

ITEM 14 - Information

January 18, 2006

Briefing on Improving CLRP Information and Proposed Public Involvement Activities

Staff

Recommendation: Receive briefing on improving plan information and proposed enhanced public outreach activities.

Issues: None

Background: At the July 20, 2005 meeting, the Board was briefed on proposed consultant assistance to staff for conducting outreach activities to engage community leaders and those traditionally not involved in the planning process; obtaining broad and representative citizen input on key issues facing transportation planning in the region; and developing more effective and timely information on the Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP).

MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board

FROM: John Swanson, Senior Transportation Planner

SUBJECT: New Public Involvement Activities for 2006

DATE: January 12, 2006

A number of activities are being launched in 2006 to improve public information and outreach related to the region's Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP). These efforts will focus on three key goals:

- *Engage* and *educate* community leaders, particularly those not traditionally involved in the process.
- Develop more effective and timely public *information* on the plan.
- Obtain representative citizen *input* on key issues.

Current Public Involvement Activities

The TPB's Public Involvement Process, adopted in 1998, provides a framework for current TPB public involvement activities. These include:

- Structures: Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC); Access for All Advisory Committee (AFA)
- Procedures: Public Involvement Process, including public comment periods
- TPB Website
- Documents: *TPB News*, *The Region*, *Citizens Guide*, special publications
- Public Meetings: Mostly sponsored by the Citizens Advisory Committee

Staff has made a number of public outreach improvements in the past two years, including the online public comment form, user-friendly CLRP brochures, and the recent public forums on the TPB's scenario study, which were sponsored by the CAC.

Initiating New Efforts

A number of factors contributed to the current plans to enhance the TPB's public involvement efforts. The new federal transportation reauthorization (SAFETEA-LU) calls for expanded citizen outreach, including the development of a Public Involvement

Plan. The advisory committees of the TPB—the CAC and AFA— have made recommendations for public outreach improvements. And mostly importantly, the triennial update of the Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP) in 2006 will provide new opportunities to improve public information and implement new public outreach.

In July of 2005, a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) was issued to solicit consultant support for improving public involvement activities. Respondents to the RFQ were asked, among other things, to provide information showing: experience and familiarity with the regional transportation and land use issues confronting the TPB; experience and familiarity with public involvement techniques and community leadership development; and experience in designing and implementing workshops, training programs and seminars.

Two organizations were awarded contracts in response to the RFQ: The Academy of Leadership Foundation and Fitzgerald & Halliday. The total budget for this consultant support has been set at \$100,000 through June of 2006.

Planned Activities

A number of new activities are being initiated:

- ***Community Leadership Institute***

Through a series of three half-day workshops, the Institute will work with community leaders in the Washington Metropolitan area to create a deeper understanding of long-range and regional transportation planning. The Institute will develop their knowledge, skills and literacy in transportation-related issues and will empower them to get involved and act as ambassadors for the regional planning process.

The Institute will take place in the late spring of 2006. Three half-day sessions will focus on the following topics:

- Overview of Regional Transportation Decision Making
- The Land Use/Transportation Connection
- Transportation Funding: Continuing Challenges, New Opportunities

- ***Improvements in CLRP Information***

A series of improvements are being planned to make CLRP information more accessible. Activities will include:

- Create a new identity for the CLRP (branding)
- Provide more accessible web and printed information
 - o Web-based CLRP homepage
 - o Online project database
- Provide user-friendly analysis
- Clearly explain project selection

- ***Public Input Improvements***

New methods will be developed to make public input more useful to decision-makers through the transportation planning process.

Public input improvements are still under development. They may include:

- Making the CAC scenario forums a more interactive means for getting public input;
- Improving the public comment process and documentation of comments received.
- Soliciting input from a broader array of citizens, including the use of public opinion polls.