



Memorandum

Attachment B. Summary of Engagement Feedback to Inform Development of MTC's Draft 2023 Public Participation Plan for the San Francisco Bay Area

MTC staff collected ideas and suggestions about public engagement, including best practices for public participation in the planning arena, in the following ways:

- Presentation before MTC's Policy Advisory Council (November 9, 2022)
- Public Participation Survey (November 9, 2022–December 9, 2022)
- Group interviews with MTC's Policy Advisory Council Members (December 2022)
- Review of MPO partners' public participation plans (November–December 2022)
- Research public engagement best-practices (November 2022–January 2023)

Summary of Feedback

Comments from MTC's Policy Advisory Council

November 9 meeting and group interviews:

- What methods of engagement have you found most successful — both from Plan Bay Area/MTC or other efforts?
 - Share information with the Council so they can share with their networks.
 - Paid participation in focus groups.
 - Social media surveys
 - Workshops with multiple tables allows for one-on-one conversation.
 - Games
 - Bringing the meeting to the people; pop-up workshops; small group discussions instead of big public community meetings
 - Presentation style public meetings are not as useful.
 - Zoom, but not for activities that are too complex.
 - Reach groups not often accessed: seniors, students, homeless and multilingual individuals.
 - Set up 90-minute phone calls or Zoom meetings with community health workers or volunteers in their own languages.
- Have you encountered innovative engagement methods from other agencies or organizations? If so, what are they? Why were they successful?
 - There should be a community building component to outreach.

- Contribute to it being less extractive and transactional.
- Engagement at community gardens.
- Bus and bus stop signage
- Break it down into little chunks; mini versions of a series of meetings.
- Use gaming to get people involved (see Marin County Game of Floods) — that is especially appealing to young people.
- Education campaigns
- Hold different classes or fairs that aren't directly related to your engagement work, like Zumba classes, which will help build community relationships and it's a good way to learn more about each other.
- How do you prefer to receive information about MTC's work? How do you think your communities prefer to receive information? Any recommendations that could help us grow our contacts database?
 - Receiving information from a trusted connection is most effective.
 - Social media sharing is most effective when the information shared comes from a trusted staff or leader of an organization.
 - Compensation is important, as well as honoring people's time especially when it's around their time off; provide gift cards.
 - Offer a variety of choices for providing input.
 - Avoid "checking the box" activities.
 - Add MTC events to local calendars of events.
- Are there creative partnerships that MTC staff should consider developing?
 - Office of Equity in Sonoma County
 - Identify people in leadership roles in organizations that are well networked/connected.
 - Find organizing engines that work with community organizers.
 - County *promotores* programs
 - Supervisor aides
 - School districts; reach out to community colleges.
- Anything else we should consider to help improve our engagement efforts?
 - Language-specific opportunities and language-specific outreach is important; people who speak other languages deserve to participate in these processes — they are as vital to the process as others, and they deserve a space.
 - Succinct information posted on how to stay involved, who are the contacts, and here are the meetings.
 - Toolkits with social media content and translated into different languages that partners can use to share information; reach out to organizations/partners to help push out information for us.
 - Connect and coordinate with local communications staff, PIOs.

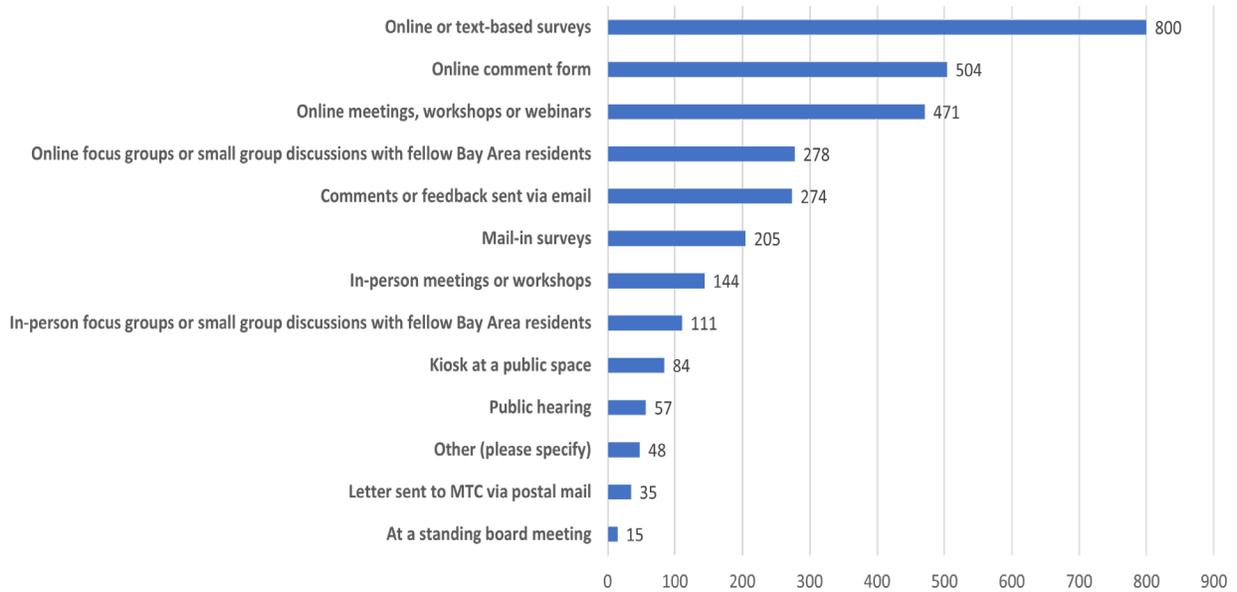
- Offer training to help the public use new technologies.
- Provide recordings for those who cannot attend online or in-person meetings.
- Create introductory materials for Policy Advisory Council members, committee members and community leaders so they can easily introduce MTC's projects to their networks.
- Creating ways to show information, like "journey mapping," which comes from users' experiences and helps explain things in a more concrete way.
- Use newspaper articles and partner with local unions to send emails to their members, most of them would meet some of our low-income requirements.

Public Engagement Survey Results

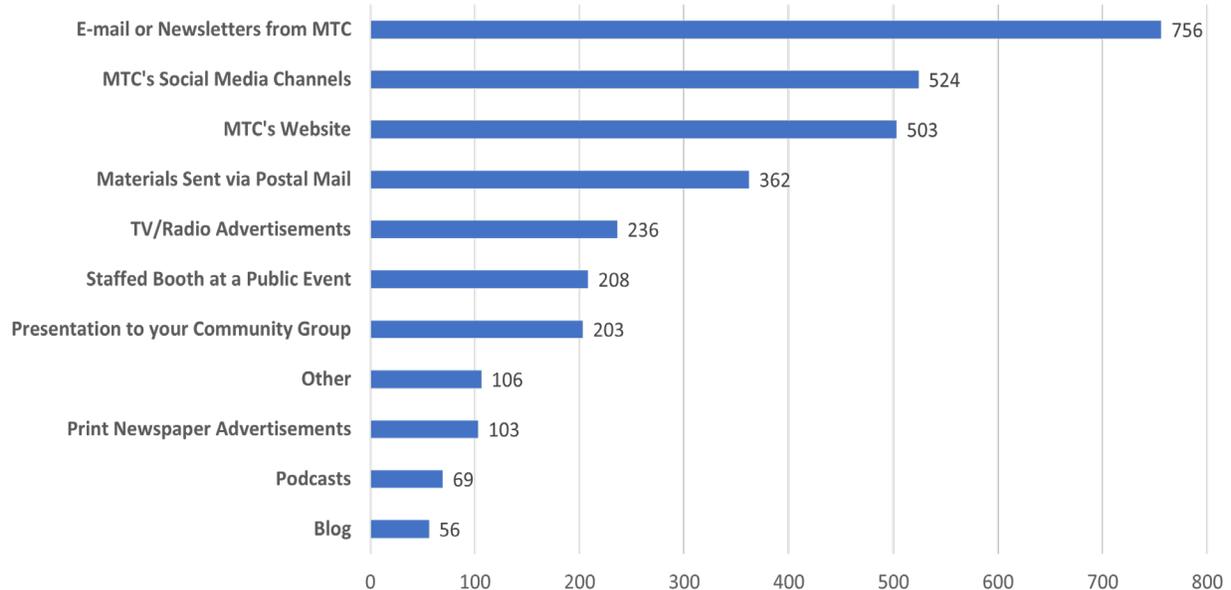
Staff conducted an online survey that was open from November 9 to December 9, 2022. The survey was available in Chinese, English and Spanish. Information about the survey was sent to local jurisdiction, transit agency, CTA, Caltrans and other partner agency staff; community-based organization partners; Tribal partners; news outlets; as well as the general public. Staff also [issued a press release on November 9](#) about the opportunity to provide input and conducted paid digital promotion on Facebook in three languages (Chinese, English and Spanish), and organic social media promotion on Twitter. Information on the survey was [also posted on The Bay Link blog on November 9](#). A total of 1,042 individual survey responses were received. A summary of the survey results starts in the following page.

By far, the pandemic’s impact has cemented the expectation for virtual engagement opportunities — both to provide input and to stay informed:

What methods would you most likely use to express your views to MTC? Please select your top THREE choices from the options below.



What is the best way for MTC staff to communicate with you about MTC’s decisions, activities and programs? Please select your top THREE choices from the options below.



When asked what would make it easiest for people to participate in and provide input on key policy decisions MTC makes, respondent ranked “provide online/telephone options for participating rather than in-person events” as their top option — with over half of survey participants ranking this as their top option. Presenting information at events people are already attending was ranked second with less that 30% of participants ranking this as their top option. Compensating participants was a distant third with less than 8% of participants ranking it as their top option.

The open-ended responses also prioritized virtual engagement. The majority of comments received focused on providing options for virtual engagement, as well as maintaining the virtual engagement opportunities that emerged during the pandemic, such as the ability to participate remotely in board meetings and other engagement events. The second most-received comments focused on providing engagements opportunities that “meet people where they already are,” including pop-up workshops, tabling at community events, and having information available at transit hubs/stops. A large number of comments focused on the need to improve communications by using plain language and reducing technical jargon, illustrated by this comment:

*“Slides in most government presentations are way too overloaded with wordiness, multiple charts on a single slide, etc. Turns people off, divides attention, makes it *more difficult* to take*

in the info. Better to keep only the key points on slides and move the details into handouts and accessible Word docs and/or PDFs.”

Surprisingly, many comments received highlighted the need to better inform the public rather than to engage them. Specifically, comments focused on the need for more “education” — about who MTC is and the individual projects we work on. Several comments also highlighted the need to build trust by reporting back on the impact of their input, as well as setting clear expectation about when their input does or does not influence policy development and decision-making.