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## COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MONTHLY REPORT

October 19, 2022  
Ashley Hutson, CAC Chair

The TPB Community Advisory Committee (CAC) met on Thursday, October 13. The meeting was conducted in a hybrid format. Five people came to the COG office, and six attended via Microsoft Teams. This was the first time since February 2020 that committee members met in person.

### DISCUSSIONS ABOUT PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND THE CAC PROCESS

The meeting featured a focus group with Lori Zeller and Charlie Echard from Foursquare Consulting who are conducting an evaluation of the TPB's public participation activities. Ms. Zeller and Mr. Echard began the session with polling questions that asked whether CAC members believe the TPB has successfully implemented the five goals of the TPB's Participation Plan. The focus group followed up with open-ended questions about public engagement overall and the role of the committee.

The focus group was followed by an open discussion, led by John Swanson of TPB staff, that dug deeper into some key ideas. Mr. Swanson explained that staff wanted to get the committee's input before the committee's two-year term ends in January. A week prior to the meeting, committee members had the opportunity to respond to a Survey Monkey questionnaire. The survey answers provided a basis for exploration at the meeting.

Some key themes emerged from the meeting discussions, as well as from the Survey Monkey questionnaire:

- ***Committee appreciation for outreach conducted during the pandemic, especially to historically excluded communities.*** Members complimented the wide range of virtual engagement opportunities that the TPB used for the update to Visualize 2045, including the survey, focus groups, and QR code outreach. They noted the special efforts that staff took to include communities of color and low-income individuals.
- ***But mixed feelings about whether the TPB is truly interested in public input.*** Some members were quite positive about the TPB's commitment to public engagement. They noted that the TPB has put considerable effort into conducting surveys and other outreach. But others expressed doubts about the TPB's motivation for community engagement. Some said it feels like the TPB is simply fulfilling federal requirements through its outreach efforts. Others noted that it is hard to see how public input is affecting the policies and planning of the TPB.
- ***Public outreach should go out into communities and collaborate with local partners.*** As the pandemic ends, members suggested that TPB staff should seek opportunities to conduct outreach in-person throughout the region. Some said that TPB staff should get on the agendas of community groups or local agencies. Others suggested that the TPB should have a presence at local festivals and events. One specific idea was that the TPB staff could set an annual goal of attending at least one community event in every TPB local jurisdiction. Members explained that leveraging external events, instead of organizing sessions specifically for the TPB, could increase participation and more efficiently utilize staff time. Also on the topic of increased coordination with local partners, CAC members suggested that city and county websites could include links to TPB materials.

- ***The CAC worked successfully through the pandemic, but it's been challenging.*** Committee members were generally complimentary of the switch to virtual meetings during the pandemic and the staff's efforts to keep the committee as engaged as possible. They highlighted some particularly effective meetings, including recent interactions with the TPB officers and with state DOT representatives. However, some members noted that it is becoming increasingly hard to keep members feeling connected in a meaningful way. Many noted the decrease in CAC attendance.
- ***Concerns that CAC input is not heard and/or has little impact.*** Members said they often feel their input is not heard. Some noted that TPB members rarely ask questions or offer comments in response to the CAC monthly report. Others expressed frustration that the committee's input – and community feedback more generally – seems to have little impact on regional planning. Members said they often feel they are getting information about decisions that have already been made. More broadly, committee members said they understand that MPOs like the TPB have very limited powers, so therefore the role of the CAC will inevitably be quite modest.
- ***Comments about committee logistics.*** CAC members suggested a number of ideas to improve the operations of the committee:
  - *Consider having some CAC meetings during the day.* Members suggested that TPB staff might consider alternating monthly meetings between lunchtime and dinnertime.
  - *Continue to provide virtual option for participation.* Members agreed that in order to be as inclusive as possible, it was important to maintain the option for virtual participation – even when in-person attendance is encouraged.
  - *Consider establishing attendance requirements.* Members said that poor attendance at the meetings was disheartening. Some suggested that members should be required to attend a certain number of meetings in order to be eligible for membership.
  - *Actively maintain a balance between new and older members.* The group agreed that newer and older members provide valuable contributions to the committee and staff should work to make sure that everyone's perspective and voice is brought into the process. Members suggested that a separate orientation session for new members should be conducted early in the new term to get them up to speed as quickly as possible. In order to increase turnover, a suggestion was made to implement term limits on previous members.

## OTHER BUSINESS

- Mr. Swanson briefed the committee on the upcoming TPB meeting.
- Mr. Swanson made the following announcements:
  - A new TPB public participation staffer will begin in November.
  - Recruitment for the new committee membership for calendar years 2023 and 2024 will open in mid-October. The application period will close at the end of November. The TPB will be asked to approve new appointments in January. The new committee's term will begin in February 2023, and it will end in January 2025.
  - This was the last CAC meeting for long-time member Emmet Tydings who is moving out of the area. Emmet has been on the committee since 2004 and was chair in 2006. Members expressed their deep appreciation to Emmet for his years of service and his commitment to our region.

## **ATTENDEES**

### Members

Ashley Hutson, Chair  
Michael Artson  
Nancy Abeles  
Prince Coulibaly  
Jeff Jamawat  
Jemila Kia James  
Katherine Kortum  
Audrey Nwaze  
Daniel Papiernik  
Lorena Rios  
Emmet Tydings

### Staff

Rachel Beyerle  
Leonardo Pineda  
John Swanson

### Others

Lori Zeller, Foursquare ITP Consulting  
Charlie Echard, Foursquare ITP Consulting