

October 2, 2003

To: Metropolitan Policy Committee
From: Paul Thompson
Subject: Item 4c: Options for Responding to MPC Public Involvement
Subcommittee Recommendation to Add Citizen Representatives to TPC

Background

At the December 12, 2002 Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC) meeting, MPC members agreed by consensus to form a subcommittee 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 met four times from February through June, 2003. The Subcommittee presented their recommendations for improvements to the Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) public involvement process to MPC on July 3, 2003, in a memo of that same date. The primary focus of the Subcommittee's recommendations was to improve the MPO's public involvement process in accordance with the public involvement standards contained in the Oregon Transportation Commission's (OTC) draft *Policy on Formation and Operation of Area Commissions on Transportation*. This memo outlines five options for implementing the following primary recommendation of the Subcommittee to MPC:

Increase Citizen & Stakeholder Representation in MPO Transportation Planning Process

1. Add citizen and stakeholder representation to the MPO's Transportation Planning Committee (TPC)
 - Recommend citizen and stakeholder representatives appointed by MPC for two-year terms
 - Possibly appoint MPC representative to TPC
 - Possibly appoint Lane County Roads Advisory Committee (RAC) representative to TPC
 - Voting positions
 - a. When appropriate, identify potential freight and other additional specific-interest stakeholders for inclusion in the MPO advisory committee processes on an ad-hoc basis (Note that this is an element in the MPO's FY03-04 adopted work program.)
 - b. MPC should review TPC Bylaws and update as needed.

The Subcommittee indicated the desire to involve citizens at an earlier point in the process, before issues are framed and options narrowed. The Subcommittee noted the following points in their discussion leading to this recommendation:

- Lack of true public *involvement* (as opposed to public comment) in decision-making process. No citizen stakeholder representation on MPO advisory (or other) committee at any point in the MPO transportation planning process. Currently, the MPO's Transportation Planning Committee (TPC) is the main technical advisory committee to the MPO policy board. TPC is fully comprised of staff.
- Public input provided during public comment periods and public hearings is one-way. Insufficient two-way dialog between citizen stakeholders and decision-makers. Insufficient documentation of consideration of, and response to, public input.

Options for Expanding Public Involvement in the Transportation Decision Making Process

Staff kept in mind the broader goal of improving public involvement in the transportation decision making process when generating options for MPC's consideration. The options outline ways to add citizen representatives at various levels, reflect research on how Portland METRO includes citizen representatives, and includes an option that uses a series of techniques to improve public involvement.

1. Add citizen representatives to TPC to attend all meetings, either as full voting members, members who can vote only on recommendations to MPC, or as nonvoting advisory members.
 - a. Alternative to maintain Technical Advisory Role of TPC – Add only “transportation technical/professional” representatives (such as freight, land use, etc.) to TPC.
2. Create a Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) to advise TPC or MPC on transportation-related issues. One or two CAC representatives could then serve on TPC, while TPC would have one seat on the CAC. The CAC would be primarily staffed by MPO staff, with support from the local jurisdictions as needed.
 - a. Alternative to maintain Technical Advisory Role of TPC – Create a “Transportation Technical/Professional” Advisory Committee (such as freight, land use, etc.) to TPC.
3. Add citizen representatives to MPC, to attend as voting or nonvoting members when TPC brings transportation-related agenda items.

Discussion

There are several questions to resolve in deciding how and whether to add citizen representatives to the process: What would be the role of the citizens? Would it be preferable to specifically involve citizens with technical or professional expertise related to the MPO issues? Does MPC want to hear the input of citizens directly, or have the citizen input incorporated into materials that staff presents? Adding citizen representatives to either TPC or MPC would require a change in bylaws. Options that work within the existing committee structure will be more cost effective than options that add a citizen committee or a series of outreach events.

Adding technical/professional citizen representatives to TPC would facilitate citizen input of a technical nature before the options are shaped for MPC, to be incorporated into the materials staff prepares for MPC. It would be time-consuming to bring non-technical citizen representatives up to speed on the technical aspects of a given issue/project at the TPC level, where technical discussion is usually streamlined. TPC could modify options to reflect citizen input and/or summarize and report citizen input for MPC's consideration along with the staff report.

Should citizen representatives serve on the TPC in a voting capacity, voting privileges would include TPC actions that are advisory to MPC. Technical and administrative actions of the TPC would be open to input from the citizen representatives.

Adding citizen representatives to MPC would offer the efficiency of enabling the citizens to receive a staff briefing at the same time as MPC and facilitate broader citizen input at the point of MPC decision making. MPC would receive the citizen input directly and consider it as part of their discussion and deliberation. This option more closely parallels ODOT's requirements for ACTs.

By whatever option citizen representatives are incorporated, the responsibility for determining the appointees should rest with MPC. The regional role of the MPO should be kept in mind when appointing representatives, drawn from diverse interest groups, who will speak for the citizens of the region, not for any one jurisdiction. Direction for selecting citizen representatives could be drawn from the guidelines for establishing representative citizen input to statewide and other processes, such as the following guidance from the *Oregon Transportation Commission Policy on Formation and Operation of Area Commissions on Transportation (ACTs)*:

- . . . reflective of . . . population and interest groups and . . . broadly representative of those impacted by . . . recommendations.
- . . . representation should be from interested stakeholders which may represent, but are not limited to: freight, trucking, bicycle, pedestrian, public transportation system, public interest advocacy groups, environmental, land use, local citizens, business, education, public safety providers, non-profit organizations, etc.

- Members should be . . . selected so that transportation recommendations are coordinated with other local and Regional community development activities, creating consensus . . . on transportation issues and priorities.

Regardless of which option MPC chooses, the MPO will be incorporating into its public involvement process a series of outreach techniques designed to solicit broader citizen input on transportation projects and programs on an ongoing basis, such as: a monthly/bimonthly/quarterly email to key interest groups, activists, and community members; a series of interactive informal workshops or round table discussions; and regular newsletters.

Using a series of outreach techniques to expand public involvement offers a flexible way to solicit broader public input, which could be varied from year to year or project to project. This work will be used in conjunction with any of the options described in this memo.

Action Requested: Staff requests that MPC discuss and consider the options for addressing the MPC Public Involvement Subcommittee's recommendation to add citizen and stakeholder representation to the Transportation Planning Committee, and provide direction to staff.