

March 4, 2004

To: Metropolitan Policy Committee
From: Tom Schwetz
Subject: Item 4c (ii): Overview of MPO Public Involvement Plan

Action Recommended: Review and discuss overview of MPO Public Involvement Plan

Issue Summary:

Staff is currently working on an update to the MPO's Public Involvement Plan or PIP. The current PIP for the Central Lane MPO is the *Eugene-Springfield Area Citizen's Guide to Transportation Planning*, which was adopted in January 1995. The Draft PIP takes a new approach to respond to MPC direction and direction received in the recent federal Certification Review. The new approach fits within the overall emphasis for a fresh approach to MPO public involvement. The over-arching goal is two-way communication with citizens, open decision making, and responsiveness to citizen input. The updated PIP will:

- Serve as the framework for public involvement for key MPO products
- Add public involvement Goals, Objectives, and Policies
- Build in a tool to evaluate the MPO's public involvement process
- Move detail now in the body of the current PIP to appendices
- Use a summary table (Attachment 1) to show public involvement process for key and special MPO products
- Show when public involvement occurs for each key MPO product
- Use more graphics, e.g. Central Lane MPO map (Attachment 2), process flow chart, timelines to assist the public in following the MPO process
- Have a leaner, more citizen-friendly style, e.g., will use fewer acronyms
- Will be one component of a broad ongoing public involvement program that also includes:
 - Fact sheets
 - MPO Basics (Attachment 3)
 - Tips on Testifying/Clues on Commenting
 - Getting Involved in Transportation Planning
 - Website
 - Periodic E-updates providing electronic status reports to an interested parties list

- MPO Email address
- Speakers Bureau
- An array of tools that can be tailored to the needs of a particular study or plan process

The public involvement program for the MPO has three main components--core tools to be used on the key and special MPO products, tailored techniques to be added as needed during work program development for each product, and ongoing public outreach such as the website and e--updates.

The PIP outlines the set of core tools that the MPO uses to provide public involvement opportunities on the key products and some special products. The attached summary table shows public involvement as the bridge connecting MPO programs. An appendix to the PIP lists a wide array of public involvement opportunities that can be added when appropriate and affordable to tailor the public outreach as the need arises on a specific product. The core tools and any tailored techniques complement the ongoing public involvement provided through the website and periodic e--updates.

Background

Federal and state transportation regulations require the MPO to have a Public Involvement Plan (PIP). The *Eugene-Springfield Area Citizen's Guide to Transportation Planning*, January 1995, is the current PIP for the Central Lane MPO. The recent federal certification included the following corrective action:

“Update Citizen’s Guide to Transportation within two years”

Two years from the certification review would mean that the MPO needs to have an update no later than May 2005.

In addition, the MPC Public Involvement Subcommittee met over the winter and spring of 2003 to work on a model for citizen involvement that would help to meet the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) Area Commission on Transportation (ACT) guidelines for public involvement. The Subcommittee made the following two recommendations regarding public involvement at the July 2003 MPC meeting:

8. Develop and adopt formal *Central Lane MPO Public Involvement Goals, Objectives and Policies* (the “Goals, Objectives, and Policies” section from the Salem-Keizer *SKATS Public Involvement Framework Plan* could serve as a model)
 - State specific intent to expand public involvement and interaction at early stages of all processes
 - Clarify and document that all public comment shall be considered during decision-making processes, and staff responses prepared to significant public input

- Policy direction to document all decision points in transportation planning process – when the decision is made, and by whom
9. Review and update the Central Lane MPO Public Involvement Plan (PIP – currently known as the Eugene-Springfield Area Citizen’s Guide to Transportation Planning) to ensure that interested parties have the opportunity to be involved in the early stages of the federally-required MPC public involvement process. The Citizen’s Guide was last updated in 1995 as part of the TransPlan update process. (Note that this update is an element in the MPO’s FY03-04 adopted work program.) The update should address, at a minimum:
- Document timelines and frequency of major public involvement opportunities (TIP updates, STIP priority setting, update of the long-range transportation plan, etc.)
 - Document policy guidance for public notification and information publication & dissemination
 - Document policy guidance for collection, summarization & distribution of public comment/testimony to decision-makers
 - Document policy direction for responding to public input
 - Document all relevant plans, studies and other documents that are relevant to the MPO transportation planning process
 - Document the responsible decision-making body(ies) throughout the MPO process

Attachments

Attachment 1 - Summary Table of Public Involvement for Key MPO Products

Attachment 2 - Map of Central Lane MPO

Attachment 3 - MPO Basics Fact Sheet