

Testimony - Baltimore Region Transportation Improvement Program 2010-2013

June 17, 2009

by

Michele Rosenberg

michel.rosenberg@gmail.com



How many people are aware of tonight's meeting and the opportunity to comment on the final draft of the Baltimore Region Transportation Improvement Program for 2010-2013?

According to this document the Metropolitan Planning Organization has adopted a public involvement process that fulfills the requirements and intent of public participation and outreach as defined in the Metropolitan Planning Organization regulations.

On page 13 of this 236 page document it states "as a requirement of SAFETEA-LU, the public must have an opportunity to review and comment on the TIP in the early stages of preparation with at least one public meeting. Formal public participation procedures to govern metropolitan transportation planning activities were updated by the MPO in January 2007. These guidelines reaffirmed a framework for public participation and information dissemination.

The next paragraph on this page includes a summary of what has been done including posting the meeting on the website and including it in an electronic newsletter.

As a member of the Citizens Advisory Council to the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board I am aware of this meeting. What about the general public? Better yet, what about the not so general public interested in transportation and environmental issues. According to the draft announcements were made in local papers. I am an avid newspaper reader, something one doesn't find often these days with the ongoing death of local journalism. Where did these announcements appear?

Last week I attended an all day conference on the Humane Metropolis which was attended by numerous planners, developers, environmentalists and park advocates. I mentioned this hearing and no one seemed to be aware of it. Several people asked me for the time and location.

I am not complaining about what the staff here does because I believe it is an excellent job. Unfortunately I don't think it is working and I wonder what the answer is.

My next question concerns the mention of two public meetings in the document, the first being held on June 17. It then mentions a summary of all comments received both verbal and written with BRTB responses and included in Appendix D. Obviously comments made tonight are not in any summary. Will they be part of this final draft?

I also find it problematic that this meeting is also being used to fulfill the requirement for the MTA public meeting (also mentioned in this document). When and where has the MTA explicitly stated during any planning process that this meeting would fulfill that requirement?

Don't regular users of the MTA deserve better than this.

I mentioned earlier about the lack of knowledge about this meeting by many people interested in transportation issues. According to one such person an accessibility meeting for those with transportation disability issues related to the MTA is being held today making it impossible to be in two places at the same time.

Transportation plans and project and their financial related data are very important but equally important is process and I feel that this is something which is being highly neglected.

Thank you.

Michele Rosenberg