



Dover/Kent County Metropolitan Planning Organization

P.O. Box 383, Dover, Delaware 19903
<http://www.doverkentmpo.org>

(302) 760-2713 FAX: (302) 739-6340

DOVER/KENT COUNTY MPO PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE JUNE 30, 2007 WORKSHOP MINUTES

Public Advisory Committee Members & Alternates attending:

Nicholas DiPasquale, Chair	Horace Cook, Vice Chair
Richard Ornauer	Dwight Meyer
Daniel Houghtaling	Arley Cooper
James Webster	Prameela Kaza
Diana Welch	William Saunders

Non-members attending:

Juanita Wiczoreck, MPO Staff	Joshua Waltz, MPO Staff
Daniel McNulty, MPO Staff	Peter Schaeffer, Member Candidate
Rexene Ornauer, Guest	Joan Terrell, NAACP
Ron Zink, Sierra Club	James Wolfe, Rep. Users of Public Transportation
Terry Villanueva, U S Fish & Wildlife	Benjamin Clendaniel, DRBA
Daniel Wolfensberger, CDEDC	Don Neizer, Smyrna Planning Commission
Tom Antoniou, City Cab	John Kepfer, Rep. Public Transportation employees
Chandra Aleong, Member Candidate	

Discussion: Development of a documented, comprehensive and sustainable public participation program.

Dan McNulty presented to the PAC Members, and guests in attendance five questions to be discussed on how to improve the public participation with the MPO. These are the question that were asked, and the responses they generated.

- **How should the MPO be conducting effective public outreach?** The PAC as a group came up with four major categories on how to improve public participation, each with several ideas on how to accomplish them.

Marketing the MPO was a key point stressed by a few of the PAC Members in reaching out to the public. The two ideas for implementing a marketing program expressed were one, hire or appoint a marketing director, and two, have a grad student do the marketing.

Advertising was the second idea brought up by the PAC members for encouraging public participation. Below is a list of the ideas that was generated by the PAC for advertising the MPO.

1. Utilizing the media by advertising on Comcast CN8, talk to local radio personalities, print notices and ads in the local newspapers in Smyrna and Harrington, and place ads on buses or cabs. Utilizing the internet by way of Internet Blogs, linking the MPO to other local websites, and placing ads in electronic newsletters. Also noted was contacting State retired Persons and "Base Retirement People" through their newsletters.
2. Getting out and speaking to public organizations like Rotary and Lions Clubs along with speaking at town council meetings, and civic groups was seen as a positive way to advertise the MPO.



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3. Other ideas expressed by various members of the PAC were get the University involved, think “Sexy” and “Green” when advertising, print notices in color, and raise the “Alarm” to get people to attend meetings.
4. Have a banquet/reception to say thanks and draw attention to the MPO.
5. Have municipalities on the PAC that have planning bodies.

The MPO Image, as viewed by the public, is something that needs improvement or clarification. The MPO Mission Statement was expressed as hard to understand by someone like a “Soccer Mom” PAC members suggested rewriting in a way that anyone could instantly know what the MPO stood for. They felt that the public is unclear of the powers and influence that the MPO has. Below are the ideas the PAC came up with to help improve the MPO Image.

1. Express the relevance of any project to the project, and how it relates to them. Do not sugar coat stuff, and provide “Cliff Notes” on describing the MPO and its functions.
2. They also wanted the MPO to get away from being perceived as a ‘rubber stamp’ agency and also reinforce the accountability to the Council.
3. The other two key points for improving the MPO Image was create a better website, and link the MPO to the subdivision process.

The Contributing Factors to our current volume of public participation had a lot to deal with the education of the Public and the attitude that they do not think about transportation until the bulldozers are in their backyard. The PAC also feels the public needs to be better informed by DelDOT on projects, and in the past they have never had the need to call the MPO for information.

1. The question, “Is the MPO in an identity crisis?” was brought up as a factor along with if we have a good idea the people will come to us.
2. To help attendance at meetings the idea of getting the right people involved was expressed such as Delaware’s legislators who need to get educated about the MPO.
3. The question “Why isn’t the county involved in roads” was asked as a possible contributing factor.

- **What Transportation Issues and processes are of greatest interest?** There were two main themes expressed by the PAC to answer this question.

How to notify people by means of word of mouth to neighbors from the public that has already attended a workshop, and links to popular websites were the two ideas expressed for Transportation Issue Notification.

Improvements was the other topic brought up by this question and mainly consisted of better communication to the public and keeping them better informed from the planning of a project, to the bulldozers breaking ground. The PAC also suggested the questions that need to be answered: “Who the MPO is?” and “what can the MPO do for them?”, or “how can we help? Also explaining, for example, how a lack of a budget and bus service affects them was an idea brought up for improvements.

1. One added note for interests was the idea of Mass Transit/Connectors in Smyrna.



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- **What other agencies should be involved in the process?** Two approaches were seen as ways to get other agencies involved. The first is a list of agencies not already involved in the MPO process, and the second is a way to make sure they stay involved.

Agencies to involve Here is the list of agencies and other entities that should be involved in the MPO process.

1. Disability Agencies
2. General population (Soccer Mom)
3. HOA's, Neighborhood Agencies, and Crime Watch Groups

Staying Involved by figuring out who the right people to contact was said to be key in keeping participation up.

1. Figure out who the staff is and not the chair, because they tend to be associated with the organization longer.
2. If you are the right person of contact, who is? Can you tell us?
3. Don't advocate and focus on one specialty group.

- **What level of involvement do constituents want to have with the MPO?** The PAC first said that we need to define it, and once it is defined for example; "our door is always open", use it. Also said was as PAC members' public speaking is key to getting the word out. They also stated that a common link to DelDOT and other local/state government offices needs to be defined and expressed to the public. Two slogans also emerged from the discussion.

"Planning is our middle name." Richard Ornauer

"This is where you plan your future" (Tom Antoniou)

- **What type of monitoring mechanism should be put into place to insure that the MPO is meeting SAFETEA-LU guidelines?**

To insure that the stakeholders are being kept informed and invited to the appropriate meetings and workshops, a very disciplined approach must be employed. Invite lists must be reviewed and those ignoring the invitations should be taken off the list and replaced.