

ITEM 11 – Information

April 18, 2018

Visualize 2045: Phase 2 Public Outreach

Staff Recommendation: Briefing on nine public forums that are planned in April and May to obtain input for Visualize 2045 and other planning activities.

Issues: None

Background: The board will be briefed on nine public forums that are planned in April and May to obtain input for Visualize 2045. The board will be asked to help spread the word and provide other assistance for these events, which will be held throughout the region.



MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board
FROM: John Swanson, Transportation Planner
SUBJECT: Public Forums on Visualize 2045
DATE: April 12, 2018

This memorandum provides an update on a series of public forums on Visualize 2045 that are currently underway. Staff is seeking support from TPB members to help us maximize turnout and reach out to a broad cross-section of community members.

BACKGROUND

Visualize 2045 is the federally required long-range transportation plan for the National Capital Region. Scheduled for final approval in October 2018, the plan will identify all regionally significant transportation investments planned through 2045 and will provide detailed analysis to help decision makers and the public “visualize” the region’s future under current plans. The plan will focus on regionally significant road and transit projects, and will also highlight bicycle and pedestrian projects and key land-use issues facing the region. The plan will take a multimodal approach, relying not on any one travel mode to accommodate future population growth and address the region’s diverse transportation challenges.

Public outreach is being integrated into the development of Visualize 2045 over a two-year period during calendar years 2017 and 2018. During Phase I outreach, in 2017, staff conducted an online survey on public attitudes toward transportation, which generated more than 6,000 responses. Two methods were used to gather feedback: One method polled a geographically representative sample through a randomized mailing, and the other method reached out to all residents of the region through public events, social media, and other outreach.

Phase II outreach, which was detailed in a memo to the TPB last month, includes a series of public forums in April and May, and open houses in September.

OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC FORUMS

Staff is planning nine public forums throughout the region in April and May. In these sessions, we will ask residents to “visualize” our transportation future with a focus on the seven initiatives that were endorsed by the TPB at the end of last year. The primary purpose of these sessions will be to obtain information about how the public believes we might implement our unfunded priorities.

To graphically depict the seven endorsed initiatives, TPB staff has developed an online presentation in the format of a GIS story map, which uses text, maps, illustrations, and other graphics. The story

map will be used as a live presentation tool at the forums and is also available on the Visualize 2045 website: visualize2045.org.

A common format has been devised for the forums, which will typically last two hours. Following opening presentations, participants will use Poll Everywhere software to answer questions about their travel patterns and their opinions about transportation. Using their cell phones to respond to the questions, the participants' answers will be instantaneously tallied in graphs that will be projected on a screen. This polling helps to provide a baseline for understanding who is in the room and warms up participants for group discussion.

The majority of time at the forums will be devoted to group discussions at four tables where participants will have the chance to share their experiences, hopes, and concerns. Each table will have a facilitator and a scribe who will take notes. Discussions at each table, which will focus on specific initiatives, will be limited to 15-minute periods. At the end of each period, participants will be asked to move to another table and another topic. They will have the opportunity to provide comments at three tables.

The qualitative feedback elicited from the forums will be summarized in a discrete report and also reflected in the public involvement chapter/appendix of the long-range plan. More broadly, the forums will serve to raise public awareness of the TPB and the regional planning process.

In September, as part of the final public comment period for Visualize 2045, the TPB will conduct three open houses (in D.C., Maryland and Virginia) in which we will feature displays about draft elements of the plan. Planning for these open houses will begin in June 2018.

UPDATE ON FORUMS

On Wednesday, April 11, the TPB conducted its first public forum for Visualize 2045 in Frederick, Maryland. More than 35 participants attended the session. TPB Vice Chair Kelly Russell played a lead role in helping to organize the event. Mayor Michael O'Connor and County Executive Jan Gardner provide opening remarks. Participants remained quite engaged throughout the evening and the majority stayed to the end of the two-hour session.

The following locations and dates have been scheduled for the other forums:

- College Park, April 18
- La Plata, April 25
- Rockville, April 26
- D.C., May 1
- Vienna, May 8
- Leesburg, May 16
- Woodbridge, May 23
- Arlington, TBD

For details regarding these upcoming events, please visit visualize2045.org/participate.

GETTING THE WORD OUT

We are currently contacting TPB members, staff of member jurisdictions, and community leaders to help publicize the forums. Staff recently sent “Ambassador Kits” to the TPB, Technical Committee, and Citizens Advisory Committee members which provide ready-to-use messages – sample emails, tweets, etc. – that can be easily tailored and forwarded to organizations and individuals who may be interested in attending or knowing about the forums.

For more information about outreach for the forums, please contact Abigail Zenner at azenner@mwkog.org.

For information about the forums in general, please contact John Swanson at jswanson@mwkog.org.