TPB PARTICIPATION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION EVALUATION

TPB Access for All Advisory Committee, December 16, 2022

FOURSQUARE ITP

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 AFA.

RESEARCH APPROACH

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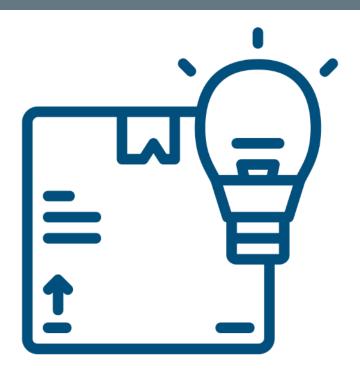- ## Recommendations

RESEARCH APPROACH

- Material Review

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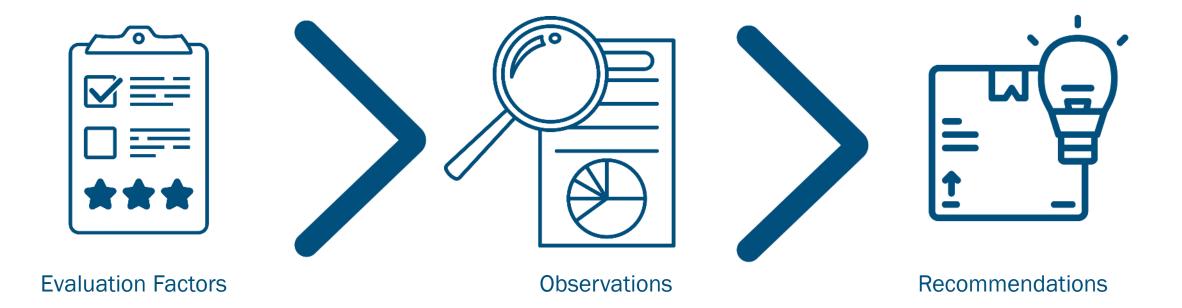
- Rubric Evaluation

- 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:
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

- From the AFA focus group:
  - "I think TPB has done an incredible outreach job of being more inclusive and meeting people where they are."

- 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."

- 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.

- Focus group participants discussed the need for 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.

- 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.

EVALUATION FACTOR: EQUITY PERSPECTIVE
(Principle for Engagement From Participation Plan)

Staff strive to incorporate an equity perspective into their work activities so that work acknowledges and seeks to accommodate different contexts, experiences, and abilities.

This equity perspective is informed by COG's Title VI Plan and Program, the TPB Equity Statement, and the TPB's Equity Emphasis Areas. It acknowledges past inequities and barriers to involvement and seeks to be more just.

OBSERVATIONS

- The TPB tracks race and ethnicity data of members of its advisory committees but it does not report on other demographics. While listed as underrepresented populations in the Title VI Program, the TPB does not maintain data on CAC or AFA membership of people with disabilities or limited English proficiency.

- Focus group participants discussed the need for more proactive accessible non-English accommodations.

- AFA meeting materials are often provided in alternative formats (plain text Word documents) for those who require them. Meetings of the CAC and of the TPB do not typically offer similar materials.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- As the TPB already does with regard to race and ethnicity, consider tracking other demographic data (such as age, languages spoken, and other elements that are mentioned in the Title VI Program) in the advisory committees' membership and ask applicants more information to inform the selection process and evaluate the representation of each body.

- Proactively provide accommodations like captioning, ASL or Spanish interpretation, etc.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Identify high-profile documents and announcements (such as the executive summary of the long-range transportation plan or Tweets that announce public comment opportunities) that are candidates for translation into Spanish and other frequently spoken languages across the region.

- Continually review and identify documents (e.g., reports, publications, memos) that could be summarized onto or converted to webpages on the TPB website for easier public access and easier automatic translation using the Google Translate widget.

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 7th to 8th 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).

TPB STAFF UPDATE

Q&A AND DISCUSSION