completely local, can affect transportation demand across a broader geographic area.
- ***Public comments that are needs-oriented could be useful for local and state planners.*** A member noted that much of the public comment received through the Voices of the Region engagement was related to people's general needs and not to specific solutions. She encouraged the board to make sure that project planners and local elected officials are aware of this input, particularly as the comments received relate to an unfiltered articulation of people's concerns that are not biased by their attitudes toward specific projects.
- ***The concerns of road users should be more fully included in the future.***
 - ***More outreach to drivers.*** A member noted that the response rates for the *Voices of the Region* activities were high, but she observed that responses from people who are more "road-oriented" were much lower. She suggested that future outreach might find ways to better incorporate the opinions of people who primarily drive.
 - ***Focus on congestion.*** Another member suggested that information about worsening congestion, and the public's attitudes about congestion, should be more prominently featured in the plan and tied to concerns about economic development.
 - ***Tolls are an equity concern.*** Another member observed that many low-income people in the region have no option but to drive and for them, tolls are a question of personal economics. However, she said, planners often talk about tolling's effects on professionals who can easily change their schedules to accommodate varying prices.
- ***Don't forget the outer jurisdictions.*** Members acknowledged that it can be challenging to get input from people in the outer jurisdictions. But, they said, these perspectives deserve to be heard. Among other things, members suggested that discussions about transit in the region are too DC-centric. They suggested there should be more focus on connections between suburbs and business complexes.

Preparation for Joint Meeting with TPB Officers

At the end of their June meeting, committee members informally discussed plans for next month's CAC meeting, on July 14, 6-8 PM, which will be a special joint session with the CAC and the members of the TPB. The session is being planned to strengthen the relationship between the TPB and the committee.

This meeting will feature short presentations from the three TPB officers – Chair Sebesky, Vice Chair Collins, and Vice Chair Henderson – in which they will describe how they balance their work on regional issues at the TPB with the local interests they represent as elected officials. After a full group discussion, the session will break into three groups, giving all participants – CAC and TPB members alike – the chance to discuss regional transportation issues that pertain to their own states.

The committee encourages all TPB members to attend this special July meeting. The meeting will be conducted virtually via Microsoft Teams. A link will be provided on the CAC meeting agenda, which will be posted on the COG/TPB website.

Other Business

- Lyn Erickson of the TPB staff provided an overview of the upcoming TPB agenda.

Attendees

Members

Ashley Hutson, Chair

Nancy Abeles

Ra Amin

Michael Artson

Lorena Rios

Emmet Tydings

Elisa Walton

Staff

Rachel Beyerle

Lyn Erickson

John Swanson

Other

Bill Orleans

Bill Pugh