

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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Planning Session on Public Outreach For the Update of the Region's Long-Range Transportation Plan October 15, 2009

OUTREACH TECHNIQUES

The following list provides a broad menu of outreach techniques that could be used as part of this year's outreach strategy for the region's long-range transportation plan.

Briefings: informational meetings with a community group or leader.

Conferences, Workshops, Retreats: special meetings to inform people and solicit input on specific policy issues, plans, or projects; range from a subset of a larger meeting to a large, multi-day event.

Charette: problem-oriented meeting to resolve an issue within a specified time-limit; participants work together intensely, often in groups, to reach a solution.

Citizens Jury: a panel of citizens, or jury, convenes to examine an issue; jury hears from expert witnesses and is able to deliberate together on the issue and ultimately present recommendations to decision-makers and the public.

Deliberative Polling: combines deliberation in small group discussions with random sampling to provide public consultation for public policy issues.

Electronic Town Meeting: informal public meeting that uses technology to connect people in multiple locations in real-time; community members are invited to attend, voice opinions, and hear the responses from public figures and elected officials.

Exhibits/Performances/Arts: Public, sometimes participatory, exposition of objects or talent.

Focus Groups: a small, professionally facilitated group discussion with a selected group of individuals; regards transportation as a product that can be improved and the public as customers for this market.

Games and Simulations: vividly demonstrate issues and consequences of decisions in a nontraditional way; displays of information that generate public positions or reactions to agency actions and gather information for use in the process; can be electronic.

Key Person Interview: one-on-one talk about a specific issue with an individual recognized or a designated community leader.

Leadership and Training Development: educational workshops that provide information on policies, processes, and area-specific topics.

Mailing: announcements of upcoming events, meeting invitations, newsletters, summary reports and other information about its activities sent through postal mail or email.

Media and Messaging: inform customers about projects and programs through newspapers, radio, television and videos, billboards, posters and variable message signs, mass mailings of brochures or newsletters, and distribution of fliers.

Open Forum Hearings/Open Houses: informal setting in which people get information about a plan or project; no set, formal agenda.

Open Space Technology: a public meeting where participants construct the agenda and schedule during the meeting itself; four basic principles include: (1) Whoever attends = correct audience, (2) whatever happens is all that could have, (3) whenever it starts is the right time, (4) When it is over, it is over

Public Information Materials: materials that provide information about a transportation investment that is underway or in the planning stage; publications may be targeted for different audiences.

Public Hearing: held prior to a decision point; gathers community comments and positions from all interested parties for public record and input into decisions.

Public Meeting: presents information to the public and obtain informal input from community residents.

Role Playing: participants play out characters in a predefined “situation” dealing with controversial aspects of transportation planning and project development; session is followed by an evaluation of the interaction and the statements made.

Samoan Circle: a type of “fishbowl” activity; a leaderless meeting that has people seated in a circle within a circle, only those in the inner circle are allowed to speak. The inner circle represents all the different viewpoints present, and all others must remain silent.

Site Visits: trips taken by community residents, officials, agencies, and consultants to proposed or actual project areas, corridors, etc.

Storytelling: a tool for collective listening and communication; people may present ideas about place and experience and define their roles in those contexts.

Surveys (telephone, mail, web): systematic collection of data from a sample population using a standardized questionnaire; a method of public opinion polling using telephone numbers to contact respondents.

Town Hall: informal public meeting where community members are invited to attend, voice opinions, and hear the responses from public figures and elected officials.

Transportation Fair: an event used to interest community members in transportation and in specific projects or programs; typically a one-day event and heavily promoted.

Video Techniques: use recorded visual and oral messages to present information to the public, primarily via tapes or laser disks.

Visual Art Techniques: include drawing, sculpting, modeling, graphic rendering and painting; can work with basic planning processes in workshops and meetings or specifically in the form of community mural projects or illustrations during visioning programs.

Web-based Activity (Blogs/Social media): Using the Internet to facilitate interaction or networking among many different people. Short for “weblog”; a blog is website that displays in chronological order the postings by one or more individuals and usually has links to comments on specific postings.