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## COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MONTHLY REPORT

November 17, 2021

*Elisa Walton, CAC Chair*

The Community Advisory Committee (CAC) to the TPB met on Wednesday, November 10 for an online-only meeting. At the meeting the committee learned about the Street Smart campaign and the Voices of the Region Focus Groups. The committee also discussed climate change and brainstormed ideas for strengthening the relationship between the board and the CAC.

Materials for the meeting can be found here: [mwcog.org/events/2021/11/10/community-advisory-committee-cac-public-comment/](https://mwcog.org/events/2021/11/10/community-advisory-committee-cac-public-comment/)

### **CAC DISCUSSION – PUBLIC OUTREACH & CLIMATE CHANGE**

Bryan Hayes, TPB Transportation Planner, shared a brief presentation sharing climate change findings from two Voices of the Region public outreach activities conducted between 2020 and 2021. He shared data from the 2020 public opinion survey showing that people in the region agree that human actions contribute to climate change and that elected officials need to consider impacts of climate change when planning for transportation in the future. He also shared selected quotes from the focus groups that reveal a more mixed perspective; that while people want to make a climate change a priority when making decisions about where to live and how to get around, other factors like make it difficult to do so.

The committee divided into small groups and answered two questions. A summary of CAC responses to these questions can be found below. These responses will inform future CAC discussions on climate change and how TPB staff prepare and share public outreach information with the committee in the future.

#### **Question 1 – Why is there a disconnect between people recognizing that it is important to take action to curb climate change, while struggling to make climate change a priority when making decisions for themselves?**

- There are a lot of reasons why people struggle to make climate change a priority when making decisions. Cost or affordability is a major reason.
- There is a feeling that elected officials have more responsibility to steer society in a direction that reduce human impacts on climate. It is easy to feel that decisions individuals make in their daily lives won't have an impact.
- Educating the public is important. It can be difficult for people to make decisions when they lack basic knowledge about the impacts of their decisions. "If you know better, you can do better."
- There is a skepticism that corporations who make money while harming the environment, but may also make money on efforts to limit greenhouse gas emissions. This can make it hard for people to want to try.
- Many people are still getting their lives back in order following the COVID-19 pandemic. This disconnect may reflect that people's priority during the outreach was surviving through the pandemic and restoring some normalcy. It may take time before people are back in a place where they can prioritize mitigating their impacts on the climate when making decisions.

## **Question 2 – How can input from public outreach activities inform elected local officials, members of the TPB, and you as a CAC member?**

- When sharing results from public outreach activities, make sure that information is packaged in a way that is easy to read and understand – to include overall takeaways, and specific ideas and comments.
- Include anticipated outcomes and concrete recommendations when sharing results of public outreach activities.
- When collecting input from the community and sharing that input with the community, it can help to have a trusted person or group involved in the process. This can help build trust as they serve as intermediaries with organizations, like the TPB, that are not well known.

The CAC will continue its discussion about climate change at future meetings. The committee is eager to be briefed on the results of the TPB Climate Change Mitigation Study of 2021.

### **VOICES OF THE REGION – FOCUS GROUP REPORT**

Sarah Bond, TPB Transportation Planner, briefed the committee on Voices of the Region Focus Groups that were conducted early in 2021. The presentation covered summary findings from the three topics explored in the focus groups – transportation equity, safety, and climate change. She also shared key takeaways for jurisdictions and agencies.

The committee asked about how the selection process for the focus groups and about whether the moderators defined terms like equity or whether participants were encouraged to provide their own description. There was also a question about how the findings from the focus groups can be used by the TPB.

### **STREET SMART BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY CAMPAIGN**

Michael Farrell, TPB Transportation Planner, briefed the committee on the Street Smart Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Campaign.

The committee asked how the campaign determines which messages are appropriate for which audiences. They agreed that testimonials can motivate people to care. The committee also observed that structures exist – like car insurance being cheaper for big cars than small cars – that encourage people to drive vehicles that are more dangerous for cyclists and pedestrians. The committee expressed frustration with the increase in reckless driving following the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **CAC DISCUSSION – STRENGTHENING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CAC AND THE TPB**

Elisa Walton, CAC Chair, led a discussion with the committee brainstorming ideas for strengthening the relationship between the CAC and members of the board.

There were two main themes from this discussion.

First, the CAC wanted more training and information so that they feel prepared and empowered to interact with elected officials. They felt that information about the purpose of the CAC and the role that the TPB plays in the region is important. They also felt developing CAC talking points or generally agreed-upon positions would be useful.

Second, the committee felt that it was important to have an opportunity to meet with their elected officials on the board and others who have decision-making responsibility for transportation. This would provide an opportunity for the CAC members to explain the committee's role while learning about the board member's approach in coordinating local plans with regional priorities.

## OTHER BUSINESS

- Bryan Hayes, TPB Transportation Planner, shared a document prepared by TPB staff responding to questions and comments brainstormed by the CAC during its October 2021 briefing on the TPB Climate Change Mitigation Study of 2021.
- Lyn Erickson, TPB Program Director, walked the committee through the November TPB agenda.

## ATTENDEES

<b>Members</b>	
Elisa Walton, CAC chair	Jeff Jamawat
Ashley Hutson	Jeff Parnes
Audrey Nwaze	Michael Artson
Delia Houseal	Ra Amin
Emmet Tydings	Robert Jackson
Eyal Li	Tracy Duvall
J. Kia James	
<b>Guests</b>	
Bill Orleans	
<i>Unnamed participants may have phoned into the meeting.</i>	
<b>Staff</b>	
Bryan Hayes	Sarah Bond
John Swanson	Lyn Erickson
Michael Farrell	Stacy Cook