

ITEM 8 - Information

May 17, 2006

Report on the TPB Community Leadership Institute

Staff

Recommendation: Receive briefing on the Community Leadership Institute conducted on April 26 and 29. Several of the participants in the first institute will be introduced.

Issues: None

Background: At the February 15, 2006 meeting, the Board was briefed on proposed public involvement improvements, including a pilot activity to educate community leaders on how, where and when transportation decisions are made and how to connect their interests with the regional planning issues facing the TPB.

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board

FROM: John Swanson
Senior Transportation Planner

SUBJECT: Report on Community Leadership Institute, April 26 & 29, 2006

DATE: May 11, 2006

Overview

The TPB brought together 21 community leaders for its first Community Leadership Institute on April 26 and 29 at the Council of Governments.

The two-day pilot workshop was designed to help community leaders learn how to get involved more effectively in transportation decision-making. It was also intended to help the TPB reach out to communities and groups that have not typically been involved in the TPB process.

The participants at the Institute represented organizations that have been recognized as forces for change in their communities, including civic groups, homeowners associations, business organizations and local citizen advisory boards. Most of the participants were nominated by TPB members. They specifically did not include individuals who are already involved with the TPB. Special care was taken to make sure the participants reflected the region's diversity.

The TPB contracted with consultants to provide support for the Institute—the Academy for Leadership Foundation, Fitzgerald & Halliday, and Renaissance Planning. Former TPB Chairman Peter Shapiro of the Academy for Leadership Foundation helped conceive the Institute and facilitated the entire program. Mr. Shapiro is currently a senior fellow at the University of Maryland's Burns Academy of Leadership.

Curriculum

Over the course of two days, participants learned about how, where and when transportation decisions are made in the Washington region. The curriculum included information about the various planning processes at the state, regional and local levels.

Information about key regional transportation challenges were woven into the curriculum, including the need for improved coordination between transportation and land use, and the regional transportation funding shortfall.

Wednesday, April 26

The first session, on Wednesday from 6:00 to 9:00 pm, was called “What’s the Problem.” TPB Chairman Michael Knapp gave welcoming remarks, followed by a presentation by Peter Shapiro and Karren Pope-Onwukwe, former chair of the TPB’s Citizens Advisory Committee. The presentation touched on regional challenges facing the TPB: congestion is growing, transportation funding is tight, and the region is divided.

The featured activity on Wednesday evening was a pyramid exercise that was designed to provide an experience simulating some of the complexity of the regional transportation decision-making process.

Saturday, April 29

Saturday’s session, which lasted from 9:00 to 2:00, was called “Thinking Regionally, Acting Locally.” This day was designed to get participants talking about how their local interests are linked to the regional planning issues facing the TPB.

To illustrate the importance of transportation and land use issues, participants played a tabletop exercise in which they developed scenarios to address key regional challenges, including the east/west regional economic divide and the fact that people are living farther and farther away from their jobs. After the group exercise, Wendy Klancher of the TPB staff gave a presentation on the transportation and land use scenarios that the TPB is currently analyzing in the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study.

The day concluded with presentations on transportation project development. John Swanson of the TPB staff began by quickly and broadly describing the various planning processes at the state, regional and local levels. Following this briefing on “The Process,” four case studies were briefly presented— the Bi-County Transitway, Woodrow Wilson Bridge, New York Avenue Metro Station and the Beltway HOT lane project.

The case study presentations demonstrated that project development is not formulaic. Rather, projects often are propelled forward or stalled by unique factors, including funding availability and political circumstances. Successful community leaders know how to influence decisions at the right place and the right time.

The Saturday session concluded with small group discussions in which participants talked about how they might apply what they learned at the Institute to the work of their groups.

Lessons learned

The written evaluations and other feedback from the Institute have been very positive.

“Thank you for reaching out to us and empowering us for action,” wrote a participant in her evaluation form. “It made me more aware of how regional decisions are made and the complex nature of the decisions,” wrote another.

The pilot seems to have been well-received for a number of reasons:

- ***Good participants.*** The attendees were interested and enthusiastic. The nomination process ensured that they were people already engaged in their communities and therefore were leaders who could use the information and experience from the Institute. Plus, as Peter Shapiro put it: “The selection process, especially the involvement of TPB members in identifying participants, led to an appropriately heightened sense of the prestige of the Institute.”
- ***Good mix of presentations and participation.*** The curriculum was designed to avoid overwhelming participants with information and data. Rather, a key goal of the Institute was to get participants engaged and empowered through interactive and experiential learning methods. The interactive sessions literally illustrated the concepts discussed in the presentations and made people think about how these issues related their communities.

“There was a lot of info covered in a few hours but it didn’t come across as information overload,” wrote one participant on her evaluation form

- ***Extensive preparation.*** The Institute required extensive preparation, in terms of the curriculum, the invitation process and the logistics. The course content for the Institute largely drew upon material that had previously been developed, such as the TPB Citizens Guide and the “What if” presentation from the TPB’s scenario study (RMAS). However, all this material required significant updating and adaptation.
- ***Diversity.*** An explicit goal of the Institute was to get a good cross section of people from the region. Participants included representatives from groups representing minority and low-income communities, and people with disabilities. The participants also included representation from throughout the region’s geographic area, including outer jurisdictions. In addition, the Institute featured a diverse set of presenters.

Next steps

The program was designed to be replicable. TPB staff plans to repeat the Institute next spring. In addition, staff will determine whether the materials and curriculum from the Institute can be used in other formats—for example, in one-day workshops, in shorter presentations or in publications.

TPB staff also intends to maintain and utilize the contacts with the community leaders who attended the pilot Institute. These contacts could provide valuable conduits for expanded public outreach.

For more information:

To see the presentations and other information from the Community Leadership Institute, go to [www. www.mwcog.org/transportation/activities/cli](http://www.mwcog.org/transportation/activities/cli).