

Discussion Questions and Background for Citizens Advisory Council Meeting

U.S. DOT Certification Review of the Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Area Transportation Planning Process

Federal Team Meeting with the 2010 Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

Time: 6:00 p.m. during scheduled CAC meeting
April 15, 2010

Location: Training Center
777 North Capital Street, NE
Washington, D.C. 20002
(202) 962-3200

Purpose: The Federal review team will participate in the CAC scheduled meeting and engage in open dialogue with members.

The discussion will address how successfully the public is able to participate in the transportation planning process in the metropolitan area.

- What methods and procedures are available to the public to participate?
- How successful are these methods?
- To what extent does the public contribute to: the transportation planning process, development of policies, and regional decision-making?

Format: The Federal review team will distribute discussion questions in advance to the CAC. The Federal Team will introduce each question and lead an informal discussion with CAC members.

Note: the focus is on the planning and decision making process and not on the merits of specific projects or decisions.

Background: Every four years the U.S. DOT, FHWA, and FTA conduct a Certification Review of the metropolitan transportation planning process. The Certification formalizes continuing oversight and evaluation of the planning process by U.S. DOT to ensure that the planning requirements of 23 U.S.C. 134 and 49 U.S.C. 5303 to 5305 are being satisfactorily implemented.

The Certification provides an opportunity to provide advice and guidance to enhance the planning process and improve the quality of transportation decisions. Although FHWA and FTA routinely interact with the metropolitan planning organization and its partner agencies in reviewing and approving planning products and providing technical assistance, this formal external review can be a catalyst to improve the effectiveness of the planning process and its ability to address major issues facing the metropolitan area.

The Federal team will use the following questions to guide discussion. At the meeting, please be prepared to identify yourself and, if applicable, what organization you represent.

1. How effective is public involvement in transportation planning conducted by the National Capital Region TPB and its partner transportation agencies?

2. What methods to encourage involvement are working and what are not? Please provide examples and explanations.
3. How does public involvement assist the region to reach consensus on difficult and controversial issues related to transportation?
4. How can public views successfully be communicated to decision-makers in an area as large and complex as this?
5. Please describe situations where public involvement has had an impact on the planning process and decisions reached and where it has not. For example, consider how involvement contributes to developing strategies in the long-range plan, selecting investments in the TIP, or any other activities.
6. How might the TPB improve public involvement? For example, consider changes to the structure of advisory groups, use of media, use of facilitators, or efforts to reach a broad range of groups, including minority and low-income communities.

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