

Agenda Item 5a



METROPOLITAN
TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION

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Memorandum

TO: Policy Advisory Council

DATE: June 4, 2014

FR: Ellen Griffin

RE: MTC Public Engagement – Policy Advisory Council Brainstorming Results

At the May Policy Advisory Council meeting, members worked in three small groups to brainstorm ideas about public engagement. Attached is a summary of session comments, organized around concepts of messages, stakeholders and strategies. I will attend your June 11 meeting to follow-up and make sure we have accurately captured your ideas. The ideas will add value to MTC's public engagement efforts and will be considered as we begin work to update our Public Participation Plan this fall.

Attachment

J:\COMMITTE\Policy Advisory Council\Meeting Packets\2014\06-June_2014\5a_Public Engagement Brainstorming Results.doc

MTC Policy Advisory Council Recommendations for MTC Public Engagement May 2014

About the Message

1. Connect regional planning efforts to local plans (clarify how it supports locally designated Priority Development Areas (PDAs) or voter-approved transportation projects).
2. In presenting the need for transit improvements, highlight individual success stories of transit usage and PDA implementation (examples of successful engagement cited were the Ravenswood Business District in East Palo Alto and Bay Meadows in San Mateo)
3. Target outreach strategy and materials to multi-generational audience — need both low-tech and high-tech ideas, depending on audience (youth, seniors, general public, a particular geographic area)
4. Need to formulate the message so it resonates with people and gets their attention
5. Match number and complexity of survey questions to outreach technique (i.e., make questions shorter if surveying people at a bus stop)
6. Define acronyms/terminology in plain language (avoid planning terms)
7. Create the link between transportation and the environment in the messaging
8. Personalize the message: help people make the connection of how the plan will improve their life, and tell them what they get in their local community from regional planning and funds
9. Need to “sell” issues, such as why it’s important to promote and fund bike safety, etc.
10. There was a lot of misinformation spread about the last plan. The power of the rumor is very strong, so need to get ahead of the rumors by getting correct information out now.
11. When doing presentations at local meetings, put a face on it (e.g., who is “affordable” housing for: teachers, police, etc.)
12. Anticipate communication needs now and make sure materials are ready to go

About the Stakeholders

1. Inform/educate elected officials (attend city council meetings)
2. Reach out to the disability community through organizations such as Independent Living Centers
3. Involve the corporate sector – large corporations like Google, Kaiser, and Genentech, Medtronic and the UC school system – that already have their own transportation systems that can be used to educate their employees and partners
4. Work with reporters before and after meetings to advertise events and spread the word
5. Get CMAs, city councils, planning commissions, county boards of supervisors and Commissioners to help spread the word (break the barriers so that one agency can be part of another agency’s meeting); but don’t rely solely on CMAs for local public engagement.
6. Participate in assembly programs at high schools
7. Focus on kid-friendly activities and/or send information home in school registration parent packets in order to engage parents as well
8. Piggyback onto smaller community group meetings (such as existing homeowners’ associations and other existing meetings) to help distribute information and improve overall outreach process

Potential Strategies

1. Broad and varied outreach strategies should be used beyond meetings (online, youth, senior centers, etc.) if subject matter affects a broad swath of the population
2. Develop a speakers' bureau to train volunteers to speak on transportation issues
3. Use advisors to help publicize events and to provide information to their Commissioners; also let advisors know where gaps in communication exist in their county
4. Recruit a group of "ambassadors" to help relay information, encourage participation
5. Use social media, online ads and web site to lay the groundwork and target various age groups (including web-based "pop-up" ads)
6. Have more interactive meetings online; suggestions for online forums:
 - Require only zip code vs. full address in online forums
 - Moderate the forum
 - Identify available library computers where those without a computer can participate
7. Use video in a loop with information at city halls, as well as YouTube and cable
8. Sponsor a concert featuring environmentally-conscious entertainers.
9. Advertise at transit stations and on-board transit vehicles both to get the word out about events and clear up misinformation; provide a short URL (or #) to use when they get off
10. Look to technology and gaming:
 - Use apps, including advertising in apps
 - Make it fun: offer prizes, incentives, create games (SimCity, Minecraft, Bingo)
 - Encourage texting
 - Use 511 or other MTC web sites to get the word out
 - Spread the message through other agencies' web sites
11. Use discovery and science museums to host exhibits
12. Focus outreach and advertise in places where people congregate such as on board transit, at transit stations, flea markets, coffee houses, farmers' markets, bike parties, 5K runs, Sunday Streets events, First Fridays, libraries, senior centers, community centers, hospitals, etc.
13. Create a guidebook that defines housing/transportation types
14. Utilize Public Access Stations and public service announcements
15. Provide incentives as encouragement to participate (swag, transit fare, food, etc.)
16. Create fast/short surveys:
 - All multiple choice options, but end with an open-ended question
 - Offer both options: online survey such as Survey Monkey and hard copy
 - With a short interaction, provide the person with some "leave-behind" information
 - Have a short URL, ask individual to go online when they have time
17. Public Meetings
 - Visual voting is a good tool and should continue to be used
 - Use texting to allow people to provide comments during a meeting
 - Alternative ways to provide input
 - Pass out printed "rules of conduct" for meetings
 - Provide transportation to meetings when transit is unavailable (after hours)