



Evaluation of BRTB Public Involvement Activities

Public Advisory Committee

May 27, 2020



Tonight's discussion

- Study update
- Options for the PAC's Future
- Discussion
- Next steps

Update on Task 1: Evaluate Effectiveness of Current BRTB Public Involvement Activities

Review of:

- Key documents: Public Participation Plan, Limited English Proficiency Plan
- Current practices for engaging traditionally underserved communities
- Website and social media platforms
- Current outreach efforts overall
 - Qualitative assessment
 - Quantitative assessment using Public Involvement Effectiveness (PIE) Tool

Update on Task 2: Review BRTB Public Involvement Activities with Key Participants

- Meetings and interviews with key participants
- PAC Assessment and Input

Assessment: Core Issues Identified

- Lack of clarity regarding purpose and relevance of the PAC given that many decisions are made at state or county level
- Many members do not feel they have meaningful influence
- Lead time to consider and comment on issues pending before the BRTB is often limited
- Membership does not fully represent the region's population
- Difficulty attending meetings due to time and/or location
- Difficulty retaining members, particularly from outlying jurisdictions
- Limited orientation for new members

Comparison with Other MPOs

- Internet scan of peer MPOs that are a) roughly similar in size and b) known for strong public involvement programs
- Reveals a mix of practices, with some peer MPOs using citizen committees and others relying on alternative methods to engage public
 - MPOs with citizen committees include Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, Broward MPO, and Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization
 - MPOs without citizen committees include Alamo Area MPO and Capital Area MPO (Austin)
 - Other non-peer MPOs that excel in public involvement without citizen committees include Puget Sound Regional Council and North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority

Comparison with Other MPOs, cont.

- Survey in partnership with AMPO (the Association of MPOs)
 - Distributed to the AMPO Public Involvement Working Group
 - Survey currently underway, will close this Friday
- Questions cover committee membership, roles, meeting frequency and use of virtual meetings, perceived usefulness, and engagement with issues of equity, among others
- Responses thus far show a mix of practices in place
 - Example: meeting frequency varies—some meet monthly, some bi-monthly, some quarterly, and others “as needed” with no set schedule
 - Those without committees gave varied reasons for not having one
- Results will be incorporated in final report (Task 3)

Options for the Future of the PAC

- Based on information and feedback to date, two initial options identified
 - Option A: Retool the PAC
 - Option B: Replace the PAC with New Forms of Public Engagement
- Ultimate decision to be made by the BRTB; could differ from these options

Option A: Retool the PAC

- Reduce the frequency of meetings to 6-8 meetings per year.
 - This might include 6 core meetings and 2 optional meetings if needed.
 - A lighter level of commitment may encourage broader participation
- Consider a later meeting time to accommodate those who must travel from work
- Convert some meetings to a virtual format and provide a video feed for all meetings
- Provide a simple meal for those meetings that remain in-person, especially if the meeting time remains at 5:30

Option A: Retool the PAC, cont.

Focus on issues where PAC can have the most meaningful input

- Development of UPWP topics and priorities
- Providing input to various policy studies, reports, analyses
- Providing input to the long-range plan or its implementation
- Bringing information on transportation needs from members' own constituencies
- Holding public education events such as Transportation Academy
- Participating in occasional topical roundtables
- Reviewing public involvement plans for specific outreach campaigns

Option A: Retool the PAC, cont.

- Establish a predictable annual calendar with meetings structured around the issues identified for the PAC's main focus
- Encourage BRTB members to attend PAC meetings
- Consider appointing a PAC member to serve as a liaison to the Technical Committee
- Drop the policy subcommittee (since policy would now be a focus of the full group meetings)
- Identify steps to increase member diversity
- Develop and implement a more comprehensive orientation program for new members

Option B: Replace the PAC with New Forms of Public Engagement

- Add seats for representatives of the general public to other BRTB advisory committees to preserve opportunities for regular, structured input
- Create a virtual panel to provide input to BMC/BRTB for various activities throughout the year
- Maintain involvement of interested former PAC members in the Transportation Academy/Every Voice Counts program
- Consider holding an annual public workshop prior to the development of the UPWP

Option B: Replace the PAC with New Forms of Public Engagement, cont.

How might a virtual panel work?

- Would serve as a permanent focus group, providing input for various activities and topics throughout the year
- Aim for approximately 50-75 members
- The panel would mainly function “asynchronously” through email outreach and online feedback
- All current and past members of the PAC would be invited to join
- Additional members could be recruited from BMC’s email lists, social media followers, and organizations representing a wide range of constituencies



Discussion