

Metropolitan Transportation Commission Policy Advisory Council

November 9, 2022

Agenda Item 10

MTC's Public Participation Plan Update Approach

Subject:

Overview of the approach for updating MTC's Public Participation Plan — slated for adoption in late spring 2023.

Background:

Federal regulations require MTC to adopt a [public participation plan](#) (PPP) to provide the public and our partners with ample opportunities to be involved in the transportation planning process. Specifically, the regulations require that metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), like MTC, inform the public and our partners about how they can participate in the development of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). State statutes further require MPOs to develop an engagement plan for the development of the RTP and Sustainable Communities Strategy — the region's long-range plan, known as Plan Bay Area 2050.

Due to the nature of the specific federal and state requirements, the PPP has historically been focused exclusively on the long-range plan and the TIP. As we begin the update of the PPP, staff believes the scope of the public participation plan should be expanded to provide the public with an overview of how they can get involved in other agency projects and activities with opportunities for input and engagement, as well as to serve as a guiding document for staff to conduct meaningful engagement. The current update also provides a timely opportunity to incorporate MTC's Equity Platform into the plan, as well as update our guiding principles and engagement strategies.

Current Plan:

MTC's current PPP, last updated in 2018, gives an overview of how interested members of the public can participate in key transportation planning, policy and investment decisions at MTC. The document can be found at this [link](#). The plan details the process for updating, amending and modifying MTC's long-range plan and the TIP, and it explains methods for providing continuous engagement, including the role of advisory groups as well as the Commission's own committees. The PPP also summarizes various methods for public engagement; describes how MTC consults

with Tribal governments and other public agencies; and discusses the process for evaluating and updating the PPP. Per state law, the PPP must detail the process and schedule for public engagement goals and opportunities relating to the next update to the region's long-range plan, including information about regional forecasting, the preferred land use and investment strategy process, and issuance of the draft and final plan.

MTC's public involvement procedures are built on the following **guiding principles**:

- Public participation is a dynamic activity that requires teamwork and commitment at all levels of the MTC organization.
- One size does not fit all — input from diverse perspectives enhances the process.
- Effective public outreach and involvement requires relationship building with local governments, stakeholders and advisory groups.
- Engaging interested persons in 'regional' transportation issues is challenging, yet possible, by making it relevant, removing barriers to participation, and communicating in clear, compelling language and visuals.
- An open and transparent public participation process empowers low-income communities and communities of color to participate in decision-making that affects them (adopted as an environmental justice principle by the Commission in 2006).

Additionally, MTC follows five **strategies** for involving the public:

1. Early engagement is best
2. Access to all
3. Response to written comments
4. Inform Commissioners and the public of areas of agreement and disagreement
5. Notify the public of proposed or final actions

Proposed Update Approach:

Staff will seek to broaden the scope of the PPP to include information on how the public and interested partners can stay engaged and informed about the agency's programs and projects in addition to Plan Bay Area and the TIP. As part of the update, staff also will work to incorporate

MTC's Equity Platform into the PPP. The PPP update will be conducted in five phases: research, development, engagement, revision, and adoption.

Staff has already begun the initial research phase, which involves identifying current best-practices for guiding principles, engagement strategies and methods, as well as performance metrics. As part of the research phase, staff will seek to interview partner-agency engagement staff and interested Policy Advisory Council members to help inform the development of the Draft PPP. Staff also will conduct an online public survey to gain a better understanding on how the public now prefers to be engaged under the "new normal," and will solicit new ideas and innovative methods for engaging with the public.

The development phase will happen this winter with staff developing the Draft PPP for a potential release date in late January. The Draft PPP release will kick off the engagement phase, which will include a webinar, press release, virtual small group discussions with CBOs, direct outreach to Policy Advisory Council members, online engagement, and a robust communications campaign that will include e-mail blasts, social media and blog posts, press releases and paid digital promotion. After the close of comments in mid-March, the revision phase begins with staff reviewing and analyzing public input and incorporating feedback into a revised draft. The revised PPP is slated to be released at the May MTC Planning Committee meeting, which starts the adoption phase, with recommendation for final adoption at the May Commission meeting.

Next Steps:

Staff seeks the Council's feedback on the PPP's guiding principles and engagement strategies. This feedback will help inform the development of the Draft PPP. Additionally, in the coming weeks, staff would like to meet with interested Council members to discuss ideas for improving the plan and our engagement efforts through small-group discussion interviews.

As noted above, the Draft PPP is slated to be released in late January for a 45-day comment period that will include various engagement activities described above. Staff plans to return to the Council in spring 2023 to report back on what we heard and how the draft PPP will be revised. The revised Draft PPP is slated for release in May with adoption of the PPP by the Commission scheduled for May.

Issues:

None identified.

Recommendations:

Information.

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Presentation