

# TPB PARTICIPATION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION EVALUATION

TPB Technical Committee, December 2, 2022



National Capital Region  
Transportation Planning Board



# BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

- TPB contracted with Foursquare Integrated Transportation Planning, Inc. (Foursquare ITP) through ICF to conduct a review of the TPB's public participation implementation activities from 2019-2022.
- The final report documents the research effort, findings, and recommendations from Foursquare ITP's evaluation.
- This presentation provides an overview of the report and highlights key findings that are relevant to the TPB Technical Committee.

# RESEARCH APPROACH

- Material Review
  - Participation policies and goals
  - Public outreach activities
    - Ongoing
    - Visualize 2045
- Focus Groups
- Rubric Evaluation
- Recommendations



# RESEARCH APPROACH

- Material Review
- Focus Groups
  - Community Advisory Committee
  - Access for All Advisory Committee
  - TPB Technical Committee
  - Project Implementation Staff
- Rubric Evaluation
- Recommendations



# RESEARCH APPROACH

- Material Review
- Focus Groups
- Rubric Evaluation
  - Public Participation Plan
    - Policy Goals
    - Principles for Engagement
  - Title VI Program and Plan
  - COG Accommodations Policy
- Recommendations



# RESEARCH APPROACH

- Material Review
- Focus Groups
- Rubric Evaluation
- Recommendations
  - Status updates on recommendations from the 2019 evaluation provided by TPB staff
  - New recommendations regarding:
    - Purpose and goals of public participation
    - Current practices and tools
    - New strategies, approaches, and tools



# SELECTED OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



Evaluation Factors



Observations



Recommendations

# EVALUATION FACTOR: PROMOTING A REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE

(Policy Goal From Participation Plan)



Promote a regional perspective. The TPB will communicate how regional transportation planning plays a vital role in coordinating planning activities on many levels. The TPB will also work to connect the public to where their input can have the biggest impact, which is often on the local or state level.



# OBSERVATIONS



- This goal did not generate much discussion during the focus groups, which was potentially due to the goal being unclear or difficult to measure/assess.
- A topic of discussion in the TPB Technical Committee focus group:
  - *“It's hard for TPB to respond meaningfully to comments when comments often focus on projects, but project development is more the role of local and state agencies. It's rarely appropriate for public comment at TPB to overrule local processes.”*
- “A Citizens Guide to Transportation Decision Making in the Washington Metropolitan Region” describes the TPB’s role in regional transportation policy.
  - The information in this publication is not readily available on the TPB’s website where people interested in public participation may find it.

# RECOMMENDATIONS



- Consider editing the policy goal to clarify that the TPB solicits input from the public on regionwide policy matters.
  - Add a sentence following the first sentence, to read: “Solicit input and facilitate discussion on regionwide policy matters.”
  - This will help clarify that the TPB solicits input from the public on regional matters at a policy-level, which can help manage expectations and clarifies the role that the public will be playing.

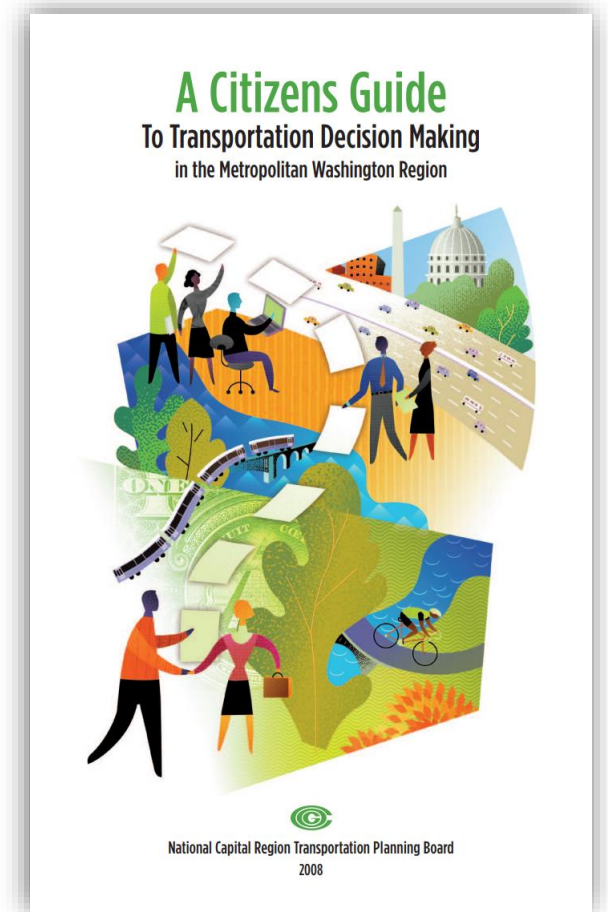
*The goal with the recommended addition would read:*

Promote a regional perspective. The TPB will communicate how regional transportation planning plays a vital role in coordinating planning activities on many levels. **Solicit input and facilitate discussion on regionwide policy matters.** The TPB will also work to connect the public to where their input can have the biggest impact, which is often on the local or state level.

# RECOMMENDATIONS



- Explain on the TPB website how the public can get involved at the local and regional level in the context of the regional transportation decision making process.
- Capture the most relevant points from “A Citizens Guide to Transportation Decision Making in the Washington Metropolitan Region” on the TPB website so people can better understand where their input is most appropriate and will be most effective.



# EVALUATION FACTOR: PLAIN LANGUAGE

(Principle for Engagement from Participation Plan)



Staff strive to use plain language and prepare their materials in a variety of ways. This will make TPB work accessible and understandable to as many people as possible and serve as a foundation for meaningful participation.

# OBSERVATIONS



- Tweets and talking points in the Visualize 2045 Ambassador Kit contained acronyms and technical terms.
- Resources (i.e., Visualize 2045 website “Requirements” page) that provided context for understanding of technical terms may not have been apparent to visitors.
- “Getting Involved and Public Comment” page on the TPB website scored a grade reading level of 10.7\* and reading ease score of 44.\*\*
  - The goal for grade reading level is 7<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade.
  - The goal for reading ease is 60-70 out of 100.

*\*Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Test*

*\*\*Flesch Reading Ease Test*

# RECOMMENDATIONS



- The TPB and Visualize 2045 websites, particularly web pages about public participation and meetings, should be reviewed for plain language and updated accordingly.
- The TPB’s social media posts should be written using plain language and avoiding acronyms without explanation.
- The Participation Plan should be updated to include resources and examples of how to use plain language within the context of TPB’s work.
- Make resources explaining technical terms more easily discoverable on the websites (e.g., update the name of the “Requirements” web page).

# EVALUATION FACTOR: GATHERING INPUT FROM DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES

(Policy Goal From Participation Plan)



Gather input from diverse perspectives. The TPB will encourage participation from diverse constituencies and will provide for discussion about transportation issues that are responsive to the interests of different constituencies.

In addition to encouraging input from people with different racial, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds, the TPB will seek the perspectives of people who use all transportation modes and come from all areas of the region.

# OBSERVATIONS



- Visualize 2045 survey consultants noted that more people could be incentivized to participate in surveys in the future with a post-incentive in addition to the pre-incentive that was used this past time.
- From the TPB Technical Committee focus group:
  - “While difficult, so much more can be done as these are often the groups that require the most effort to reach and enable attendance at meetings, etc. Every effort must be made to get input from historically disadvantaged communities and [those with the greatest] need.”
- Focus group participants discussed the need for more proactive accessible non-English accommodations and varied meeting times for those with different work schedules.



# RECOMMENDATIONS



- Offer both pre- and post-incentives for taking surveys or participating in focus groups.
- Explore the feasibility of oversampling EEAs for surveys.
- Proactively provide accommodations like captioning, ASL or Spanish interpretation, etc.
- Always provide a virtual participation opportunity for meetings.
- Plan events to occur during a variety of times of the day and days of the week.

# Q&A AND DISCUSSION





# TPB STAFF UPDATE