

**Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization**

---

**From:** charles biggs [charles\_biggs@hotmail.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 27, 2006 10:11 PM  
**To:** Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization  
**Subject:** RE: Public participation

MPO,

Why have you settled for the minimum amount of public participation? Why not have the maximum!!!! Use the IAP2 public participation model and get someone trained in how to administer it properly! Not like these consultants doing the Eugene City Hall dog and pony show for the City Council. Charles Biggs

>From: "Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization" <mpo@lcog.org>  
>To: "Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization" <mpo@lcog.org>  
>Date: Thu, 27 Jul 2006 16:48:33 -0700

>  
>PUBLIC COMMENT WANTED on Draft Public Participation Plan  
>The public comment period for the Draft Public Participation Plan of  
>the Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is open until  
>August 31, 2006. The purpose of the document, which will be adopted by  
>the Metropolitan Policy Committee, is to meet federal requirements for  
>specifying how and when public involvement will occur for key MPO  
>products. The Plan will have the force of policy in directing the MPO.  
>The Draft Public Participation Plan is available to view or download in  
>PDF format. Learn more about public involvement in regional  
>transportation planning for the Central Lane MPO and about the Draft  
>Plan, including the public outreach strategy and opportunities to  
>comment, on the MPO's Public Involvement page  
>(http://www.lcog.org/mpo/pubinv.html).

>  
>\*Please excuse any multiple copies you may receive -- this distribution  
>is from several different lists and duplication is not supposed to  
>happen, but then again...  
>

## Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization

---

**From:** Linda J. Swisher [lswisher@efn.org]  
**Sent:** Saturday, July 29, 2006 6:22 AM  
**To:** Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization  
**Subject:** Re:

Are these documents available for public examination at the Eugene public libraries? I cannot access them otherwise.

Thank you,  
Linda Swisher

----- Original Message -----

**From:** Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization  
**To:** Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 27, 2006 4:48 PM

### **PUBLIC COMMENT WANTED on Draft Public Participation Plan**

The public comment period for the Draft Public Participation Plan of the Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is open until August 31, 2006. The purpose of the document, which will be adopted by the Metropolitan Policy Committee, is to meet federal requirements for specifying how and when public involvement will occur for key MPO products. The Plan will have the force of policy in directing the MPO. The **Draft Public Participation Plan** is available to view or download in PDF format. Learn more about public involvement in regional transportation planning for the Central Lane MPO and about the Draft Plan, including the public outreach strategy and opportunities to comment, on the MPO's **Public Involvement page** (<http://www.lcog.org/mpo/pubinv.html>).

\*Please excuse any multiple copies you may receive -- this distribution is from several different lists and duplication is not *supposed* to happen, but then again...

## Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization

---

**From:** Rob Zako [rob@friends.org]  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 31, 2006 3:53 PM  
**To:** Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization  
**Cc:** WIEDERHOLD Kathi M  
**Subject:** Comments re Draft Public Participation Plan

Dear Central Lane MPO,

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the draft Public Participation Plan dated July 13, 2006.

Our comments are attached as a PDF file. Our comments also refer to three attachments, the first of which is part of the main PDF file and the last two of which we attach separately. Together these three files make up our official comments.

Please confirm that you have received these on time and that you can open all three files.

Sincerely,  
Rob

P.S. Note that we could not find in the message below nor on LCOG's web site any indication of exactly where to send comments. We assume that replying to the email below is adequate, with a cc to Kathi Wiederhold. Of course, this is but one small example of how it is important to pay attention to details when soliciting public comments. The public needs to know what, why, who, when and where. In this case, it isn't completely where to send comments.

--  
Rob Zako  
Transportation Advocate  
1000 Friends of Oregon  
1280-B East 28th Ave., Eugene, OR 97403-1616 (home office)  
(541) 343-5201 (home office)  
(541) 683-6333 (fax)  
rob@friends.org  
<http://www.friends.org>

Share *your* vision for Oregon: <http://www.EnvisionOregon.org>  
Support 1000 Friends of Oregon: <http://www.friends.org/support>

---

----- Original Message -----

**From:** "Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization" <mpo@lcog.org>  
**Date:** Thu, 27 Jul 2006 16:48:33 -0700  
**To:** "Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization" <mpo@lcog.org>

### **PUBLIC COMMENT WANTED on Draft Public Participation Plan**

The public comment period for the Draft Public Participation Plan of the Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is open until August 31, 2006. The purpose of the document, which will be adopted by the Metropolitan Policy Committee, is to meet federal requirements for specifying how and when public involvement will occur for key MPO products. The Plan will have the force of policy in directing the MPO. The **Draft Public Participation Plan** is available to view or download in PDF format. Learn more about public involvement in regional transportation planning for the Central Lane MPO and about the Draft Plan, including the public outreach strategy and opportunities to comment, on the MPO's **Public Involvement page** (<http://www.lcog.org/mpo/pubinv.html> <<http://www.lcog.org/mpo/pubinv.html>> ).

\*Please excuse any multiple copies you may receive -- this distribution is from several different lists and duplication is not *supposed* to happen, but then again...

9/20/2006



534 SW Third Ave., Suite 300, Portland, OR 97204 • (503) 497-1000 • fax (503) 223-0073 • www.friends.org

Southern Oregon Office • P.O. Box 2442 • Grants Pass, OR 97528 • (541) 474-1155 • fax (541) 474-9389

Willamette Valley Office • 189 Liberty St. NE, Suite 307A • Salem, OR 97301 • (503) 371-7261 • fax (503) 371-7596

Lane County Office • 642 Charnelton, Suite 100 • Eugene, OR 97401 • (541) 431-7059 • fax (541) 431-7078

Central Oregon Office • P.O. Box 8813 • Bend, OR 97708 • (541) 382-7557 • fax (541) 382-7552

**Date:** August 31, 2006

**From:** Rob Zako, Transportation Advocate

**To:** Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization

**Cc:** Citizen Advisory Committee

**Re:** Draft *Public Participation Plan* dated July 13, 2006

Dear MPO members:

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the draft *Public Participation Plan* dated July 13, 2006.

As you know, Goal 1 (“Public Involvement”) is... well, the first goal of the state land use planning program, and should be the first goal of the Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization (Central Lane MPO) in ensuring that the decisions it makes are responsive to the people.

As the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) explains on its “Public Involvement” web page (attached):

*Public involvement is more than just a hearing, or one meeting near the end of the process. It needs to be an early and continuing part of the process. It is essential to “know” the community’s values in order to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts as well as narrow the field of alternative modes (for planning) and alignments (for projects). The community also needs to understand the tradeoffs and constraints behind the process, and to “buy-in” to the project.*

Overall, we commend staff and the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) for drafting a good plan.

In general, we are concerned that the Central Lane MPO might implement this plan and thereby achieve quantity but not quality in public involvement. Yes, we all know that transportation planning and project development is time-consuming and complex. On some level, the public doesn’t care about all the details. What the public cares about is what it *values*. In order to be effective, public involvement must get at what the public values and serve to build “buy-in” for what the Central Lane MPO decides.

Below we offer specific comments about parts of the draft plan.

## **Requirements in State Land Use Planning Program**

At the top of page 5, the draft plan states:

*While the MPO transportation system planning process is not subject to the requirements of the statewide land use planning system, it is consistent with those requirements.*

***Recommendation: This statement is wrong and should be corrected. The Central Lane MPO transportation system planning process is subject to such state requirements.***

For example, OAR 660-012-0015(2), which is related to the "Preparation and Coordination of Transportation System Plans," provides:

*MPOs and counties shall prepare and amend regional TSPs in compliance with this division. MPOs shall prepare regional TSPs for facilities of regional significance within their jurisdiction. Counties shall prepare regional TSPs for all other areas and facilities: \* \* \**

For example, OAR 660-012-0016, which the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) recently adopted, imposes requirements related to the "Coordination with Federally-Required Regional Transportation Plans in Metropolitan Areas."

For example, OAR 660-012-0035(4), which is related to the "Evaluation and Selection of Transportation System Alternatives," provides:

*In MPO areas, regional and local TSPs shall be designed to achieve adopted standards for increasing transportation choices and reducing reliance on the automobile. Adopted standards are intended as means of measuring progress of metropolitan areas towards developing and implementing transportation systems and land use plans that increase transportation choices and reduce reliance on the automobile. It is anticipated that metropolitan areas will accomplish reduced reliance by changing land use patterns and transportation systems so that walking, cycling, and use of transit are highly convenient and so that, on balance, people need to and are likely to drive less than they do today.*

For example, OAR 660-012-0055(1), which is related to the "Timing of Adoption and Update of Transportation System Plans," provides:

*MPOs shall complete regional TSPs for their planning areas by May 8, 1996. For those areas within a MPO, cities and counties shall adopt local TSPs and implementing measures within one year following completion of the regional TSP: \* \* \**

While it is true that some of these requirements impose responsibilities on cities and counties within an MPO area, others impose specific responsibilities on MPOs themselves. In particular, pursuant to OAR 660-012-0015(2), the Central Lane MPO is charged with the responsibility of preparing a regional Transportation System Plan (TSP) for facilities of regional significance within its jurisdiction.<sup>1</sup>

## **Unified Planning Work Program**

On page 13, Table 1 ("Summary Table of Public Involvement") does *not* call for a public comment period nor a public hearing prior to the adoption of the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Given that the UPWP is one of the key work products of the Central Lane MPO and given that this document effectively sets the annual priorities for the Central Lane MPO, a higher level of public involvement is warranted.

<sup>1</sup> It is not completely clear to us if the Regional Transportation Plan adopted by the Central Lane MPO in December 2004 is intended to be the regional TSP satisfying this requirement, or if the Central Lane MPO intends to prepare and adopt some other document to satisfy this requirement. In any case, the new requirements in OAR 660-012-0016 are intended to clarify the relation between the RTP and the regional TSP.

***Recommendation: The table should be modified to call for both a public comment period and a public hearing prior to adoption of the UPWP.***

## **Evaluation of Public Participation Plan**

We commend the Central Lane MPO for making a commitment to evaluating the effectiveness of its public involvement program. Otherwise, the Central Lane MPO could devote a lot of time and resources to trying to involve the public to no meaningful end.

On pages 17 and 18, Table 2 (“Evaluating Public Involvement Tools”) offers some measures of the effectiveness of involvement efforts. These measures are a good starting point.

But these measures are all about quantity and not about quality. All these measures represent ways in which the public either 1) received information from the Central Lane MPO or 2) provided comments to the Central Lane MPO (or both).

Again, these measures are good as a starting point. But one can have lots of web hits and lots of comments and have it not matter much at all—if no meaningful communication has occurred, i.e., if there is no significant change in terms of understanding or action based on the communication. For example, if the Central Lane MPO were to receive 1000 comments on a draft Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)—and ignore every one of them—the measures would say that there had been a vigorous public involvement process but the people might nevertheless feel that their involvement was not worthwhile.

Of course, it is easier to assess quantitative measures such as the number of web hits than it is to assess qualitative measures that aim to determine if the public involvement is effective. Nevertheless, it is important to try to do so.

***Recommendation: Measures such as the following should be added to the measures of the effectiveness of the public involvement program:***

- 1. Number of issues for which public comments resulted in a substantive change from what was originally proposed in a draft.***
- 2. Percentage of people who comment who feel like their comments were heard.***
- 3. Anecdotal stories of cases in which members of the MPO feel like comments from the public led them to revise their views.***
- 4. Percentage of people attending, say, an open house who say that doing so significantly increased their understanding of whatever is at issue.***
- 5. Percentage of members of the public and members of the MPO who feel like meaningful two-way communication is taking place.***

***More generally, the measures should be tied to specific goals, objectives or policies. The measures should either be listed along side the goals, objectives and policies, or else there should be a table that cross references which measures pertain to which goals, objectives and policies. In this way, the purpose of each measure can be made plain. Moreover, in this way it should be clear which goals, objectives and policies aren't being measured, and thus perhaps not advanced.***

We asked previously in a memo dated November 9, 2004 (attached): “What are the indicators of an effective public involvement process?” Now as before, we offer the answer provided by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA):

*A good indicator of an effective public involvement process is a well-informed public, which feels it has opportunities to contribute input into transportation decision making processes through a broad array of involvement opportunities at all stages of decision making. In contrast, an ineffective process is one that relies on one or two public meetings or hearings to obtain input immediately prior to decision making on developed draft plans and programs. Public meetings that are well attended, frequent news coverage on transportation issues, public forums where a broad representation of diverse interests is in attendance, and plans, TIPs, MIS alternatives, and project designs which reflect an understanding and consideration of public input are all indicators that the public involvement process is effective.<sup>2</sup>*

## **Conclusion**

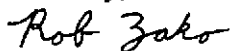
Again, we commend staff and the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) for drafting a good plan.

*With the specific changes we recommend, we urge the Central Lane MPO to adopt this plan and to put it into effect.*

*But given concerns about the effectiveness of public involvement, we recommend that the Citizen Advisory Committee review the effectiveness of the plan within one year of adoption and prepare a report with recommendations.*

Lastly, as we have commented previously on public involvement, we have attached some of our previous thoughts in the hopes that these might be helpful.

Sincerely,



Rob Zako  
Transportation Advocate  
1280-B East 28<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Eugene, OR 97403-1616  
Phone: (541) 343-5201  
Fax: (541) 683-6333  
[rob@friends.org](mailto:rob@friends.org)

### Attachments:

1. Federal Highway Administration's web page re "Public Involvement"
2. Memo dated 1/5/05 from 1000 Friends to MPC re "Looking Back, Looking Forward"
3. Memo dated 11/9/04 from 1000 Friends to MPC re "Effectiveness of the public involvement process for the RTP update"

---

<sup>2</sup> "FHWA/FTA Questions and Answers on Public Involvement in Transportation Decisionmaking," Question 3, [http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/pub\\_inv/q\\_and\\_a.htm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/pub_inv/q_and_a.htm)

# Public Involvement

Source: FHWA web site, <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/pubinv2.htm>

Learning the viewpoints and opinions of the stakeholders in transportation projects is one of the chief elements of the FHWA project development process. Stakeholders can be the users or those affected by construction or traffic. Since the Federal-aid Highway Act of 1950 and the Federal Transit Laws originally enacted in 1964, we have worked to ensure that all interested persons have the opportunity for a voice in how our transportation system is developed. In conjunction with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), we extended opportunity for public involvement throughout the location and design process for specific transportation projects.

In 1991 the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and in 1998 the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) extended the opportunity for public involvement into the transportation planning process.

It is the intent of NEPA that agencies encourage and facilitate public involvement in decisions which affect the quality of the human environment.

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations on implementing NEPA require that agencies make diligent effort to involve the public in preparing and implementing their NEPA procedures. They also require that agencies provide public notice of NEPA-related hearings, public meetings, and the availability of environmental documents so as to inform those persons and agencies who may be interested or affected.

It has long been a challenge to grab and hold people's interest in a project or plan, convince them that active involvement is worthwhile, and provide the means for them to have direct and meaningful impact on its decisions. The FHWA and FTA published the guide Public Involvement Techniques for Transportation Decision making in September, 1996 to provide agencies with access to a wide variety of tools to involve the public in developing specific plans, programs, or projects through their public involvement processes. It discusses a wide variety of subjects, including Civic Advisory Committees, Public Meetings/Hearings, Negotiation & Mediation, and Improving Meeting Attendance.

Public involvement is more than just a hearing, or one meeting near the end of the process. It needs to be an early and continuing part of the process. It is essential to "know" the community's values in order to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts as well as narrow the field of alternative modes (for planning) and alignments (for projects). The community also needs to understand the tradeoffs and constraints behind the process, and to "buy-in" to the project. Public involvement allows the State and resource agencies to know the impacts as viewed by the community. Instead of public "finding out" and stopping/delaying the project late in the process, early and continuing public involvement allows us to know the problems/impacts up front and deal with them early; so the designers can avoid or minimize or otherwise design the project before they have fully designed and provided the best engineering solution. If involved early, the public can provide insight (directly or indirectly) into what their community would find acceptable in the way of mitigation—perhaps some form of community enhancement that will allow to project to fit more harmoniously into the community.

The public also knows the things they would like to change and promote within their community. If the community's demographics, values, impacts, and desires are discovered early and on a continuing basis through public involvement as the planning and project development processes proceed, the designer can incorporate this knowledge into consideration when designing the plan or project—using design options and incorporating avoidance, minimization, and mitigation of impact as well as adding enhancements into the design.



534 SW Third Ave., Suite 300, Portland, OR 97204 • (503) 497-1000 • fax (503) 223-0073 • www.friends.org

Southern Oregon Office • P.O. Box 2442 • Grants Pass, OR 97528 • phone/fax (541) 474-1155

Willamette Valley Office • 189 Liberty St. NE, Suite 307A • Salem, OR 97301 • (503) 371-7261 • fax (503) 371-7596

Lane County Office • 1192 Lawrence • Eugene, OR 97401 • (541) 431-7059 • fax (541) 431-7078

Central Oregon Office • P.O. Box 8813 • Bend, OR 97708 • (541) 382-7557 • fax (541) 382-7552

**Date:** January 5, 2005

**From:** Rob Zako, Transportation Advocate

**To:** Metropolitan Policy Committee

**Cc:** Transportation Planning Committee  
Citizen Advisory Committee

**Re:** Looking Back, Looking Forward

(Below we expand on the remarks I made at your special meeting on December 30, 2004.)

Dear members of the Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC),

The end of the year is a good time to look at where MPC has been and where it might be headed.

The roots of MPC go back as far as 1945, when six member governments formed the Central Lane County Planning Commission. The name was later changed to the Central Lane Planning Council.

In 1971, the name was changed again to the Lane Council of Governments (LCOG). Today, LCOG serves 26 member governments and agencies, coordinating their activities and providing high quality services throughout Lane County. Member governments support LCOG and govern it through a Board of Directors, which consists of representatives from the member governments.

In 1973, the Governor of Oregon designated LCOG as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Eugene-Springfield metropolitan area for the purposes of meeting federal transportation planning requirements.

In 1987, MPC was established by a joint resolution of Eugene, Springfield and Lane County, who then as now were partners in the Eugene-Springfield Metro Plan. Member jurisdictions *appoint* representatives to MPC.

MPC is often referred to as an *advisory* dispute resolution body. Indeed, as recently as 2001, members of MPC negotiated in good faith to resolve differences over the adoption of TransPlan. But MPC itself did not have the power to adopt TranPlan. MPC's recommendations went back to Eugene, Springfield, Lane County and Lane Transit District (LTD) for approval and each jurisdiction retained its independent authority to adopt or reject TransPlan.

But MPC has always had some independent decision making *authority*. The Lane Council of Governments (LCOG) delegated to MPC some MPO responsibilities, which had previously been delegated to the earlier Metropolitan Area Transportation Committee (MATC). These responsibilities included the adoption the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP). LCOG retained other MPO responsibilities, including the "endorsement of the transportation plan and annual amendments and for adoption of the work program governing the transportation planning process." In any case transportation planning was much simpler during the early years of MPC.

Following the 2000 Census, which indicated a population of 224,049 in the metropolitan area, LCOG's designation as an MPO changed. By federal regulation, MPOs over 200,000 are classified as Transportation Management Areas (TMAs). With this designation came LCOG's increased transportation planning responsibilities related to congestion management, project selection, and certification, as well as increased discretion over federal transportation funds.

As the LCOG Board of Directors consists of 26 elected officials from member governments and agencies mostly outside the metropolitan area, it became clear that it would be better for the LCOG Board to delegate the MPO responsibilities it had retained to officials more in touch with metropolitan transportation issues.

Thus in October 2002, the LCOG Board of Directors approved resolution 2002-08 delegating all MPO responsibilities to MPC. In February 2003, MPC accepted all MPO responsibilities from LCOG. With this delegation and with the transition to a Transportation Management Area, the authority of MPC increased greatly—a change that still isn't fully appreciated.

But old habits die hard. As recently as your last meeting, an elected official referred to MPC as a "dispute resolution body," even as MPC had just independently approved the regional transportation plan and was in the process of allocating tens of millions of dollars to transportation projects.

The reality today is that MPC is an increasingly powerful *decision making body* made up of representatives *appointed* from various jurisdictions. Moreover, these representatives are apparently not bound to act according to the wishes of the jurisdictions they represent. As MPC isn't elected directly by voters, there is a risk that the label "shadow government" might stick.

Some of you perhaps aren't aware of how severely your actions over the last month or two have damaged your credibility. It may take a long time for MPC to repair that damage and to regain the trust and respect of the metropolitan area it is charged to represent.

But we are cautiously hopeful that, with a good faith effort on your part, you can fulfill an important need in our community. Increasingly, the problems we face aren't confined within city limits but rather encompass the Eugene-Springfield-Coburg metropolitan area and extend throughout the larger Region 2050 area. The housing policy in Eugene affects cities from Veneta to Harrisburg to Cottage Grove. The employment policies of Springfield affect Eugene. And transportation decisions affect the whole region.

Today, MPC has many different roles. It is a dispute resolution body, a forum for coordinating activities, the MPO policy board that approves transportation plans and programs, and more. Perhaps most importantly, it is a group of officials from around the metropolitan area that gather monthly to talk about important issues facing the area.

If MPC is to succeed—and we hope it does—here are twelve suggestions for 2005, sort of our "Twelve Days of Christmas" gift to you:

1. **Think regionally.** MPC was originally formed to address regional concerns. A primary purpose of LCOG—like most councils of government—is to support cooperation amongst local governments and a regional approach to problem solving. At the recent Regional Planning and Business Symposium in Portland, Frank Beal, the executive director of Chicago Metropolis 2020, urged leaders to "leave their self-interests at the door and bring in their civic interests" when talking about regional visions and planning. When serving on MPC, strive to look beyond the narrower interests of Eugene, Springfield, Coburg, Lane County,

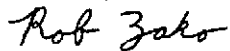
LTD or ODOT to advance the broader interests of the Central Lane region. The region will succeed when its members fight amongst themselves less and work together more for the benefit of all.

2. **Display a map.** What is this thing called “Central Lane”? Are you a citizen of “Central Lane”? To help give meaning to the idea of the region, and to help you and the public to better visualize the decisions you are making, start displaying a map of the region prominently at each meeting. Do so even if no map is part of your packet. When a member of MPC or staff is making a point, get in the habit of walking up to the map to show everyone what you are talking about. Seeing things visually in a map will help everyone understand better how the pieces of the region fit together.
3. **Explain yourself.** Make sure you understand what you are deciding and why before taking action. When you open a public comment period, explain what the issues are and what kinds of comments from the public would be helpful. Before you take final action, reflect back to the public what you heard from them and why you settled on the decision you did. It’s not sufficient for you to say you heard the public but disagree. You need to respond to the public and explain how you are addressing their concerns or how other concerns outweigh theirs. And don’t let staff speak for you but speak yourselves directly to the public.
4. **Slow down.** Allow yourself and the public adequate time before making decisions. Before making an important decision—a decision to amend a transportation plan or to allocate money—make sure to schedule a public hearing at least two weeks in advance and allow time after the public hearing to submit and digest written materials. If new information is presented (such as the December 22 memo re the I-5/Beltline project), allow adequate time for you and the public to digest the information—even if it means postponing final action.
5. **Serve the public.** Your role is to serve the public, not the other way around. Consider changing your regular meeting time from the middle of the working day to the evening when more people could attend. Never again cut public comments short except in extraordinary circumstances. If the public is interested in what you do—something you should welcome—schedule additional meetings to accommodate the public you serve.
6. **See the forest through the trees.** Let’s face it: Transportation planning is incredibly complex. I do this stuff full time now and am supposed to be an expert, and I continue to learn brand new things about transportation planning. It is easy to get lost in the details and let staff worry about it. But it is critically important for you to rise above all the technical details and to understand what the key issues are and what policy choices you have. Insist that staff help you—and the public—understand the key choices.
7. **Take time to step back.** Since LCOG delegated all its MPO responsibilities to MPC, you have been very busy. Perhaps it seems like you are always behind just trying to do what the Feds require you to do. It is important to realize that your purpose isn’t merely to satisfy federal requirements. The federal transportation planning requirements—like the state requirements—are intended to help and guide you to make critical decisions for the benefit of the region. If you find yourself doing things just because they are required, then you are missing the boat. Direct staff to schedule open discussion time not tied to a particular requirement, during which you can discuss the challenges—transportation and otherwise—facing the region. Do this even if it requires scheduling more meetings. You should do so not only for yourselves, but also for the benefit of the public.

8. **Strive to act by consensus.** Often it isn't so much what you decide but how you decide it. Initially, ODOT faced a lot of opposition to the I-5/Beltline project. To their credit, they stepped back, formed a stakeholder working group and a decision team, and took the time to build consensus around a decision. While some might think that that process took too long, the result is that there is far more support and less controversy around the I-5/Beltline project than around, say, the West Eugene Parkway. You will often save yourself lots of time in the long run by taking adequate time in the short run.
9. **Benefit from your new Citizen Advisory Committee.** Frankly, there is a good chance that the new Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) won't be much help. Either the citizens will get frustrated by the complexity and won't have the time and energy to wade through all the issues, or you will not appreciate or heed the advice they give you. But we hope that both you and the CAC try your best to help each other. For your part, you would do well to give the CAC a fair degree of autonomy. If you confine them too much, they will get lost in narrow details, as so often all of us have. They need to have the freedom to look at the big picture of transportation planning and to understand it in their own way. Of course, they are merely an advisory body and you will not always heed their advice. But we hope that you will welcome and respect their advice. (In particular, Commissioner Green, as you know so much about these transportation issues, there is a danger that you will overwhelm the CAC in your role as liaison. Please don't. Hold back and be there as a resource, talking less and listening more.)
10. **Public involvement begins at home.** Too often members of MPC or staff say there has been adequate public involvement because the materials were available and there was a public hearing. Wrong! Try this experiment: Take the materials for a recent decision—say the UPWP or the MTIP—and give it to your 8<sup>th</sup> grade son or daughter. See if it makes sense to them. If it doesn't, then you have already failed. As a rule of thumb, assume that the average interested citizen understands complex issues at the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level. Most of the materials produced by staff fail this simple “8<sup>th</sup> grade” test. Insist that staff does better, and enlist the help of the CAC in this effort. Note that back in 1999, LCOG worked with some business and citizen groups to develop a tabloid insert that explained TransPlan to the general public. That insert was a great resource for the public. We need more of that.
11. **Educate yourselves and the public.** In cooperation with the CAC, consider more educational events. The occasional public forums are a good start, but these are run by staff. MPC and CAC should consider holding educational forums for the public, with the support of staff, not only before important decisions but also as part of an ongoing series of educational events. And don't underestimate the importance of members of the MPC taking the time to show up, talk with the public, and listen to their concerns and confusion in a less formal setting than a regular MPC meeting.
12. **Urge Lane County to act more like an ACT.** Two years ago, MPC took steps to act more like an Area Commission on Transportation (ACT). But MPC isn't the ACT; it's the MPO. The decision to form a Citizen Advisory Committee is a good approach to better fulfilling *federal* requirements for public involvement. But the issue of how Lane County can better fulfill *state* requirements for public involvement and decision making remains unaddressed. The issue should be of concern to MPC, as Commissioner Papé has explained: The Oregon Transportation Commission won't punitively punish Lane County for not acting more like an ACT, but Lane County is punishing itself because its substandard public involvement and decision making process results in projects that aren't as ready to go as in other areas.

Lastly, we want to wish you all a very happy New Year!

Sincerely,



Rob Zako  
Transportation Advocate  
1280-B East 28<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Eugene, OR 97403-1616  
Phone: (541) 343-5201  
Fax: (541) 683-6333  
[rob@friends.org](mailto:rob@friends.org)

P.S. The brief history presented above draws from suggestions from George Kloeppel and the following sources:

- MPC Bylaws, <http://www.lcog.org/meetings/mpc/MPCBylawsAdopted.pdf>
- LCOG Charter, <http://www.lcog.org/about/charter.html>
- LCOG Bylaws, <http://www.lcog.org/about/bylaws.html>
- LCOG 2002 Annual Report, <http://www.lcog.org/2002ar/default.htm>

We apologize in advance for any minor inaccuracies in this history.



534 SW Third Ave., Suite 300, Portland, OR 97204 • (503) 497-1000 • fax (503) 223-0073 • www.friends.org

Southern Oregon Office • P.O. Box 2442 • Grants Pass, OR 97528 • phone/fax (541) 474-1155

Willamette Valley Office • 189 Liberty St. NE, Suite 307A • Salem, OR 97301 • (503) 371-7261 • fax (503) 371-7596

Lane County Office • 120 West Broadway • Eugene, OR 97401 • (541) 431-7059 • fax (541) 431-7078

Central Oregon Office • P.O. Box 8813 • Bend, OR 97708 • (541) 382-7557 • fax (541) 382-7552

**Date:** November 9, 2004

**From:** Rob Zako, Transportation Advocate

**To:** Central Lane MPO

**Re:** Effectiveness of the public involvement process for the RTP update

Dear members of the Central Lane MPO policy board,

## Discussion

Federal regulations require that:

“[T]he metropolitan transportation planning process ... [i]nclude a proactive public involvement process that provides complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and supports early and continuing involvement of the public in developing plans and TIPs ...”<sup>1</sup>

I commend your staff for their efforts to involve the public in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) update. They are using a variety of means to notify the public of the update and to provide detailed information. When problems have arisen (for example, when no more copies of the draft RTP were available), they have been prompt and courteous in resolving the problems. I very much appreciate their efforts.

But despite all their good efforts, I am concerned that the public involvement process hasn't been very effective. For example, few others attended the public workshop I attended on November 4. Public interest in this update has been far below that of the 2001 *TransPlan* or the 2002 amendments. (And perhaps some of you might think that isn't such a bad thing!)

What are the indicators of an effective public involvement process?

“A good indicator of an effective public involvement process is a well-informed public, which feels it has opportunities to contribute input into transportation decision making processes through a broad array of involvement opportunities at all stages of decision making. In contrast, an ineffective process is one that relies on one or two public meetings or hearings to obtain input immediately prior to decision making on developed draft plans and programs. Public meetings that are well attended, frequent news coverage on transportation issues, public forums where a broad representation of diverse interests is in attendance, and plans, TIPs, MIS alternatives, and project designs which reflect an understanding and

---

<sup>1</sup> 23 CFR 450.316(b)(1)

consideration of public input are all indicators that the public involvement process is effective.”<sup>2</sup>

By this standard, the RTP public involvement process isn't very effective. There are only two public hearings scheduled, the second one the same day you are scheduled to adopt the RTP update. To the best of my knowledge, there has been no news coverage of the RTP update. Public meetings have not been well attended and there hasn't been a broad representation of diverse interest.

Perhaps the public doesn't believe that “active involvement is worthwhile” and that they can “have direct and meaningful impact on ... decisions.” After all, most people lead busy lives and only come out when they feel there is an important decision at issue.

Indeed, are you even making a decision, i.e., choosing amongst different alternatives? If the choice were between adopting the RTP update and not adopting it, then that really wouldn't be decision. Perhaps there really are no alternatives, hence no real decision before you, hence really no need for public involvement. More precisely, perhaps there are really no important policy decisions to be made, only technical decisions that are best made by staff. As staff continues to emphasize that this is a “minor” update, maybe there is little to decide.

But the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration note:

“Minor changes in plans ... generally can be made after the MPO ... has completed its public comment process without further opportunities for public involvement. ... However, MPOs ... should identify what are to be considered as minor changes, with the public, during the development of the public involvement process. What may appear to be minor to the public agency may not be considered minor to the public. ...”<sup>3</sup>

## Recommendations

In order to better meet federal requirements for a “proactive public involvement process,” I recommend the following:

1. **Clarifying the Nature of Decision:** Staff should provide the MPO policy board and the public with a clearer summary of the nature of the decision.<sup>4</sup> The summary should answer the following basic questions:
  - a. What is being adopted for what purpose?
  - b. Who is the adopting body?
  - c. What are the approval criteria, i.e., what regulations must the plan satisfy?

<sup>2</sup> “FHWA/FTA Questions and Answers on Public Involvement in Transportation Decisionmaking,” Question 3, [http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/pub\\_inv/q\\_and\\_a.htm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/pub_inv/q_and_a.htm)

<sup>3</sup> “FHWA/FTA Questions and Answers on Public Involvement in Transportation Decisionmaking,” Question 14, [http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/pub\\_inv/q\\_and\\_a.htm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/pub_inv/q_and_a.htm)

<sup>4</sup> The first page of the draft, “Context of Transportation Planning in the Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Area,” Figure 2, and Chapter 3, Part Three (“Regional Transportation Plan Amendment Process”) provide partial answers to these questions. But more clarity is needed.

- d. What is the affected geographic area?
  - e. What types of goals, objectives and policies, if any, are under consideration?
  - f. What types projects (regionally significant, federally funded, urban standards, etc.), if any, are under consideration?
  - g. What types of implementation strategies, if any, are under consideration?
  - h. What performance measures, if any, are under consideration?
  - i. What is the relation of the RTP to other plans? In particular, how is the RTP to be used guiding state and local decisions for plan amendments, funding decisions, implementation, etc.? Which plan applies when and where?
2. **Policy Issues and Alternatives:** Staff should provide the MPO policy board with a list of policy questions at issue in the RTP update, reasonable alternative answers to each question, and the pros and cons of each alternative. These questions should reflect the 16 factors federal regulations state “shall be explicitly considered, analyzed as appropriate, and reflected in the planning process products.”<sup>5</sup> The list should also highlight outstanding challenges, for example, inadequate funding, failure to meet mobility and other performance standards, or issues that have been identified since the last adoption. If staff determines that there are no policy questions to be decided, they should indicate so. This information shall be provided to the public in advance of a public hearing.
  3. **News Story:** Staff should contact at least one local newspaper about running a story about the RTP update, ideally prior to the primary public hearing on November 18. A good reporter will want to know: “Why should the public care?” The list of policy questions should provide the answer.
  4. **Citizen Advisory Committee:** Ideally, before the adoption of the RTP update, the Citizen Advisory Committee should meet at least once and make a recommendation to the MPO policy board. If that is not feasible, staff should personally encourage each member of or applicant to the CAC to provide their own comments on the RTP update prior to adoption.
  5. **Summary of and Responses to Public Comments:** Prior to adoption of the RTP update, staff should provide a written summary of and responses to public comments in accordance with federal regulations.<sup>6</sup>
  6. **Readable Costs:** Staff should provide a list of projects with costs that are readable. While, in general, the legislative format is very useful, it does make the costs practically incomprehensible.

---

<sup>5</sup> 23 CFR 450.316(a)

<sup>6</sup> 23 CFR 450.316(b)(1) requires the MPO to:

“(v) Demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input received during the planning and program development processes;” and

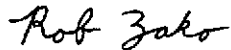
“(vii) When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft transportation plan ... (including the financial plan) as a result of the public involvement process..., a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made part of the final plan ...”

## Parting Words

The following words from the Federal Highway Administration, which I have shared with you before, continue to provide clear guidance for the public involvement process:

“... It has long been a challenge to grab and hold people’s interest in a project or plan, convince them that active involvement is worthwhile, and provide the means for them to have direct and meaningful impact on its decisions. ... Public involvement is more than just a hearing, or one meeting near the end of the process. It needs to be an early and continuing part of the process. It is essential to ‘know’ the community’s values in order to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts as well as narrow the field of alternative modes (for planning) and alignments (for projects). The community also needs to understand the tradeoffs and constraints behind the process, and to ‘buy-in’ to the project. ...”<sup>7</sup>

Sincerely,



Rob Zako  
Transportation Advocate  
1280-B East 28<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Eugene, OR 97403-1616  
Phone: (541) 343-5201  
Fax: (541) 683-6333  
[rob@friends.org](mailto:rob@friends.org)

---

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/pubinv2.htm>

## Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization

---

**From:** WIEDERHOLD Kathi M  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 31, 2006 4:26 PM  
**To:** Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization  
**Subject:** FW: Public Participation Plan

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Sandhu, Satvinder [mailto:Satvinder.Sandhu@fhwa.dot.gov]  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 24, 2006 3:04 PM  
**To:** SCHWETZ Tom B; WIEDERHOLD Kathi M  
**Cc:** YOUNG Jon (SMTP); Conroy, Ned <FTA>  
**Subject:** Public Participation Plan

**Kathi/Tom:**

Thanks for providing a copy of the Draft Public Participation Plan released for public comment on July 13, 2006. We appreciate your efforts in taking a head start to complete the public participation plan required pursuant to passage of SAFETEA-LU. The review of the draft plan has generated following comments for your consideration, as you develop the final plan:

- 1) It is noticed that the plan was developed by the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC). However, the plan does not indicate the make up of the CAC. Please address how this meets the requirement of SAFETEA-LU [Section 6001)(i)(5)(B)] that the public participation plan shall be developed in consultation with all interested parties and publics listed on Page 5 of the Plan.
- 2) The purpose of the plan is well explained under 'Purpose of the Public Participation Plan' on Page 3. However, the document does not clearly guide the public for participation opportunities and means of communication during the development of the various planning documents.
- 3) Chapter III. Providing Public Input, indicates that specific public outreach strategy will be developed for the update of each work product. Do you intend to develop the plan for each planning product, in consultation with the interested parties, and make available for 45-day public comment period?
- 4) The current 72 page document devotes only 3 pages to the 'Providing Input' section and remaining dedicated mostly to the regulations and reasons this public participation plan has to be developed. It will be more useful to provide additional information that encourages public participation in the development of the planning and programming documents.
- 5) The policies outlining annual evaluation and review of the public participation plan to improve public participation show a strong commitment from MPO to invite public participation in the development of planning and programming documents. That is greatly commended.

These are FHWA comments only and have not been coordinated with FTA. Thanks. Satvinder

**Satvinder S. Sandhu, P.E.**

9/20/2006

**Community Planner**

**Federal Highway Administration**

**Oregon Division**

**530 Center Street, NE, Suite 100**

**Salem, OR 97301**

**Tel: (503) 587-4723**

**Email: [satvinder.sandhu@fhwa.dot.gov](mailto:satvinder.sandhu@fhwa.dot.gov)**

**Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization**

---

**From:** WIEDERHOLD Kathi M  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 31, 2006 4:26 PM  
**To:** Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization  
**Subject:** FW: Comments: MPO Draft Public Participation Plan

-----Original Message-----

From: Rob Handy [mailto:handyrob@hotmail.com]  
Sent: Friday, August 11, 2006 8:28 AM  
To: WIEDERHOLD Kathi M  
Cc: Diana.J.Freedland@nwp01.usace.army.mil  
Subject: Comments: MPO Draft Public Participation Plan

To: Central Lane MPO and the MPC

Re: Draft MPO Public Participation Plan

I would like you to consider the process used by the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) in hosting a recent Public Meeting, hosted on June 29, 2006 at Harris Hall in Eugene, concerning a permit application from the developers of the Hayden Homes subdivision in west Eugene.

The developers plans included proposals for building homes near the confluence of the Amazon (A-1) Channel and Greenhill Tributary in an area north of the West Eugene Wetlands. A significant response rate during a ACOE and Fish and Wildlife service public comment period raised concerns about dwellings at the confluence of the two waterways, and the width of setbacks along the two channels.

ACOE set a time and energetically posted notice for a Public Meeting, inviting the Hayden Homes developer, the public, F&W, and other interested parties to attend and participate in a discussion and to exchange information with all parties. This meeting was facilitated by Diana Freedland of ACOE.

The ACOE Public meeting was an exceptional example of how healthy Public Participation can be accomplished. Not only was there adequate time for all parties to exchange vital information and perspectives, but there was sufficient time and a healthy atmosphere created for additional dialogue and response between all parties that led to greater understanding about the issues at hand. Additionally, a minutes recorder was onhand memorializing all comments and dialogue, further giving interested parties confidence that the agencies were sincere in engaging public participation. The success of this Public Meeting was due to the farsightedness of ACOE in formatting the meeting, as well as the excellent work done by the ACOE facilitator.

As Chair of the River Road Community Organization (RRCO), Co-Chair of the Neighborhood Leaders Council (NLC), and regular attendee and submitter of comment to the Central Lane MPC on issues relevant to the MPO, I do understand the challenges inherent in engaging significant and substantive public input into policy decision making.

I urge the MPO and MPC staff and decision makers to take a thorough look at the ACOE model used at their June 29 Public Meeting. Additionally, I urge you to please contact the ACOE facilitator (cc'ed here), to learn more about why and how ACOE crafted a format that had such unusual and effective interaction with all interested parties.

Thank you

Rob Handy  
455 1/2 River Road  
Eugene, OR. 97404  
(541) 689 6372

cc: Diana.J.Freedland@nwp01.usace.army.mil