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Effective Use of Citizen Advisory Committees for Transit Planning and Operations

A Synthesis of Transit Practice

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TRANSIT COOPERATIVE RESEARCH PROGRAM

TCRP SYNTHESIS 85

Effective Use of Citizen Advisory Committees for Transit Planning and Operations

A Synthesis of Transit Practice

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TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH BOARD

WASHINGTON, D.C.
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TRANSIT COOPERATIVE RESEARCH PROGRAM

The nation's growth and the need to meet mobility, environmental, and energy objectives place demands on public transit systems. Current systems, some of which are old and in need of upgrading, must expand service area, increase service frequency, and improve efficiency to serve these demands. Research is necessary to solve operating problems, to adapt appropriate new technologies from other industries, and to introduce innovations into the transit industry. The Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) serves as one of the principal means by which the transit industry can develop innovative near-term solutions to meet demands placed on it.

The need for TCRP was originally identified in *TRB Special Report 213—Research for Public Transit: New Directions,* published in 1987 and based on a study sponsored by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). A report by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), *Transportation 2000*, also recognized the need for local, problem-solving research. TCRP, modeled after the longstanding and successful National Cooperative Highway Research Program, undertakes research and other technical activities in response to the needs of transit service providers. The scope of TCRP includes a variety of transit research fields including planning, service configuration, equipment, facilities, operations, human resources, maintenance, policy, and administrative practices.

TCRP was established under FTA sponsorship in July 1992. Proposed by the U.S. Department of Transportation, TCRP was authorized as part of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA). On May 13, 1992, a memorandum agreement outlining TCRP operating procedures was executed by the three cooperating organizations: FTA, the National Academy of Sciences, acting through the Transportation Research Board (TRB); and the Transit Development Corporation, Inc. (TDC), a nonprofit educational and research organization established by APTA. TDC is responsible for forming the independent governing board, designated as the TCRP Oversight and Project Selection (TOPS) Committee.

Research problem statements for TCRP are solicited periodically but may be submitted to TRB by anyone at any time. It is the responsibility of the TOPS Committee to formulate the research program by identifying the highest priority projects. As part of the evaluation, the TOPS Committee defines funding levels and expected products.

Once selected, each project is assigned to an expert panel, appointed by TRB. The panels prepare project statements (requests for proposals), select contractors, and provide technical guidance and counsel throughout the life of the project. The process for developing research problem statements and selecting research agencies has been used by TRB in managing cooperative research programs since 1962. As in other TRB activities, TCRP project panels serve voluntarily without compensation.

Because research cannot have the desired impact if products fail to reach the intended audience, special emphasis is placed on disseminating TCRP results to the intended end users of the research: transit agencies, service providers, and suppliers. TRB provides a series of research reports, syntheses of transit practice, and other supporting material developed by TCRP research. APTA will arrange for workshops, training aids, field visits, and other activities to ensure that results are implemented by urban and rural transit industry practitioners.

The TCRP provides a forum where transit agencies can cooperatively address common operational problems. The TCRP results support and complement other ongoing transit research and training programs.

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FOREWORD

Transit administrators, engineers, and researchers often face problems for which information already exists, either in documented form or as undocumented experience and practice. This information may be fragmented, scattered, and unevaluated. As a consequence, full knowledge of what has been learned about a problem may not be brought to bear on its solution. Costly research findings may go unused, valuable experience may be overlooked, and due consideration may not be given to recommended practices for solving or alleviating the problem.

There is information on nearly every subject of concern to the transit industry. Much of it derives from research or from the work of practitioners faced with problems in their day-to-day work. To provide a systematic means for assembling and evaluating such useful information and to make it available to the entire transit community, the Transit Cooperative Research Program Oversight and Project Selection (TOPS) Committee authorized the Transportation Research Board to undertake a continuing study. This study, TCRP Project J-7, "Synthesis of Information Related to Transit Problems," searches out and synthesizes useful knowledge from all available sources and prepares concise, documented reports on specific topics. Reports from this endeavor constitute a TCRP report series, *Synthesis of Transit Practice*.

This synthesis series reports on current knowledge and practice, in a compact format, without the detailed directions usually found in handbooks or design manuals. Each report in the series provides a compendium of the best knowledge available on those measures found to be the most successful in resolving specific problems.

PREFACE

By Donna L. Vlasak
Senior Program Officer
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This synthesis describes the state of the practice for involving advisory committees in transit planning and operations, exploring the experiences from a few agencies in detail. The purpose of this report is to provide practitioners with guidance about how their colleagues across the country are involving advisory committees and ideas for how to structure successful advisory committees.

This synthesis is based on the results from survey responses received from transit agencies and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) in 46 states and the District of Columbia. More than 80% of respondents indicated that they had involved an advisory committee in the past 3 years. Additionally, two transit agencies and three MPOs were selected for case studies to highlight their successful practices for committees with different structures and authority levels providing input on different kinds of agency and MPO activities.

Kristin Hull, CH2M Hill, Portland, Oregon, collected and synthesized the information and wrote the report, under the guidance of a panel of experts in the subject area. The members of the topic panel are acknowledged on the preceding page. This synthesis is an immediately useful document that records the practices that were acceptable within the limitations of the knowledge available at the time of its preparation. As progress in research and practice continues, new knowledge will be added to that now at hand.

CONTENTS

EFFECTIVE USE OF CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEES FOR TRANSIT PLANNING AND OPERATIONS

SUMMARY

Advisory committees composed mainly of community members go by many names, ranging from stakeholder working groups to citizen advisory committees. These groups often form the backbone of transit agency and metropolitan planning organization (MPO) public involvement programs, supporting both transit planning and operations. This synthesis report examines the range of approaches to advisory committee membership, operations, roles, and authority; it also highlights successful practices as identified by transit agencies and MPOs throughout the country. It is designed to assist public involvement practitioners, transit planners, and project managers in the design of advisory committees as part of the agency's or MPO's outreach program.

This synthesis is focused on the operations and management of committees rather than on substantive outcomes. It includes a review of the relevant literature, information gathered from a survey of transit agencies and MPOs, and case studies that highlight successful practices. The literature review, agency and MPO survey, and case studies reference ad hoc committees formed to provide short-term input on specific projects, programs, or policies on a limited basis, as well as standing committees that provide long-term input on day-to-day operations or specific issues.

The review of literature provides the regulatory and historic framework for agency and MPO public involvement in decision making and provides context for accepted best practices as described in FTA guidebooks. The movement toward broader public involvement in transportation decision making began with the passage of the National Environmental Policy Act in 1969 and was expanded under transportation funding authorization bills in the 1990s and 2000s. The use of advisory committees is an accepted way to meeting public involvement guidelines described in implementation guidebooks. The literature review describes research on the operations and structure of advisory committees, including how advisory committees are defined and when they are most useful. The literature refers almost exclusively to ad hoc committees, rather than standing committees.

The synthesis includes the survey results of transit agencies and metropolitan planning organizations. Overall, 232 responses to the 62-question survey were received from 206 agencies. Responses were received from throughout the country, with most of the survey responses coming from California, Florida, and Pennsylvania. More surveys were received from transit agencies than from MPOs. More than 80% of responses were received from agencies that had involved an advisory committee in their planning during the past 3 years. The results show that advisory committee authority and role, structure, and membership vary greatly among agencies, and indicate high levels of satisfaction with the advisory committee process.

Key lessons learned from the synthesis include the following:

- Clear expectations and communication about committee roles and responsibilities contribute to an advisory committee's success.
- For committee membership the need for representation of all viewpoints can be balanced with the need to maintain a manageable committee size.

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- Agencies find value in the input provided by advisory committees and think of them as an indispensable part of the public involvement process.
- Many agencies employ professional public involvement staff to support committees and other outreach activities.
- Committee evaluation can lead to improved effectiveness.

Case studies were drawn from survey responses and recommendations from public involvement practitioners. The five case studies highlight successful practices found in a wide range of committee types and circumstances. The case studies include the following:

- The Minneapolis Metropolitan Council has designed a 40-member committee to provide input on the development of the Central Corridor Light Rail Project. The committee includes a diverse membership that mirrors the communities affected by the project. Through careful planning, training, and organization, all committee members are able to participate meaningfully in committee activities.
- TriMet, in Portland, Oregon, has developed a robust committee structure for each major capital project. This structure bridges changes in leadership, when projects move from the planning phases at Metro (the MPO) to the design and construction phases at TriMet (the transit agency). The structure provides a place for all agency partners and community members to participate and provide input on the issues most important to them.
- Valley Metro in Phoenix, Arizona, has developed an advisory committee that oversees contractor activities and determines how financial incentives are distributed to contractors. In addition to rating contractor performance, the Community Advisory Board serves several functions, including providing input on construction mitigation activities to acting as a voice for the community during actual light rail construction.
- King County Metro Transit, in Seattle, Washington, began using community sounding boards to advise the County Council on service changes in response to community controversy in the early 1990s. Today, a sounding board is formed every time the agency needs to change service in a particular area. The County Council expects a report from sounding boards before making decisions about service changes.
- The Miami–Dade MPO in Florida has a structured 42-member standing citizen advisory committee that provides input on transportation planning issues. The group breaks into subcommittees to address specific issues, including those related to transit. When the MPO undertakes a corridor study, an ad hoc committee is formed that includes community members from the study area.

Taken together, the literature review, survey, and case studies demonstrate the importance of paying close attention to the details of committee operations and organization, as well as carefully considering the agency's and MPO's goals and needs when planning for committee involvement. Reported best practices tended toward organizing and planning principles rather than consistent advice about the practices that ensure well-functioning committees. As demonstrated by the survey results, practices at agencies and MPOs that successfully involve advisory committees vary in many specific ways. The case studies demonstrate that successful involvement of advisory committees relies on practices that suit the community's needs and context, careful planning, and support of advisory committee process.

The report concludes with topics for further study and research about the involvement of advisory committees in transit planning and operations. These topics include the following:

- Selection of the appropriate advisory committee structures and designs that work best
- Establishment, management, and involvement of standing committees
- Evaluation of committee effectiveness
- Facilitation of effective meetings
- Committee involvement at smaller transit agencies.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

Citizen or community advisory committees are a commonly used tool for involving the public in making decisions about transit planning and operations. The structure, function, membership, and management of these groups vary as much as the agencies they advise and the communities they represent. They are known by a variety of names, ranging from citizen or community advisory committees (both abbreviated as CAC) to stakeholder working groups and community task forces. These groups nearly always have a few things in common: they are aimed at creating informed stakeholders, are a sounding board for ideas, and benefit from clearly communicated expectations about authority, goals, and protocols.

Public involvement became common in transportation circles in the early 1970s after the passage of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in 1969. With NEPA, the federal government, for the first time, required the public to be involved in decisions that affected the environment (*1*). In reality, NEPA required only public notice, access to information, and, in some cases, a public hearing. Today, the practice of public involvement has become more sophisticated and practitioners have deep toolboxes ranging from simple open houses to hands-on workshops and interactive Web tools. Despite this proliferation of ideas about how to involve community members in the decision-making process, CACs still have currency. Involvement of these committees is a standard practice for many metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) and agencies and often is the foundation of a public involvement program.

Although advisory committees are commonly used to involve the public, they are not all the same. Advisory committees vary greatly in terms of purpose, membership, structure, and operations between and even within agencies. This synthesis describes the state of the practice for involving advisory committees in transit planning and operations, exploring the experiences from a few agencies in detail. The purpose of this report is to provide practitioners with guidance about how their colleagues across the country are involving advisory committees and ideas for how to structure successful advisory committees.

METHODOLOGY

The majority of this synthesis report is based on the results of a survey of transit agencies and MPOs throughout the country. Agencies were identified through the National Transit Database and MPOs were identified through the U.S.DOT MPO Database.

The questionnaire included 62 questions about committee membership and roles, organization and protocols, decision-making authority and processes, facilitation and management, staff support, and committee evaluation methods. The questionnaire mainly included close-ended questions, but respondents were able to indicate "other" to define their response on each question. In addition, several open-ended questions were included.

Recognizing that some agencies involve a variety of advisory committees in different types of projects and processes, agencies were invited to complete multiple questionnaires; one for each committee established. Although some agencies did return multiple questionnaires, the majority indicated the involvement of multiple committees in different aspects of planning and operations but returned only one questionnaire describing a single committee.

This synthesis reflects analysis of 232 responses received from transit agencies and MPOs from 46 states and the District of Columbia. Responses were geographically diverse: 18% from the Northeast, 52% from the Midwest, 32% from the South, and 29% from the West (see Figure 1). Nearly 30% of responses came from three states: California (30), Florida (30), and Pennsylvania (19). Overall, more surveys were received from transit agencies than MPOs and the majority (more than 80%) were received from agencies that involved an advisory committee within the past 3 years.

In addition, two agencies and three MPOs were selected for case studies. The case studies were selected to highlight successful practices for committees with different structures and authority levels providing input on different kinds of agency and MPO activities. The case studies are based on interviews with key staff people at each agency or MPO.

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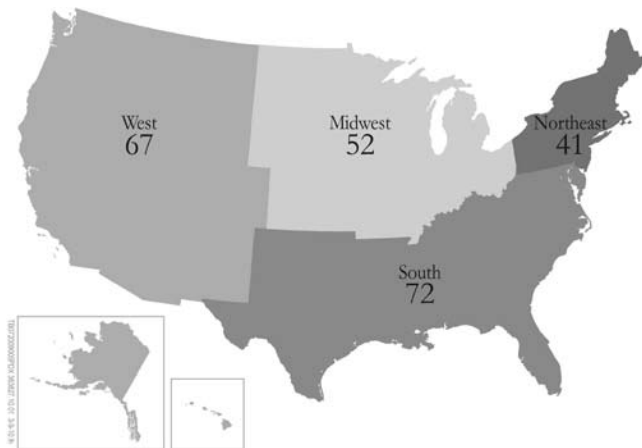
FIGURE 1 Responses received by region.

REPORT ORGANIZATION

This synthesis report begins with a review of relevant federal guidelines and requirements for public involvement that guide transit agencies and MPOs that conduct transit planning. A review of literature about advisory committees, as they relate to transit planning and transportation planning more broadly, also is included. This is followed by the results of the agency and MPO survey and case studies detailing the involvement of advisory committees at five agencies and MPOs. The report concludes with an identification of successful practices and suggestions for further study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT REGULATIONS

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR TRANSIT AGENCIES AND METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS

Public involvement is a relatively young field, but it is one that has increased in sophistication since its inception. Today, public involvement specialists are commonly found on the staff at transportation agencies and project teams. A series of federal statutes and regulations direct how public involvement is conducted by states, and metropolitan and rural planning organizations. Some policies relate specifically to public involvement for plans and projects, while others relate to any activity undertaken by a public agency.

Planning coordination requirements pursuant to Section 1308 of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) first encouraged public transportation agencies to coordinate with statewide and regional transportation planning efforts. This provided an incentive for transit agencies to use state and regional public involvement requirements as models for the development of public involvement programs for their transportation planning studies (*2*). TEA-21 has been replaced by subsequent legislation, but it is important because it provided the foundation for federally mandated public involvement in transportation planning.

In 1999, the FHWA and FTA issued a joint interim policy on public involvement to clarify requirements of the 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Equity Act (ISTEA). This policy encourages MPOs and transit agencies to develop locally appropriate public involvement plans, and provides the following guidance:

> State departments of transportation, metropolitan planning organizations, and transportation providers are required to develop, with the public, effective involvement processes which are custom-tailored to local conditions. The performance standards for these proactive public involvement processes include early and continuous involvement; reasonable public availability of technical and other information; collaborative input on alternatives, evaluation criteria and mitigation needs; open public meetings where matters related to Federal-aid highway and transit programs are being considered; and open access to the decision-making process prior to closure (*3*).

The interim policy included general performance standards that require the following (*4*):

- Public involvement to be early and proactive
- Timely information to be provided to the public
- Explicit consideration to be given to the public input collected
- Traditionally underserved populations to be actively sought out and included.

In 2005, Section 6002 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act—a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) added requirements for public involvement and agency coordination, particularly during the project development process, by requiring agencies to provide the public an "opportunity for involvement" when developing purpose and need statements and project alternatives. Advisory committees are specifically noted as a public involvement technique that can be used to meet these requirements (*5*).

In addition, transit agencies, MPOs, and other agencies receiving federal funds for transit projects are required to comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and Executive Order 12898, Environmental Justice. Title VI prohibits recipients of federal funding from discriminating on grounds of race, color, or national origin. Executive Order No. 12898 requires federal agencies to consider the impacts of federal actions on minority and low-income communities. These requirements influence the design of public involvement programs and the implementation of those plans. For example, environmental justice and Title VI considerations may affect the format of meetings and where meetings are held, while also influencing the committee's membership (*5*).

Taken together, these regulations represent a strong federal commitment to public participation in decision making. This commitment has influenced public expectations about involvement opportunities and standard procedures at many agencies. The federal guidance allows for a wide range of public involvement approaches tailored to local needs. The guidance does not require specific meeting types, tools, or techniques in most cases, except the use of visualization techniques, which is required of every federally funded project. Despite this lack of top-down specification regarding public involvement tools, advisory committees are a commonly used method to involve community members in decisions about transit planning and operations. Advisory committees offer a somewhat unique forum for continuous involvement,

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education about technical information, and collaboration among stakeholders, committee members, and government agencies. Advisory committees also can be structured to seek out the viewpoints of traditionally underserved populations and can be a mechanism for ensuring that community input is considered throughout the process.

DEFINING CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

CAC (citizen advisory committee) is commonly used in federal guidance and public involvement handbooks describing public involvement tools, but these advisory committees composed of community members go by many names, including the following:

- Community Advisory Committee
- Stakeholder Working Group
- Community Task Force
- Stakeholder Advisory Committee
- Public Input Committee
- Public Involvement Committee
- Stakeholder Sounding Board.

It is important to name committees carefully to ensure that the name correctly describes the committee's purpose and level of authority. For instance, a committee charged with decision making would not be called an advisory committee. For the purposes of this synthesis report, the term "advisory committee" will be used to describe the wide range of committee types with a mainly, but not exclusively, community-based membership that provides input on transit planning and operations.

Advisory committees are defined by FHWA and FTA as "a representative group of stakeholders that meets regularly to discuss issues of common concern" (4). The AASHTO Center for Environmental Excellence further describes an advisory committee as a "representative group of project stakeholders from the community that meets regularly with the study team in a forum that allows for interactive discussions" (5). Because they can be used alone or with other public involvement techniques, advisory committees have been used widely to achieve community input for transportation planning decisions (2). FHWA and FTA have identified the following core characteristics of community-based advisory committees (2):

- Interest groups from the project study area are represented
- Meetings are held regularly
- Comments and participants' points of view are recorded
- Consensus on issues is sought, but not required
- The committee is assigned an important role in the process.

The International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) has developed a spectrum of levels of involvement that is widely used to describe the different levels of public impact and goals (see Figure 2). The spectrum generally assigns CACs to the "collaborate" level, though advisory committees more broadly defined could fall in the full range of categories from "inform" to "empower." In some cases, advisory committees meet with the intent of hearing information and sharing it with their community ("inform") or providing individual input and feedback ("consult"). It is important to develop a committee with an understanding of where it fits in the spectrum and communicate that role to the public (6).
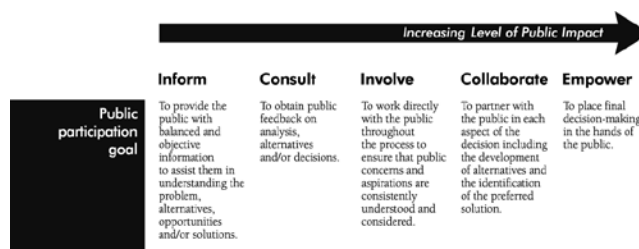
FIGURE 2 IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation.
Source: IAP2, © 2007 International Association for Public Participation. www.iap2.org

LITERATURE REVIEW

A limited body of literature is related to the structure, organization, and management of advisory committees. Much of the writing about advisory committees is intended to guide practitioners in implementing advisory committees rather than assessing their effectiveness or reporting on their outcomes. This literature review summarizes standard practices for forming and managing advisory committees found in guidebooks and highlights key findings about advisory committees from professional and academic literature.

Membership

Advisory committees generally composed of members representing organizations such as neighborhood associations, environmental groups, business groups, advocacy groups, and local agencies, among others (5). Ideally, members of advisory committees could function as a liaison between the communities they represent and the project team. To be effective, however, it is important that an advisory committee consist of a balanced and representative group of stakeholders. This can be difficult to measure, since what constitutes "balanced" and "representative" can vary depending on the scope of the project, issues to be addressed, and the range of affected stakeholder groups (5).

Members of advisory committees generally are selected either by special invitation or through a competitive applica-

tion process (*5*). The former generally involves inviting a diverse and balanced group of affected stakeholders to serve on the committee. The latter usually involves publicizing the committee's purpose and responsibilities, then asking interested individuals (often those who attend public meetings) to submit a resume and statement of interest (*2*). Regardless of the selection process, however, special attention to recruiting minority and low-income populations is usually necessary to ensure appropriate representation (*5*).

Not all stakeholders are community members; committees sometimes include representatives of public agencies such as resource agencies or local governments. The FHWA/FTA handbook, *Public Involvement Techniques for Transportation Decision-Making,* calls the inclusion of agencies on advisory committees "highly desirable" because it encourages dialogue between community members and government representatives (*2*).

Organization

The organization of advisory committees varies widely in formality and committee autonomy. According to *Public Involvement Techniques for Transportation Decision-Making,* meetings are sometimes run by a chairperson, with assistance from agency or MPO staff. In other cases, advisory committees are managed and facilitated by staff or consultants and either do not include a chairperson or include a chairperson who serves as an external spokesperson for the committee with limited responsibilities at meetings.

Holding premeetings at which agenda and materials are developed and providing information to committee members ahead of time increase the effectiveness of meetings (*2*). If a chairperson is included, he or she could be part of the meeting planning process. Alternate meeting formats such as retreats, workshops, or site tours may advance the advisory committee's purpose (*5*). Although reaching consensus is the goal of many advisory committees, when consensus cannot be reached, identifying and reporting stakeholder positions and divergent viewpoints to decision makers has value (*2*). A typical meeting agenda covers the following items (*2*):

- Introductions and welcome of newcomers
- Opportunity to amend or review the agenda
- A discussion of agenda items
- Presentations of specific information, as necessary
- Identification of consensus on each item on outstanding issues on each item.

Benefits and Drawbacks of Advisory Committees

As a public involvement tool, advisory committees offer both benefits and drawbacks. The primary benefits of advisory committees include the following (*5*):

- **Continuity:** Agencies and committee members are provided with the opportunity to meet with the same community members over time.
- **Depth:** Issues can be discussed with community members in more depth and detail, which allows for more technical information to be shared and incorporated into the decision-making process.
- **Education:** Stakeholders have the opportunity to hear and learn from differing points of view and can increase the understanding of issues.
- **Collaboration:** The formation of relationships over time supports and encourages stakeholders to engage in collaborative problem solving.

Hence, advisory committees are an ideal way to involve the public in addressing issues that require expertise and sustained community attention over time (*4*). However, advisory committees have certain drawbacks and are not appropriate for every situation. The primary drawbacks of advisory committees include the following (*2*):

- **Exclusivity:** By virtue of being representative, an advisory committee cannot represent all viewpoints. Size limitations and the difficulty of reaching minority and low-income populations mean that outcomes may be skewed.
- **Transparency:** An advisory committee can seem to be manipulated by a government agency unless the process is open and transparent; all information needs to be shared with the general public.
- **Size limitations:** An advisory committee is less useful for large regions with many stakeholders because a committee with more than 20 to 30 members can become unwieldy. To be effective, all committee members need to have the opportunity to participate in discussions.
- **Group dynamics:** Stakeholders with opposing points of view may refuse to consider each other's ideas. Members who believe they are being coerced or patronized may withdraw from full participation. Agency and MPO staff, frustrated by failing group dynamics, may not adequately support members.
- **Resources:** Advisory committees can be costly and resource intensive because they require a significant amount of staff time to run well (*4*).

Some researchers note the potential for conflict in advisory committees as a risk. This tension between stakeholders and competing interests can be a benefit to the process, however, if it helps to illuminate the trade-offs between different courses of action. Though agencies and MPOs sometimes see disagreement and divergent opinions as a failure of the advisory committee process, recognition of agreement where it exists, places where viewpoints diverge, and the reasons stakeholders hold different views can be as informative to the ultimate decision makers as a consensus-based recommendation.

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For an advisory committee to be successful, regardless of whether members can agree on outcomes, it is important that the choice to use an advisory committee is appropriate for the particular transit issue at hand. Given the benefits and drawbacks of advisory committees, several factors might be considered when deciding whether to use an advisory committee. Generally, advisory committees are effective public involvement tools when the following conditions are met:

- A policy, plan, or project is being developed on a local or regional scale (*4*).
- Technical information is sufficiently complex to require consistent attention and involvement to make a meaningful recommendation (*4*).
- Stakeholder input is needed during a well-defined time period (*4*).
- The advisory committee has a clear role in providing input to the decision-making body (*5*).
- Community buy-in is needed for a controversial project.
- Opposing stakeholders could benefit from the opportunity to hear each other's views and problem solve in a collaborative environment (*5*).

In situations that meet some or all of these conditions, advisory committees allow local agencies and opposing stakeholders to work together over time to better understand complicated technical information, address differing opinions early in the process, and develop the relationships needed to engage in sustained collaborative problem solving.

Examples of Advisory Committee Involvement at Transit Agencies

Transit agencies are using advisory committees on a wide range of projects. This synthesis report offers a snapshot of those practices through questionnaire responses and case studies. In addition to the case studies developed for this synthesis, several case studies from published literature highlight interesting or innovative uses of committees.

Business Impacts

The Utah Transit Authority (UTA) formed a Community Coordination Team (CCT) to determine how to spend funds designed to reduce construction impacts on local businesses. (*7*). In Phoenix, Valley Metro's Community Advisory Board (CAB) monitors construction activities and provides input on the size of the contractor's bonus (*7*). Valley Metro's CAB is described further in chapter four of this synthesis report.

Public Relations

UTA's CCT speaks directly to the media about the status of the project. This practice has resulted in an improved public perception of the project since information comes from community members rather than the transit agency (*7*). In Portland, Oregon, TriMet formed a Community Relations Team (CRT) to act as a liaison between the community and TriMet during construction of a light rail project. The CRT resulted in a high level of trust between TriMet and the community, as well as an "unprecedented" level of commitment to each other's goals (*8*).

Environmental Justice

While not a transit agency, the experience of the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) in rebuilding the Dan Ryan Expressway through a racially segregated, primarily low-income section of Chicago is instructive in the ways that advisory committees can help agencies involve underserved communities. IDOT used a range of innovative public involvement techniques to restore trust in the community. One of these techniques was to form a task force of community leaders responsible for reviewing designs and providing feedback on community issues. The use of the Citizen Task Force, in combination with other techniques, restored trust and allowed the project to move forward (*9*).

CHAPTER THREE

AGENCY AND METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION SURVEY RESULTS

This chapter describes the results of the agency and MPO survey for agencies that did and did not involve advisory committees in transit planning or operations in the past 3 years. The remainder of the chapter includes sections on different aspects of committee structure, management, and outcomes.

SURVEY PROCESS, TOPICS, AND RESPONSE RATE

The majority of this synthesis report is based on survey results from transit agencies and MPOs throughout the country. Agencies were identified through the National Transit Database and MPOs were identified through the U.S.DOT's MPO Database (see Appendix A).

The questionnaire included 62 questions about committee membership and roles, organization and protocols, decision-making authority and processes, facilitation and management, staff support, and committee evaluation methods. The questionnaire was mainly composed of close-ended questions, but respondents were able to indicate "other" and further explain their response on each question. In addition, several open-ended questions were included.

Recognizing that some agencies involve a variety of advisory committees in different types of projects and processes, agencies were invited to complete multiple questionnaires; one for each committee established. Although some agencies did return multiple questionnaires, the majority indicated the involvement of multiple committees in different aspects of planning and operations but returned only a questionnaire describing a single committee.

Analysis of 232 responses from transit agencies and MPOs are presented in this synthesis. Responses were received from 46 states and the District of Columbia and, though nearly 30% of response came from three states (California, Florida, and Pennsylvania), overall participation was geographically diverse: 18% from the Northeast, 52% from the Midwest, 32% from the South, and 29% from the West. Overall, more surveys were received from transit agencies than MPOs, and the majority (more than 80%) were received from agencies that had involved an advisory committee within the past 3 years.

Overview of Responses

To identify best practices among agencies that involve advisory committees in transit planning and operations, the questionnaire responses were carefully reviewed and compared to identify relationships between measures of success and attributes of committee organization, structure, and management. These comparisons are noted. The results of the questionnaire analysis are based on responses from a self-selected set of transit agencies and MPOs and may not represent the full range of experiences with advisory committees throughout the country.

The lack of consistency in the practices of agencies with successful advisory committees suggests that a formulaic approach to successful committee organization, structure, and management does not exist. This supports the commonly held idea that effective advisory committees, as with all other public involvement tools, be structured to fit the context of the agency or MPO, the community, and the issues to be addressed; a one-size-fits-all approach to public involvement does not support success. Best practices are related to strategic committee design based on agency, MPO, community, or project needs, as well as adherence to the most basic public involvement principles such as providing for meaningful involvement and clear delineation of roles and responsibilities.

AGENCIES NOT INVOLVING ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Eighteen percent of respondents reported that their agencies had not included an advisory committee in transit planning or operations in the past 3 years. These agencies were asked to provide information about why they chose not to involve advisory committees. Following are the most frequent responses:

- Other methods are more effective than CACs
- Not planning capital improvements or changes that require public input
- CACs are too time, resource, or staff intensive.

A few respondents reported negative ideas about involving advisory committees, including that they are expensive

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or ineffective, or that the agency or MPO had a negative experience with advisory committees in the past.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE USE AND PURPOSE

Respondents reported involving advisory committees in a wide range of planning, policy, and operational issues. The most commonly cited issues were general agency or MPO operations, capital project planning, specific operational issues, and planning for service changes. Some agencies also reported involving advisory committees in general planning and funding decisions, human service and accessibility plans, and fare changes.

Although agencies reported involving advisory committees in all of these issues related to transit planning and operations (see Table 1), 45% of respondents reported involving standing committees in general agency operations. Roughly 15% of respondents reported involving advisory committees in service changes, capital project planning, and specific operational issues.

TABLE 1
WHAT TYPE OF COMMITTEE ARE YOU REPORTING ON WITH THIS QUESTIONNAIRE? (Q4)

	Percentage	Frequency
Standing committee on general agency operations	44.5	81
Major capital project (e.g., new light rail line, park-and-ride development)	14.3	26
Planning for service changes	15.4	28
Standing committee on a specific operational issue (e.g., ADA service, budget oversight)	15.4	28
Other (please specify)	22.5	41
answered question		182

Note: ADA = Americans with Disabilities Act.

Respondents generally had positive experiences with advisory committees. When asked how effective their agency or MPO had found advisory committees to be, more than 80% responded that their agencies found advisory committees to be somewhat or very effective. Less than 7% of respondents found advisory committees to be somewhat or very ineffective. Given the small number of respondents who cited their advisory committee as ineffective, few conclusions could be drawn about the factors that differentiate effective committees from ineffective committees.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

When asked how committee members are selected, most respondents said that their agency or MPO invites specific individuals to participate or asks community organizations to appoint members. In fewer cases, respondents reported selecting committee members through an open application process or asking partner agencies or local jurisdictions to appoint members. Members of standing committees are selected more often through an open application process than are members of ad hoc committees. In a few cases, standing committees select their own members through a review of applications. One agency reported that asking local jurisdictions to appoint members increased committee success because local jurisdictions had personal experience with appointees and could select those who would participate fully.

Some agencies reported specific planning or recruitment tools aimed at ensuring diverse representation. These included detailed matrixes of committee member attributes and recruitment through community organizations. Three-quarters of respondents said that they considered members' perspectives when establishing the committee and sought to develop membership that represented the full range of viewpoints. Many respondents said that their agency's or MPO's advisory committee is diverse in terms of geographic representation, ethnicity, and age. Many agencies also reported the inclusion of people with disabilities. In some cases, agencies reported providing accommodations such as translation services, Braille materials, and sign-language interpretation to allow people with different abilities to fully participate in committee meetings.

Many agencies provide training and education to committee members. More than 75% of committees included people with limited experience interacting with government. To promote successful group interactions and an understanding of agency and MPO responsibilities, agencies provided members with group training sessions, one-on-one coaching, and written materials. In some cases, such as the standing Baltimore Regional Transit Board CAC, one-third of committee members are replaced each year to ensure that two-thirds of committee members have experience serving on the committee and can educate newer members.

Most committee members either represent a specific community organization's interests or serve as at-large members representing their own viewpoints. In many cases, members represent multiple interests or organizations. Generally, members were asked to state their affiliations at the first committee meeting or before a decision-making discussion to ensure that other members understand their point of view. Most

committees included members with a variety of viewpoints with some at-large members, some community organization representatives, and some interest group representatives.

Many advisory committees, even those composed primarily of community members, included agency staff or elected officials. More than 60% included staff and more than one-third included elected officials, most as full voting members. Most agencies or MPOs that included staff or elected officials reported positive outcomes. Those that included staff or elected officials noted that the range of perspectives improved discussions and that elected officials and staff developed a better understanding of community perspectives. Several agencies noted that including elected officials with community members allowed elected officials to build trust and relationships. Those who had negative experiences noted that including elected officials politicized discussions and reduced the opportunity for community members to be heard. Some agencies did not include staff or elected officials on advisory committees because they were included in other committees such as steering committees, technical advisory committees, or management teams that had formal interactions with advisory committees.

Eighty percent of groups included fewer than 20 members and most committees had 10 to 15 members. More than 10% of committees included more than 25 members. A few committees were extremely large and had more than 30 members. The larger groups were no more or less likely to be effective than smaller groups. Most standing committee members had indeterminate appointments. Observations show that larger advisory committees are more complex to manage logistically, are more resource intensive, and require more sophisticated facilitation skills to be effective. There are good reasons for establishing larger committees, particularly when a committee is considering a complex topic that would benefit from discussion that reflects a large number of distinct viewpoints.

COMMITTEE OPERATIONS

Protocols or ground rules are often established at the committee's first meeting. Among survey respondents, more than three-quarters reported defining protocols at the beginning of the process and most responded that the protocols generally were enforced. These protocols most often included meeting guidelines, decision-making protocols, and committee member responsibilities. Some standing committees were governed by bylaws established in agency or MPO codes or regulations rather than by charters developed by committee members.

Three-quarters of committees had a chairperson. Of those committees, three-quarters selected their own chairperson. In most cases, the chairperson was responsible for meeting management. Other responsibilities included assist-

ing with agendas and serving as an external spokesperson. In response to another question about facilitation, about 70% of respondents said that staff members, often with specific expertise in facilitation, facilitated committee meetings. This suggests that even when a chairperson has responsibilities for meeting management, facilitation is supported by a staff person.

Committees operated with varying levels of autonomy and influence over discussion topics, development of recommendations, and communication with decision makers. Some committees, often standing committees, selected their own agenda items, ran their own meetings, selected new members, and developed their own recommendations with limited staff participation. For example, the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board (BRTB) CAC collaborates online to develop committee reports with limited agency support using Google Docs, a free online tool.

COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES AND DECISION MAKING

About half of the committees were assigned a charge (a formal statement of role and responsibilities) by either staff or decision makers (e.g., a board of directors or elected officials). A few agencies submitted bylaws or charters for committees along with the questionnaire. Most of these charges or bylaws established the committee composition, member responsibilities, and reporting relationships. One respondent noted that a well-defined committee structure and protocols effectively supported consensus building.

Charges take many forms, from statements of purpose informally developed by staff to formal statements dictated by agency bylaws or operating rules. Examples of charge statements submitted by survey respondents include the following:

- "This committee shall be an advisory committee to the Board of Directors on policy matters relative to transportation services and facilities affecting the District" (Yolo County Transit District Bylaws).
- "The goal of this policy is to help SamTrans (San Mateo County Transit District) plan a transportation system that is safe, efficient, cost-effective, energy-efficient, environmentally responsible, and is responsive to the needs of the broadest range of Citizens and transit users in San Mateo County" (San Mateo County Transit District Citizens Advisory Committee Statement of Purpose).
- "The Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) will serve as a primary public participation forum for transportation products and plans for the Cheyenne Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). It will serve as liaison between the Cheyenne MPO and the residents of the

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urbanized area and its members will be vigilant to represent the citizens of their area, both geographically and ideologically. The CAC will convey to the MPO the goals and wishes of the citizens in the Cheyenne Metropolitan area regarding transportation issues. It will bring varied input to the CAC's planning functions by calling on a wide range of citizens' talents, civic interests and disciplines (both professional and lay). The committee will serve to make recommendations regarding MPO plans or products to the MPO Policy Committee" (Cheyenne MPO Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) Policies and Procedures).

- "Purpose: To promote continued coordinated planning and development of integrated public transportation services within and through Kootenai County" (Kootenai MPO Public Transportation Roundtable charter).

When asked to indicate all of the committee's responsibilities, nearly all committees provided input and made recommendations on projects, programs, or policies. Most committee members acted as liaisons to their communities by sharing information and gathering input. Finally, most committees heard input from the public in their meetings or in writing. Most committees did not explicitly develop media protocols, because they reported that committee members were not contacted by the media.

Nearly 80% of committees made recommendations to the agency, MPO, or decision makers. Most other committees were decision-making committees or sounding boards that provided input (see Table 2). Committees were most likely to provide input on technical issues (e.g., alignment, route); policy issues; issues related to scope, schedule, or budget; or public input or outreach (see Table 3). Most committees provided input on more than one of these topics. In most cases, committees provided input to decision makers, whether the decision makers were elected or appointed officials or executive-level staff. When a committee made a recommendation that was not adopted, most agencies discussed the decision with committee members during a committee meeting.

TABLE 2
WHAT WAS THE COMMITTEE'S HIGHEST LEVEL OF AUTHORITY? (Q42)

	Percentage	Frequency
Community liaison	1.2	2
Individual input/sounding board	11.0	18
Advice/recommendations	76.7	125
Decisions	8.6	14
Other (please specify)	2.5	4
answered question		163

TABLE 3
WHAT KINDS OF DECISIONS OR MILESTONES WERE COMMITTEE MEMBERS ASKED TO PROVIDE INPUT ABOUT (CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY)? (Q43)

	Percentage	Frequency
Issues related to project scope, schedule, or budget	48.8	79
Issues related to public involvement or outreach	62.3	101
Evaluation framework or criteria	34.0	55
Technical issues (e.g., design, alignment, alternatives)	56.2	91
Policy issues	61.1	99
Not applicable	1.2	2
Other (please specify)	12.3	20
answered question		162

About one-half of the committees made decisions by consensus; most of the remaining groups made decisions by voting. Of those groups that made decisions by consensus, about 40% of them defined consensus as agreeing that an outcome is best for the group as a whole. About one-third of groups that operated by consensus did not define consensus. Those groups that operated by consensus were likely to table contentious discussions until more information became available or to continue with discussions in the hope of reaching agreement. When consensus could not be reached or a vote was not unanimous, most committees captured minority viewpoints in meeting minutes, and some reported minority viewpoints verbally. Relatively few committees developed formal minority reports.

FEEDBACK AND MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS

When asked how agencies evaluated the effectiveness of advisory committees, most agencies reported that effectiveness was not evaluated. Most agencies did not ask advisory committee members to evaluate the effectiveness of individual meetings or the overall process. About 70% of those agencies that asked committee members to evaluate individual meetings or the overall process made changes to their practices based on input. These changes included meeting formats (by implementing time limits for agenda items or presentations), method for developing agendas, or protocols for resolving disagreements. One respondent reported annually surveying all committees for suggestions about improvements and making changes according to input. Another respondent uses their annual evaluation process to refine their MPO public involvement plan. A summary of committee evaluation activities is shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4

EVALUATION OF COMMITTEE EFFECTIVENESS BY
COMMITTEE MEMBERS (Q51–Q53)

	During the process	At the end of the process	Individual meetings
Yes—through a written questionnaire	7.9%	9.4%	4.9%
Yes—through individual interviews or phone calls	9.7%	9.4%	6.2%
Yes—during a meeting	37.0%	30.8%	14.2%
No	52.1%	56.6%	79.6%

STAFF SUPPORT AND LEVEL OF EFFORT

More than 70% of respondents reported that two to four staff people attended committee meetings. Most agencies and MPOs reported spending fewer than 10 hours to prepare for, attend, and follow up from meetings; 40% spent fewer than 5 hours on these tasks.

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES WITH ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Respondents were asked to note parts of the advisory committee process that worked well and what they would change in the future. Responses about what worked well included the following themes:

- **General public participation:** Respondents reported that committee members became advocates for outcome and process, acted as liaisons between their personal networks and agencies or MPOs, and served as sounding boards for staff ideas. Many respondents noted that committees are an efficient, manageable way to share information and gather public input.
- **Diversity of viewpoints:** Respondents reported that committees can be formed specifically to include members with diverse backgrounds, opinions, and perspectives. Committees offer opportunities for members to communicate with those with different viewpoints. Many respondents noted that members respected divergent viewpoints.
- **Open discussion:** Respondents reported that even when controversial issues were discussed, dialogue was constructive, and reaching consensus in this atmosphere was a strong indication of committee support to decision makers. Committee members and staff were able to share information and build trust, while community members raised issues that staff needed to hear.
- **Meeting management and structure:** Many agencies and MPOs reported that including an active chairperson

with the responsibility of facilitating meetings was effective, and that selecting committed, knowledgeable members was important. Several agencies noted that selecting the right meeting frequency is important to committee success; an evident tension exists between holding meetings at milestones when the committee has real work to do and holding them regularly to maintain consistency and avoid scheduling difficulties.

Respondents were asked to identify aspects of the advisory committee process that they would change in the future. Key themes about what could be improved, or challenges that arose, included the following:

- **Meeting management:** Many agencies noted that it is a mistake to not provide meeting materials ahead of time; providing materials sets an expectation that committee members will arrive prepared to participate in discussions. In many cases, agencies noted the struggle to maintain consistent attendance and an engaged committee. Many agencies reported that more time might be dedicated to agenda development, including the development of discussion topics, and the allotment of presentation and discussion times.
- **Meeting frequency and scheduling:** Agencies reported that they struggle to find the right meeting frequency for committees. Some respondents thought that meetings were held too often and that they had to work to keep the committee busy, while others wished groups met more often to allow them to be more engaged. Several respondents noted that committee meetings could be structured around milestones with less frequent meetings during less busy periods. This may be easier to apply to ad hoc committees that meet to discuss a specific program or project and more difficult to implement for standing committees that have an expectation of meeting regularly to discuss agency policies or operations.
- **Formality and process:** Several agencies noted that additional structure would help with consensus building and meeting management. They noted that a more formal method for carrying recommendations forward could improve communication between officials and advisory committee members. Facilitation is key to managing meetings successfully and making sure everyone participates. Many agencies noted that members needed to better understand their role in the process and their relationship to decision-making bodies. Some agencies noted that they needed to develop a specific charge to clearly define the role of the committee.
- **Communications:** Many agencies noted that establishing communication protocols and expectations is important to maintaining good relationships between staff members or officials and committee members, among committee members, and between committee members and their constituent groups. Agencies and MPOs reported that communication from staff to

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committee members is important, even during periods of infrequent meetings.

- **Presentations and content:** Several agencies identified the difficulty in providing committee members with technical information in a way that allows members to contribute meaningfully. Another challenge reported was that standing committees frequently review a wide variety of information that interests only a subset of committee members. Some respondents noted the formation of subcommittees to address this issue.
- **Membership:** Agencies noted that it can be difficult to maintain diverse advisory committees are even

when a concerted effort is made to recruit a diverse membership. Members can drop out of the process because the issue that motivated them to participate is resolved, because personal or professional obligations change, or because the member is somehow dissatisfied with the experience of serving on the committee. Some agencies reported that they must balance the need for a broad range of viewpoints with the need to have a committee of a manageable size. Many agencies reported having cumbersome, complex, or lengthy processes for appointing members.

CHAPTER FOUR

SUCCESSFUL PRACTICES AND CASE STUDIES

Five case studies were selected to highlight successful practices in engaging advisory committees in transit planning and operations. Care was taken to highlight practices for transit agencies and MPOs, project planning and operations, and standing committees and ad hoc committees. Some case studies are focused on a single committee experience while others are a compilation of successful practices and lessons learned from many committees involved by an agency or MPO.

The case studies were developed based on phone or in-person interviews with the contacts listed for each agency or MPO and responses to the survey. A questionnaire was used to guide the case study interviews, but interviews were largely organic with a focus on each agency or MPO's area of innovation. A table highlighting the committee's size, selection process, authority level, and reporting relationship is included with each case study.

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL, MINNEAPOLIS/ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA: REACHING OUT TO PEOPLE WITH DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS AND ABILITIES

Agency: Metropolitan Council, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota

Contact: Robin Caufman, Manager of Public Involvement

Committee: Central Corridor Light Rail Project, Citizen Advisory Committee

Overview

The Central Corridor Light Rail Project will connect downtown Minneapolis and downtown St. Paul with a new 11-mile light rail line and will serve some of the Minneapolis/St. Paul region's most diverse neighborhoods. The Metropolitan Council, the Twin Cities regional government and planning agency, is leading a public involvement effort to build and maintain public support for the project.

The Metropolitan Council has been using CACs as a form of public involvement since the 1990s. In addition to their standing Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee, which focuses on general transportation policy and service

issues in the region, the MPO employs the use of smaller CACs for specific capital projects.

TABLE 5
CENTRAL CORRIDOR CAC HIGHLIGHTS

Members	30 to 42 (varied over time)
Selection process	Open application process, selected by Metropolitan Council staff; confirmed by Council chair
Authority level	Individual input
Reporting relationships	Reports to Metropolitan Council via CAC chair who is a Council member

Note: CAC = citizen advisory committee.

The project has included a robust public involvement program. In addition to a CAC, public involvement activities in the corridor have included public hearings, open house events, and extensive outreach using print-based, electronic, and verbal communication methods.

Because the corridor passes through and will serve ethnically diverse neighborhoods, the project hired a dedicated team of multilingual community outreach coordinators to serve as liaisons between the Metropolitan Council and the community. These outreach coordinators, shown in Figure 3, support all aspects of the public involvement program by supporting the CAC and conducting targeted outreach in sometimes hard-to-reach immigrant and minority communities. Outreach coordinators are trained in facilitation and speak a variety of languages, including Hmong, American Sign Language, Spanish, Vietnamese, and French. In addition to providing meeting facilitation, outreach coordinators go door to door conducting additional outreach in non-English-speaking communities (especially where people are unlikely or unable to make an evening CAC meeting). They also conduct surveys, attend public meetings, and give presentations to local community groups.

Advisory Committee Approach

The Metropolitan Council established a CAC to provide advice for its Central Corridor Light Rail Project. The CAC's scope is to promote public involvement and develop

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a project that is beneficial to communities. The committee provides input and feedback to project staff and the Metropolitan Council through the CAC chair, a Metropolitan Council member, on issues related to the planning, design, and construction of the Central Corridor Light Rail Project. The CAC is a standing committee that meets on a regular monthly schedule.

During its tenure, the Central Corridor CAC has ranged from 30 to 42 members who represent a variety of stakeholder groups, including neighborhood associations, business representatives, advocacy groups, representatives of the disabled community, education institutions, ethnic communities, and religious organizations. Although having a CAC this large is a challenge, Robin Caufman said the size is necessary to ensure adequate representation of stakeholder groups along an incredibly diverse project corridor. Approximately 40% of CAC members represent minority stakeholder groups that mirror the community's diversity.

CAC members are selected by the Metropolitan Council through an open application process. When the CAC was first created, a matrix of potential stakeholders was developed and vetted by project partners, local city and county staff, community groups, and the Metropolitan Council. Although no cap was set on the maximum number of CAC members, efforts were made to ensure the greatest amount of stakeholder representation, while keeping the group to a manageable size. According to Caufman, an advantage of this stakeholder selection process has been that the Metropolitan Council is now much more familiar with the local community than it was before the project.

In the first 6 months of the project, the CAC underwent a thorough and intensive training process. Members were familiarized with the project corridor, project staff and officials (including the Metro Council and project engineers), their roles and responsibilities on the CAC, and the project's Communication and Public Involvement Strategic Plan. Each member was assigned a staff outreach coordinator who could answer questions and meet with the CAC member outside of formal meetings. The outreach coordinators maintain an ongoing relationship with members, keeping them engaged throughout the process. Even with this structure, some members drop out over time because of changes in personal circumstances or interest in the project. The outreach coordinators ease the transition of new members by providing training materials and a guided tour of the corridor.

CAC meetings are chaired by a Metropolitan Council member. The role of the CAC chair is to serve as a conduit between the CAC and the Metropolitan Council (see Figure 4). The CAC officially reports to the Metropolitan Council and the Central Corridor Management Committee, through the public involvement manager. Per the charter, the CAC provides input and feedback on issues related to the planning, design, and construction of the light rail project.

The committee serves in an advisory capacity, providing an important means for involving community groups and facilitating public awareness. The committee does not make decisions or group recommendations, but rather focuses on identifying issues and sharing insights with project staff. According to Caufman, one of the benefits of this structure is that meetings can be less political and more technical: "Rather than focusing on voting yes or no on whether to build a tun-

FIGURE 3 Project team outreach coordinators. *Source:* Metropolitan Council.

nel, for example, the committee discusses what would happen if they didn't have a tunnel—and the engineers are there, so they can listen to concerns and respond to questions."

FIGURE 4 Metropolitan Council Chair Peter Bell talks with members of the Central Corridor Community Advisory Committee. *Source:* Metropolitan Council.

Although this structure has been somewhat controversial within the CAC, the majority of members are content with the discussion format. "One of the problems with voting is that it would not be purely democratic as far as equal representation is concerned," Caufman explained. "Even with 40 members, you can't represent the entire corridor." Overall, the Central Corridor CAC has successfully moved through 37 issues during the project scoping, design, and preliminary engineering phases.

Innovative Practices

One strength of the Central Corridor CAC was the meticulous attention paid to ensuring that a diverse array of stakeholder voices within the project area is represented throughout the planning process. The Metropolitan Council has worked to ensure diversity of representation by pursuing the following:

- Including stakeholder representatives from more than 30 groups within the project corridor
- Actively recruiting and including members with disabilities
- Hiring a multilingual outreach coordinator team to collect input from hard-to reach immigrant and minority communities

In addition to ethnic and geographic diversity, the Central Corridor CAC also includes a vision-impaired and two mobility-impaired members. Stakeholder organizations represented on the CAC include the American Council for the Blind and the Minnesota State Council on Disability. Staff

prepares and sends meeting materials to the vision-impaired member 1 to 2 days in advance to allow him adequate preparation time. Care is used to send him the materials in a format adaptable to his reader, and visual images are translated into specific verbal descriptions. During the CAC meeting presentations, project engineers are careful to describe all visual materials in detail to allow all committee members to fully participate.

Recruiting and retaining CAC members with disabilities has benefited both the project and the Metropolitan Council immensely. According to Caufman, "the Metropolitan Council has really learned a lot about the needs of the disabled community."

Lessons Learned

Since the CAC was established in early 2007, two main challenges emerged. The first involved meeting format. Initially, CAC meetings were conducted in more of a workshop format using informal breakout focus groups. However, they received overwhelming feedback from members that this practice was not working. Committee members began inviting additional members of the public who shared their viewpoint to "stack" the compilation of meeting comments one way or another. In this format, it was difficult to tell who was an official CAC member and who was a public-at-large member. CAC members were concerned that they could not reach all of the tables that interested them during the time allotted. After hearing CAC member feedback, project staff adopted a more traditional presentation and question-and-answer format.

The second lesson learned was the benefit of breaking out business community stakeholders from citizen group stakeholders. In response to divergent subject interests and preferences about meeting times (business people prefer to meet during work hours) project staff developed a separate Business Advisory Committee (BAC). This encouraged participation by business members.

TRIMET, PORTLAND, OREGON: ADVISORY COMMITTEES THAT PROVIDE CONTINUOUS INVOLVEMENT FROM INITIAL CORRIDOR PLANNING THROUGH DESIGN

Agency: TriMet

Contact: Ann Becklund, Director of Community Affairs and Claudia Steinberg, Manager of Community Affairs

Committee: I-205, Portland Mall, and Milwaukee Light Rail Community Advisory Committees

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TABLE 6
TRIMET CAC HIGHLIGHTS

Members	21 to 25 members (dependent on project needs)
Selection process	Invited members approved by policy-level committee
Authority level	Recommendations
Reporting relationships	Reports to Policy Committee via CAC chair

Note: CAC = citizen advisory committee.

Overview

TriMet provides transit service in three counties in the Portland, Oregon, region. The transit agency has constructed 44 miles of light rail since the 1980s and is currently in the design phase of the 6-mile Portland to Milwaukee Light Rail Project that will include a new bridge over the Willamette River.

As the region's transit agency, TriMet operates buses, light rail, and commuter rail, while also partnering with the city of Portland to operate a streetcar. TriMet typically leads design and construction for major high-capacity transit projects while Metro, the area's MPO and elected regional government, leads the planning phases. Generally, Metro leads planning and public involvement through the completion of the draft environmental impact statement for major capital projects; TriMet generally leads projects from the preliminary engineering stage through construction and operations.

Regardless of which agency is in the lead, TriMet and Metro use a similar approach to decision making on these large, complex, and often controversial projects. Typically, the agencies engage elected officials, staff, and community members in a network of advisory committees from the early stages of project planning to the final project design and construction. Elected and appointed officials participate as part of a steering committee or policy committee, senior staff participate as part of a project management group, jurisdictional staff participate as part of a technical advisory committee, and community members participate as part of a CAC. This committee structure is an expected part of the process for planning and constructing light rail and provides each interested community with an appropriate place to participate in the process. The same CAC stays in place throughout the entire project, from planning to construction, despite the change in agency leadership from phase to phase.

TriMet prides itself on community engagement and involvement. TriMet assigns a community affairs manager and outreach team to each project and designs an appropriate involvement strategy for each project. The agency engages CACs as part of the overall public involvement process for

the majority of capital projects. CACs are formed on an ad hoc basis in response to specific agency or project needs. The committees are created early in the process to invite input from the beginning and disband once the project is complete.

Advisory Committee Approach

Agency staff develop a charge for each CAC. CACs are not guided by formal rules because a CAC's primary role can change throughout the planning process, as the project moves from the early planning to the final design and construction stages. Clear expectations are communicated by the agency as the CAC's role changes. In general, however, CACs perform the following functions throughout the planning process:

- Sharing information with community members
- Gathering information from community members to share with the agency
- Acting as spokesperson (e.g., speaking engagements, media contacts)
- Providing input
- Developing recommendations
- Endorsing major decisions.

CACs provide input to the multiagency steering committee, the policy committee, and the agency project managers. Frequently, the CAC chair is also a member of the Steering Committee and serves as a liaison between the two groups. CAC recommendations are generally advisory, although the specific level of decision-making authority can vary by committee. CAC recommendations are given a lot of weight and are taken seriously by decision makers. In the rare event a CAC recommendation is not adopted, the reasons are clearly explained in a CAC meeting.

Although the network of various committee types allows for the participation of elected officials and agency staff throughout the planning process, participation on the CAC is restricted to community members only. According to Ann Becklund, TriMet's director of Community Affairs, "For our community, peer committees of citizen representatives have worked well, rather than mixing elected officials or paid staff with citizen volunteers on our CACs. The presence of elected officials on this type of lay committee may politicize the process and skew the balance of CACs."

TriMet recruits a diverse range of members to represent communities affected by the project. Many committee members begin serving on CACs during the early planning stages of a project and continue throughout the project's life despite the fact that the lead agency changes. The size of each CAC is as large as necessary to get the needed diversity of viewpoints. In practice, this amounts to about 21 to 25 members. For example, the Portland–Milwaukee Light Rail

CAC has 24 members. If the meetings become unwieldy, subcommittees are formed to deal with specific issues of concern. These subcommittees meet in small groups with agency staff and the technical committee to work through each issue in more detail.

The CAC chair facilitates meetings with assistance from TriMet's Community Affairs staff. Staff members are trained in facilitation techniques and serve as liaisons between the CAC and the technical agency staff. Meeting agendas generally are developed by the agency staff.

In the decision-making process, CACs set consensus as the ideal toward which they strive; however, recommendations are not entirely consensus based. According to Becklund, the committee usually uncovers all of the issues that need to be addressed throughout the meeting process. At times, one-on-one conversations between staff and committee members and breakout sessions are necessary to help the group resolve important issues. If consensus cannot be reached, however, committee members generally note the majority and minority viewpoints and move on.

Innovative Practices

One of the unique strengths of the CAC program is the interagency coordination between TriMet and Metro that allows some members to serve for the duration of the project planning and construction process, regardless of which agency is in the lead. For example, a TriMet community affairs staff member is assigned to a project during the alternatives analysis phase, which may come years before TriMet takes the lead on a project, and a Metro public involvement staff person will continue to be involved in project outreach during the design phase. This integration provides community members with continuity of relationships and ensures that commitments made during one phase of the project are not lost during an agency transition. A single staff person might be involved with a project for 3 or more years, creating an opportunity for that staff person to develop deep relationships with stakeholders and a nuanced understanding of the communities along the corridor.

Lessons Learned

Throughout the CAC process, several lessons have emerged that can provide valuable insight for public involvement practitioners. One of these lessons is the importance of encouraging members to share their views, as well as to listen to the views of others and to look at the project as it relates to the community as a whole. Often CAC members are driven to advocate for one issue in particular [property rights, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), etc.], which can lead to committee conflicts and stalemates.

A related lesson has been the importance of good facilitation skills. According to Becklund, the facilitator "must always be prepared to artfully deal with uncooperative personalities on the committee that can threaten to disrupt the process." While it is good to include all viewpoints on the CAC, one or two members would not be allowed to monopolize the CAC and make the work for the whole committee longer than it needs to be.

TriMet has learned to be proactive about recruiting diverse membership. Although TriMet generally has been successful at recruiting diverse CACs, it has been a challenge to reach minority groups that are underrepresented in government processes. They have learned the importance of forming CAC memberships composed of peer-level groups, even if that means having multiple groups providing input on a single project (e.g., a technical advisory committee, citizen committee, and a business advisory committee).

Overall, the use of CACs in the transit planning process has been highly beneficial for TriMet. According to Becklund, CACs act as an "early warning" system and notify agency staff of a potential crisis before it erupts. Additionally, they give CAC members the opportunity to talk, express their concerns, and understand the process better. CACs establish a public record of citizen involvement and serve as a living document of how project decisions were made. According to Becklund, this kind of citizen involvement is what allows TriMet and Metro staff to "build better projects."

KING COUNTY METRO TRANSIT, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON: RECRUITING FOR DIVERSITY AND INSTITUTIONALIZING THE ROLE OF ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Agency: Metro Transit

Contact: Betty Gulledge-Bennett, Communications Manager

Committee: Ad Hoc Sounding Board for Service Changes

TABLE 7
KING COUNTY METRO TRANSIT SOUNDING BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

Members	10 to 15 members
Selection process	Open application process based on recruitment matrix
Authority level	Group recommendation
Reporting relationships	Reports directly to County Council and executive

King County Metro Transit is the public transit agency in King County, Washington, that provides bus and rideshare

services to more than 1.7 million residents within the county and provides bus service that links local communities to the regional Sound Transit system. Metro Transit operates a fleet of about 1,300 vehicles within a 2,134-square-mile area. To accommodate frequent changes to the transportation network within this large service area, Metro Transit schedules three regular transit service changes per year. To involve the public in these changes, Metro Transit involves CACs, called sounding boards, to provide input on the proposed service changes and make recommendations to the King County Executive and King County Council, the governing body of the transit agency.

In 1993, the King County Council passed an ordinance adopting a Community Outreach Model for the County Department of Transportation. This Community Outreach Model included CAC concepts and institutionalized the use of sounding boards in Metro Transit's service change planning. Before this change, community outreach had been inconsistent and service changes sometimes were met with public resistance and frustration. The adoption of the Community Outreach Model represented an acknowledgment of this problem by the County Council chair and reflected a new philosophy of public engagement within the agency.

The use of sounding boards has become an expected part of the public involvement process. Sounding board members are respected within the community and their recommendations are welcomed by the County Council. The sounding boards incorporate feedback from the broader community into the service update process and ensure that the County Council that their recommendations have been fully vetted with the community.

Advisory Committee Approach

Metro Transit includes a sounding board in its public outreach plan for all service changes. The role of these committees is specified by the County ordinance that adopted the Community Outreach Model in 1993. They provide input on proposed transit service changes and alert Metro Transit and the King County Council of any issues on the ground they might not have been aware of otherwise. Sounding boards are established on an ad hoc basis and disband once they develop their proposal.

The group's recommendations are presented to the Metro Transit general manager, the King County executive, and the King County Council. Their input is also used by Metro Transit staff and project managers on a regular but less formal basis. At the end of the process, members present their recommendations directly to the County Council. Recommendations are advisory in nature; however, their input is taken seriously by decision makers.

Each sounding board defines its own decision-making process as part of setting committee guidelines. Consensus or modified consensus processes generally are used. According to Gulledge-Bennett, many of the most important decisions have occurred through an iterative problem-solving process over a series of meetings to consider the total impacts on a community of a proposed service change.

Sounding boards are composed of approximately 10 to 15 community members selected through an open application process according to a detailed recruitment matrix of specific demographic traits. Community members representing all likely viewpoints are sought, including representatives from the transit-dependent community, diverse ethnic groups, affected businesses, civic organizations, freight interests, the disabled community, and neighborhood association members. According to Gulledge-Bennett, the size of the committees is about right; having 10 to 15 members is large enough to allow a diversity of viewpoints, while simultaneously keeping the meetings manageable.

Sounding boards often include members who have limited experience interacting with government processes. To orient these new members, Metro Transit offers a Transit Planning 101 Orientation Program that provides an overview of the service planning process. New members receive a notebook with important reference materials, the contact information of key agency staff, the project work plan, and the project schedule.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the sounding board, Metro Transit staff ask committee members for feedback during meetings and make changes, as needed, on an ongoing basis. According to Gulledge-Bennett, working with the sounding boards has been a continual, beneficial learning process for Metro Transit, because "the sounding board members know their communities better than the agency staff do."

Innovative Practices

According to Gulledge-Bennett, the detailed recruitment process that Metro Transit engages in for each committee is "labor-intensive, but worth it." The benefit of a thoroughly vetted recruitment process is that members are "committed, intelligent about transit operations and policy matters, engaged in the civic responsibility process, and respected by the County Executive and the County Council."

Having a formal advisory committee structure adopted by local county ordinance in place for more than 15 years that is formalized in the County Department of Transportation's Community Outreach Model lends legitimacy to the use of advisory committees in King County. Sounding boards are a respected part of the decision-making process, and their input is highly valued by the King County executive and County Council. Additionally, the standard format

for recruiting, structuring, and managing these committees has allowed agency staff to become experts at working with the structure. According to Gulledge-Bennett, agency staff know exactly how and when to involve the sounding board in the service planning process.

Lessons Learned

The Transit Planning 101 Orientation Program has been a highly beneficial aspect of the program. The orientation has provided a valuable learning experience for new members and allows the meetings to be more productive. In addition to increasing the overall effectiveness of recommendations, the orientation has the added benefit of disseminating a greater level of understanding and respect for the challenges of transit service planning throughout the community.

Overall, the program has helped institutionalize the role of public involvement in Metro Transit's decision-making process. According to Gulledge-Bennett, this has benefited both the community and the agency by making Metro Transit "responsive to new ideas that originate within the community."

MIAMI–DADE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION, MIAMI, FLORIDA: AN ADVISORY COMMITTEE STRUCTURE TO INVOLVE THE PUBLIC IN A VARIETY OF AGENCY ACTIVITIES

Agency: Miami–Dade MPO

Contact: Elizabeth Rockwell, Public Involvement Manager, and Wilson Fernandez, Transportation System Manager

Committee: Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC)

TABLE 8
CITIZENS TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CTAC)

Members	46 members
Selection process	Appointment by MPO Governing Board
Authority level	Group recommendation
Reporting relationships	Reports direction to the MPO Governing Board and the Board of County Commissioners

Overview

The Miami–Dade MPO is responsible for transportation planning in the urbanized area of Miami–Dade County, Florida. To support public involvement in decision making, the MPO has a network of ad hoc and standing com-

mittees that inform different aspects of the transportation planning process. The MPO has four standing committees: the Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC), the Freight Transportation Advisory Committee (FTAC), the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC), and the Transportation Aesthetics Review Committee (TARC).

The CTAC, the MPO's first advisory committee, was formed in 1983 (see Figure 5). Consisting of 46 members, the CTAC was appointed by the 23 MPO Governing Board voting members. In addition to serving as an advisory body to the MPO Governing Board, they also serve as an informal advisory body to the Board of County Commissioners (BCC). The BCC is represented in its entirety on the MPO Governing Board.

FIGURE 5 Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee.
Source: Miami–Dade MPO.

The CTAC has seven subcommittees: Aviation; Maritime; Surface; Elderly and Disabled; Transit; Legislative; and Special Projects. For efficiency, up to three subcommittees can meet once a month, meaning that any member can be part of one or more of the subcommittees. Draft resolutions are adopted and forwarded to the full CTAC for consideration.

Advisory Committee Approach

The primary function of the CTAC is to evaluate the recommendations generated during the development of the Miami–Dade MPO's transportation plans. The committee serves as a public forum in which issues related to the transportation planning process can be discussed. This is especially true for the early stages of corridor studies, before a project-specific advisory committee is established. In addition to the CTAC, the MPO forms ad hoc committees for specific projects. The CTAC members work along with community representatives from the study area on these ad hoc committees.

The CTAC mission statement is as follows:

> The Miami-Dade Citizens' Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC) is mandated by the State from the Federal government to advise the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Governing Board and the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) on achieving quality transportation facilities and programs for the citizens of Miami–Dade County (*10*).

When developing recommendations, the CTAC members vote and then provide minority and majority viewpoints. According to Elizabeth Rockwell, public involvement manager, the requirement for equal geographic representation ensures diversity on the committee.

The CTAC's monthly meetings are managed by a chairperson elected through formal biannual elections and are governed by Mason's Manual of Legislative Procedures. All members of the CTAC are required to vote; abstaining is not permitted. Subcommittees, composed of any three CTAC members, discuss issues in detail and report back to the full body. According to Wilson Fernandez, transportation system manager, CTAC generally, "honors the work of the subcommittees and avoids re-hashing individual issues once a subcommittee resolution has been passed."

Innovative Practices

The CTAC has provided leadership in the community and on transit projects. In response to chronic congestion and several failed ballot measures to fund transportation improvements, the CTAC assisted in a grassroots public outreach campaign. CTAC hosted large public forums and canvassed in their communities to build public awareness and support for a new one-half cent local sales tax to fund transportation improvements. After 80 neighborhood meetings and the active participation of more than 2,000 concerned citizens, the People's Transportation Plan was developed and the one-half cent sales tax measure was put on the ballot to fund the plan. The ballot measure language was drafted with the assistance of CTAC and public input. The measure was approved by voters in 2002 by a margin of two to one. According to Rockwell, CTAC was "instrumental" in building support for this critical ballot measure.

To evaluate CTAC's work, the MPO's public involvement office produces a report each year documenting CTAC activities. Every 3 years, the MPO releases a report that evaluates the entire public involvement program against stated goals.

Lessons Learned

According to Rockwell, the key to CTAC's success has been clear communication:

> Regardless of whether the committee is an ad-hoc or standing committee, you have to make sure meetings are constructive. If a meeting becomes argumentative, then animosity builds up, communication breaks down, and you can't build an effective and efficient transportation system.

The Miami–Dade MPO uses a structured and formalized process for CTAC proceedings. Staff report that, although some committee members might think the rules are strict, the benefits far outweigh the drawbacks. According to Fernandez, "People from the outside like coming to CTAC meetings because people respect each other, have meaningful conversations, and provide constructive insight." The benefit of an ordered process is that it keeps the focus on transportation issues and away from personal conflicts.

VALLEY METRO REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSIT AUTHORITY, PHOENIX, ARIZONA: ADVISORY COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT IN DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Agency: Valley Metro Rail, Inc.

Contact: Howard Steere, Public Involvement Manager

Project: METRO Light Rail

Committee: Construction Impacts Community Advisory Boards (CAB)

TABLE 9
COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

Members	25 members
Selection process	Open application and approved by Valley Metro Board
Authority level	Group recommendation
Reporting relationships	Reports directly to METRO's chief executive officer

Overview

On December 27, 2008, METRO light rail (the first light rail line in the Phoenix metropolitan area) opened for public operation. Stretching 20 miles through the region, METRO travels through downtown Phoenix to the suburban community of Mesa. The corridor passes through Tempe and connects riders to the Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport and two Arizona State University campuses. The project corridor primarily created a new right-of-way for light rail through densely populated urban centers, so mitigating construction impacts was METRO's chief concern. As part of the project's public involvement efforts, a Construction Outreach Plan was adopted and CABs were implemented to monitor construction impacts along 5-mile segments of the project corridor.

During the initial project planning phase, METRO implemented a variety of public involvement strategies. These included meetings with community leaders, presenting to community groups, and hosting public events. Additionally, ad hoc CACs were formed to provide input on architectural design, station design, and ADA elements.

Advisory Committee Approach

A key component of the Construction Outreach Plan was the use of CABs to serve as a voice for the community during light rail construction. Five CABs were formed, one for each of the five construction line sections of the 20-mile corridor, as shown in Figure 6. Each CAB was paired with a METRO community outreach coordinator, who served as the primary point of contact for construction issues within their corridor segment and a public involvement specialist who administered and documented all elements of the CAB process and program. Modeled from a similar program implemented by the Utah Transit Authority, CABs provided input on contractor performance. The METRO Board used CAB input to award quarterly financial incentives to contractors who exceeded the community's expectations. The incentive program was funded with $2.5 million from the general fund.

Each CAB was composed of a maximum of 25 community members who either lived or worked near the affected corridor. CAB members were typically immediately adjacent stakeholders, including property and business owners, tenants, neighboring residents, and representatives from the local neighborhood and business associations. Efforts were made to balance the ratio of property owners, tenants, and business owners so that no one group made up the majority of CAB membership. Current elected officials were not permitted to serve on the CABs. CAB members were recruited through an application and appointment process. Applications typically were received from affected citizens already active in the public process. The METRO Board reviewed the final list of CAB members.

Each CAB member received reference materials and training regarding the anticipated construction activities within each segment, the kinds of construction impacts considered to be normal, and an overview of how to participate in the CAB process. Training included the basics of CAB member responsibilities and a rehearsal before the first public meeting. If a CAB member needed to leave the committee, efforts were made to replace that member with someone who represented a similar stakeholder interest.
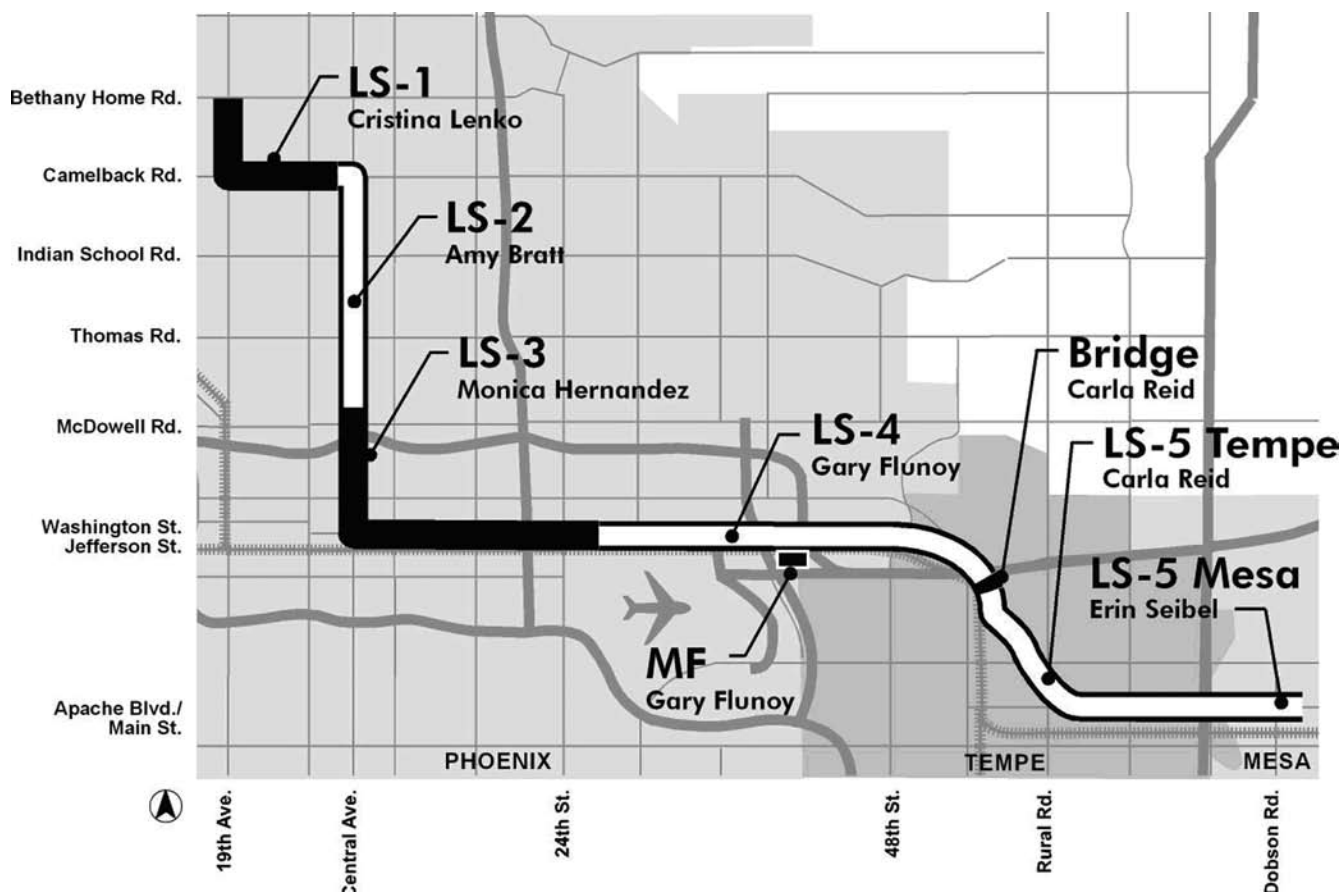
FIGURE 6 Valley Metro Light Rail Project Corridor and CAB Segments. *Source:* Valley Metro.

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The elected chair and vice chair served for the entire duration of the CAB and helped staff create agendas, facilitated meetings, and served as external spokespersons. The chair and vice chair were provided with media relations training.

CAB meetings were held regularly during active construction for each segment. In addition to the CAB members, each meeting was attended by the construction engineer, the contractor, METRO's project engineer, the community outreach liaison, and a public involvement specialist, who administered the CAB Program. Meetings were open to the public. Each meeting typically included a review of the most recent Line Section Activity Report (sent to CAB members 1 week before the meeting), a presentation from the contractor on upcoming activities, and the completion of a Contractor Evaluation Report. CAB meetings were facilitated by the chair and conducted under Robert's Rules of Order.

Each CAB made recommendations to the METRO Board of Directors regarding how to allot monetary incentives to contractors who would best mitigate construction impacts within their segment. Each line segment had a different contractor and a different CAB, so conflicting recommendations were never an issue. CAB recommendations were always carried forward by METRO's chief executive officer.

At the end of each meeting, each CAB member filled out a Contractor Evaluation Form (see Figure 7). Incentive criteria were based on the quality of the contractor's communication, mitigation, traffic flow management, and property restoration (rather than traditional schedule-tied incentives). Scores were tallied and the median score was used to rate the contractor's performance.

Innovative Practices

According to Howard Steere, public involvement manager at METRO light rail, "linking contractor incentive bonuses to CAB recommendations was a successful way to give stakeholders control over how they were being impacted." Specific strengths of the CAB program included the following:

• **Clear Communication Channels:** The visible presence of the community outreach coordinators on a day-to-day basis, literally walking along the project corridor, gave the community access to staff to address concerns (see Figure 8). This easy access to staff prevented stakeholders from having to find their way through a large agency to solve a problem and saved elected officials from having to deal with problems on the ground.
• **Continuity:** Asking the public involvement coordinators for the planning phase to continue as the community outreach coordinators during the construction phase provided stakeholders with a sense of continuity throughout the process. The relationships and trust that already were established during the planning phase could be carried over to the construction phase. This allowed the community to engage with the process right from the start.
• **Publicity:** CAB chairs and vice chairs served as spokespersons for the project and provided regular updates to the media. Visibility in the public forum allowed the public to see the work that was being done and engaged them in the problem-solving process. According to Steere, if the public only hears about the project when things go wrong, it can easily overlook the project's successes.

Monthly Contractor Evaluation Form

CRITERIA	RATING - Percentage of Incentive Fee					
	Exceptional			Good	Acceptable	Unacceptable
Public Outreach/Information	100	95	90	75	50	0
Notification of construction activity to affected stakeholders in a timely manner.						
Notification of utility interruptions in a timely manner.						
Notification of temporary parking restrictions in a timely manner.						
Notification of lane closures and traffic restrictions in a timely manner.						
Comments:						

FIGURE 7 Contractor evaluation form. *Source:* Valley Metro.

FIGURE 8 Coordinator meets with a community member on-site. *Source:* Valley Metro.

- **Contractor Response:** Contractors responded positively to the program because it gave them the opportunity to showcase the quality of their work. They recognized the value of doing a good job and of receiving positive publicity. Ultimately, all $2.5 million of the incentive funds were distributed. If money was left over after a certain rating period, it was thrown back into the pot for the final evaluation. This provided an additional incentive for contractors to improve if they had performed poorly on previous ratings.

Lessons Learned

Valley Metro plans to use the same process to mitigate construction impacts on future projects, with a slightly revised process to incorporate feedback received from evaluation surveys. This will include developing a finer-grained rating scale to allow for recognition of small differences between contractor performances. It will include a process to reduce the impact of outliers on the final rating for each contractor. Throughout the first CAB process, it became clear that certain CAB members would always score contractors either 0 (or 100) regardless of changes in the contractor's performance. This skewed the average score and created controversy within the CAB. Using a median scoring process alleviated this problem. Other methods could be developed, however, to prevent this from occurring in subsequent projects.

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CONCLUSION

Based on this analysis of the literature review, agency and Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) survey, and case studies, MPOs and transit agencies throughout the country can follow clear successful practices for the involvement of advisory committees in transit planning and operations. Some areas could benefit from additional research. This chapter will review both.

CONCLUSIONS

Transit agencies and MPOs throughout the country involve advisory committees as part of public outreach and involvement activities to support decision making about day-to-day operations, policy issues, service or fare changes, long-range planning, and capital project planning and construction. Advisory committee involvement happens at all types of agencies and cuts across geography, agency or MPO size, and complexity of planning activities undertaken by an agency or MPO.

Even as the public involvement tools and techniques have grown in diversity and sophistication, advisory committees have maintained currency. While Web-based surveys and hands-on workshops provide new opportunities for public feedback, advisory committees provide agencies with input that is uniquely grounded in knowledge from consistent involvement of and dialogue among participants with different points of view. Committee members, by virtue of ongoing involvement, provide informed feedback to agencies and act as liaisons between agencies and their constituents.

The practice of involving advisory committees has grown in sophistication. Most committees adopt protocols for communication and decision making at the outset of the process, and many agencies provide committees with a clear charge, or statement of responsibilities. Even with these strides in committee management and facilitation, agencies and MPOs have room for improved practices, including committee management and evaluation of effectiveness.

This synthesis summarizes a variety of committee structures, organization, and management philosophies that support successful committees—the bottom line is that managing successful committees cannot follow a cookie-cutter approach. The survey of agencies and MPOs across the country indicated little consistency between committee size, membership composition, level of formality, management structure, or any other aspect of committee organization or structure. For example, respondents reported successful committees with a full range of authority levels and no discernible correlation could be made between committee success and committee size. The case studies suggest that, although no one approach guarantees successful involvement, effectiveness stems from careful planning and attention to the needs of the agency or MPO and the community when forming and operating advisory committees.

KEY LESSONS LEARNED

Clear expectations and communication about committee roles and responsibilities contribute to an advisory committee's success.

Each of the agencies profiled in the case studies noted the importance of committee members understanding their role, responsibilities, and decision-making authority. Committees can fill a variety of roles from serving as a sounding board that responds to proposals to making decisions, but members can feel frustrated if they do not understand their role at the outset. Successful committees can take many forms, but expectations about a committee's role need to be aligned with the agency's needs, the community's participation culture, and available resources.

Expectations about things that seem mundane on the surface, such as the participation of committee alternates, decision-making quorum requirements, attendance expectations, and staff roles (e.g., preparation of meeting summaries, distribution of meeting materials), are important to clarify early in the process. For standing committees, this may take the form of operating bylaws that are consistent even as members rotate on or off the committee. For ad hoc committees, these decisions may be made during an early committee meeting or be determined by staff. When determining expectations, it is important to think through the staff's ability to meet expectations established for committee members. Committee staff might consider whether the project schedule will allow for distributing materials a full week before each meeting or if full meeting minutes (as opposed to meeting summaries) will be prepared.

For committees that operate by consensus, defining what consensus means can be helpful in moving toward decisions. Public involvement practitioners often define consensus as the point at which all members can agree that the decision is best for the community as a whole. Reaching consensus is easier when all committee members are operating with the same expectation about what this means. In addition, the successful groups often agree ahead of time what to do if consensus cannot be reached—for example, will the group continue discussions, ask for additional technical work, or note majority and minority positions and move on?

Confusion and frustration can emerge among committee members when their role in the decision structure is not clearly defined. If authority is not clearly defined, committee members might expect to be decision makers—a role that is often reserved for executive staff or elected officials. Clearly articulating where committees sit in the decision-making structure, what kinds of decisions they can affect, and how their input will be communicated to and used by decision makers can reduce confusion and frustration. The committee's role or authority can change over time as projects or programs progress or as agency or MPO needs change. This change in itself is not negative, but it is critical to communicate these changes to the committee as they occur.

These expectations can be communicated through chartering or protocol-setting documents, adopted committee bylaws, or formal chartering sessions. The importance of setting protocols cannot be overstated. Establishing clear expectations, roles, reporting relationships, and committee structure is paramount to committee success. If the committee's role changes over time, those changes can be communicated by revisiting the chartering documents, bylaws, or agreements.

It is important that committee membership be carefully considered, and the need for representation of all viewpoints be balanced with the need to maintain a manageable committee size.

Agencies surveyed and featured in case studies carefully considered committee membership. Many agencies developed matrixes or other tools to ensure representation of key viewpoints and demographic groups. These tools were used both by agencies that selected members directly and those that selected members through an open application process. The range of viewpoints needed on a committee generally are identified through interviews with local jurisdiction staff, key community leaders or stakeholders, or planners, managers, or community outreach specialists with knowledge of the community. Many practitioners report that procedures to add a viewpoint to a committee, if an unexpected issue arises or if it becomes clear that a viewpoint is not represented, are important.

Some agencies, particularly those with standing committees, reported complex selection processes. In some standing committee cases, new members were selected by existing committee members without assistance from staff. In many cases, final approval of committee appointments comes from the transit agency or the MPO's governing body.

Although smaller committees might be easier to manage or may advance decision making more easily, agencies that tended toward larger committees noted that the more comprehensive representation of community diversity and viewpoints inherent in a larger committee outweighed the drawbacks. In cases such as the Central Corridor Light Rail Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) in the Twin Cities or TriMet's advisory committees in Portland, Oregon, larger committees allowed agencies to include appropriate diversity. In any case, practitioners agree that the size of the committee could be considered in the context of overall availability of resources to manage the committee and the skills of the facilitator. As a general rule, larger committees require more management time, longer meetings, and more sophisticated facilitation skills to successfully fulfill their charges.

Agencies throughout the country engage people of different backgrounds and abilities as part of advisory committees. With careful planning and support, committee members who have limited English reading or speaking abilities, who have disabilities, or who have different levels of experience with public policy and group decision making can participate meaningfully in an advisory committee. In practice, staff awareness of the different needs and experiences of committee members can result in a better experience for all committee members. In addition, a good understanding of the demographic and interest groups in a corridor can support the identification of an appropriate range of stakeholder group members. This understanding may be intuitive for a staff person who has a long history of working in a community; when it is not intuitive, stakeholder interviews, review of local newspapers and blogs, and discussions with local staff can help determine who stakeholders might be.

Agencies tended to have strong opinions about the appropriateness of including elected officials or staff as part of an advisory committee. In some communities, including staff or elected officials is commonplace. Reported benefits of this approach included building trust between local governments and community members, transparent decision making, and an increased understanding of the total context of decision making (i.e., budget constraints vs. community desires). Other agencies were strongly opposed to this practice on the basis that advisory committees are places for community members to provide input and that other venues are provided for staff or elected officials to provide input. These agencies believed that combining the groups would lead to confusion about roles and dilute the mission of advisory committees.

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Ultimately, the composition of committees is a decision that every agency or MPO makes in the context of its overall decision-making structure.

Agencies find value in the input provided by advisory committees and think of them as an indispensable part of the public involvement process.

Most agencies find the benefits of including an advisory committee in a project—such as the consistent participation of knowledgeable community members, transparency in the decision-making process, and sharing of information between members—outweigh the drawbacks. The agencies featured in the case studies tended to report on advisory committees as a standard, expected part of the process by community members, staff, and officials.

Agencies noted that advisory committees supported a thorough outreach process not only because they provided public input into the decision-making process, but also because the advisory committee members held staff accountable for early and credible public outreach in the community. Advisory committee members often provided input about outreach methods that would be most effective in their communities. In this way, advisory committees are an important part of a public involvement program, but they do not replace the need for other outreach methods.

Most agencies reported serious consideration of advisory committee input and recommendations by decisions makers. In many cases, advisory committees reported their recommendations or input to decision makers in their own words through committee-authored written recommendations, committee presentations, or communication between a committee's chairperson and decision makers.

Many agencies employ professional public involvement staff to support committees and other outreach activities.

Many agencies noted the involvement of professional public involvement staff. Several agencies interviewed for case studies noted that teams of outreach staff support major capital projects. These staff people both serve as liaisons to the community and provide expertise in managing and facilitating committees. In many cases, these specialists represent the project, agency, or MPO in the public and carry public input back to the agency, MPO, or project. In some cases, agencies make a special effort to hire multilingual outreach staff who can assist with reaching communities where English language proficiency is limited.

The level of effort to manage advisory committees varies greatly based on the amount of autonomy given to committees and their structures. In some cases, advisory committees self-manage with limited participation by staff. A few committees developed their own agendas, documented meetings themselves, and drafted their own recommendations. In other cases, agencies planned for committee meetings by developing agendas and presentation materials, meeting with committee members off-line, and writing committee reports. The bottom line is that committees can be undertaken with limited or extensive resources; however, it is important that they be designed carefully to fit the resources available to support them.

Committee evaluation can lead to improved effectiveness.

Agencies that regularly evaluate the effectiveness of individual meetings or an overall committee process report improvements based on feedback. However, most agencies do not evaluate the effectiveness of their committees from the viewpoint of either committee members or agency staff, and they do not have objective targets from which to gauge success.

AREAS FOR ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

The following questions and discussion provide some suggestions about future study that could advance MPO and agency practices related to the effective involvement of advisory committees in transit planning and operations.

What advisory committee structures and designs work best and how does a practitioner choose a structure?

Handbooks on public involvement provide guidance on establishing and managing some types of advisory committees and generally are focused on project-level planning. Additional guidance on the full range of advisory committees from sounding boards providing individual input to decision-making task forces, including information on how to select the best advisory committee structure for a project, agency, or MPO's needs could be useful to practitioners.

How can standing committees be established, managed, and involved?

Although more than 100 agencies and MPOs reported on the involvement of standing committees in the questionnaire, little, if any, literature or guidance is published on how to structure and manage these committees. The practical differences between standing committees and ad hoc committees require separate study or at the least research that draws out the differences between the two. Practitioners operating these committees have questions about membership duration and rotation, committee agendas and meeting frequency, and reporting relationships that are not adequately addressed. Further study could provide guidance for agencies and MPOs that involve these types of committees and could further benefit from consideration of agency size and complexity in identifying successful practices.

How can committee effectiveness be evaluated?

Relatively few agencies engaged in regular evaluation of committee effectiveness from the perspective of the agency or committee members. Without thoughtful evaluation, it is difficult to know which advisory committee practices are truly effective and successful. In addition, a methodology for assessing the relative costs and benefits of inclusion of an advisory committee in an agency or MPO public involvement program is not available. Further guidance on how to evaluate advisory committee effectiveness from the perspectives of staff, decision makers, committee members, and the public as well as guidance about how to evaluate the cost effectiveness of including advisory committees, could provide practitioners with useful tools for making the case for involving or not involving advisory committees. This research could improve practices when advisory committees are involved.

Who can most effectively facilitate meetings?

Based on the results of the case studies and the survey, meetings led by a chairperson elected from the committee's membership and meetings led by a skilled professional facilitator can be effective. Further research on the trade-offs of each approach, including required staff resources, committee member satisfaction, and committee effectiveness, would help practitioners determine the most effective facilitator for the committee.

How can committees be involved in planning and operations at smaller transit agencies and MPOs?

This synthesis report did not specifically ask about agency or MPO size in terms of operating or capital budget, transit system complexity, or population served. Substantive differences may exist between the ways committees are involved at smaller agencies and MPOs compared with committees involved in larger agencies or between agencies involved in smaller communities compared with bigger cities. The case studies in this synthesis are drawn exclusively from agencies and MPOs in larger cities. Further study on how advisory committees are used in smaller communities or by smaller agencies and MPOs would help practitioners design successful advisory committees that meet their needs, without overburdening resources.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act	IAP2	International Association of Public Participation
BAC	Business Advisory Committee	IDOT	Illinois Department of Transportation
BCC	Board of County Commissioners	ISTEA	Intermodal Surface Transportation Equity Act
BPAC	Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee	MPO	metropolitan planning organization
BRTB	Baltimore Regional Transportation Board	NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
CAB	Community Advisory Board	SAFETEA-LU	Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act—a Legacy for Users
CAC	citizen advisory committee or community advisory committee		
CCT	Community Coordination Team	TARC	Transportation Aesthetics Review Committee
CRT	Community Relations Team	TEA-21	Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century
CTAC	Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee	UTA	Utah Transit Authority
FTAC	Freight Transportation Advisory Committee		

APPENDIX A
SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE

Project purpose: This TCRP synthesis project will document the state of the practice in involving Citizen Advisory Committees (CAC) and other community-based advisory committees to support transit planning and operations. The transportation sector frequently employs advisory committees as a form of public outreach and involvement.

In addition to documenting the responses to this questionnaire for the synthesis report, we will be using the information gathered to identify agencies that are using advisory committees in unique or innovative ways for case studies. Please indicate at the end of the survey if you would be willing to participate in a telephone interview if your agency is selected for a more detailed case study.

The final report, to be published by the Transportation Research Board, will describe the state of the practice of involving advisory committees in transit planning and operations. The report will focus on the function, operations, management and participation in committees rather than on the substantive outcomes. This report will be useful to agencies developing public involvement programs.

Questionnaire instructions: If you have not engaged an advisory committee in the past three years, please answer the first three questions. If you have engaged an advisory committee in the past three years, please complete the remainder of the survey. Participation in the survey by agencies choosing to work with and not work with advisory committees is important to ensure that the broadest range of experiences are captured in this synthesis.

Please answer the questionnaire relative to one advisory committee. An agency may complete multiple questionnaires describing experiences with different types of advisory committees.

This survey should take about 30 minutes to complete. Thank you for your participation. All responses will be confidential. Please contact Kristin Hull at 503-736-4160 or Kristin.hull@ch2m.com with questions. You can complete this form electronically and e-mail it to Kristin.hull@ch2m.com or print it and mail it to Kristin Hull, CH2M HILL, 2020 SW 4th Ave., Portland, OR 97201.

1. *Tell us about yourself*

   Name _____

   Title _____

   Agency _____

   Phone _____

   E-mail _____

   Address _____

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2. *Has your agency included a Citizen/Community Advisory Committee, Stakeholder Working Group or other advisory committee primarily comprised of community members in a public involvement program to support transit planning or operations in the past three years?*

   ☐ Yes

   ☐ No

For those who have not involved advisory committees

If your agency has included an advisory committee in a public involvement program to support project planning or operations in the past three years, please answer these questions.

3. *Why does your agency choose not to involve advisory committees (choose all that apply)?*

   ☐ We are not planning capital improvements or making operational changes that require public involvement

   ☐ Advisory committees are ineffective

   ☐ Advisory committees are expensive or time consuming to implement

   ☐ Advisory committee members expect to have decision-making authority

   ☐ Community members are not interested in serving on advisory committees

   ☐ Other public involvement methods are more effective

   ☐ Agency has had negative experiences with advisory committees in the past

   ☐ Other _____

   Please share any other information about why your agency does not involve advisory committees.

For those who have involved advisory committees

If you have involved an advisory committee in transit planning and operations, please answer the remaining questions. As committee structure and role can vary, please complete a separate questionnaire for each committee.

Overview

4. *What kinds of transit projects or programs have your agency involved advisory committees in during the past three years (choose all that apply)?*

   ☐ General agency operations

   ☐ Major capital project (e.g., new light rail line, park-and-ride development)

   ☐ Planning for service changes

   ☐ Standing committee on a specific operational issue (e.g., ADA service, budget oversight, etc.)

   ☐ Other _____

5. *What type of committee are you reporting on with this questionnaire (note: you may complete additional question-naires to report on other committee types)?*

   ☐ Standing committee on general agency operations

   ☐ Major capital project (e.g., new light rail line, park-and-ride development)

   ☐ Planning for service changes

   ☐ Standing committee on a specific operational issue (e.g., ADA service, budget oversight, etc.)

   ☐ Other _____

6.   *If the committee is a standing committee, how long are members' appointments?*

☐ Less than 1 year

☐ 1–2 years

☐ 3–4 years

☐ Longer than 4 years

☐ Indeterminate

☐ Not a standing committee

7.   *In general, how effective has your agency found advisory committees to be?*

☐ Very effective

☐ Somewhat effective

☐ Neutral

☐ Somewhat ineffective

☐ Very ineffective

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

8.   *How were members selected (choose all that apply)?*

☐ Open, advertised application process

☐ Agency invited specific community organizations to appoint members

☐ Agency invited local jurisdictions or other partners to appoint members

☐ Agency invited specific individuals to participate

☐ Other _____

9.   *Who did committee members represent?*

☐ Own viewpoints (at-large members)

☐ A geographic area

☐ Neighborhood association

☐ Community, business or civic organization

☐ Interest not representing a formal organization (e.g., commuters, freight)

☐ Other _____

10. *Did committee members represent more than one viewpoint or organization?*

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not applicable

If yes, how did the committee member acknowledge his/her various roles?

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11. *Did the committee include elected officials or agency staff members in addition to community members (choose all that apply)?*

☐ Elected officials

☐ Agency or jurisdictional staff

☐ Only community members

☐ Other _____

If the committee was comprised of a mix of community members and elected officials or agency staff, what benefits and drawbacks do you think this approach had?

12. *If elected officials served on the committee, what was their role (choose all that apply)?*

☐ Participant

☐ Observer or non-voting member

☐ Chair

☐ Not applicable

☐ Other _____

13. *If the committee included agency staff or elected officials, did all committee members participate in decision making?*

☐ All members participated in decision making

☐ Only community members participated in decision making

☐ Not applicable

☐ Other _____

14. *Did your agency identify committee members with the purpose of including all likely viewpoints?*

☐ Yes, we tried to include all likely viewpoints

☐ No, we did not consider members' viewpoints in forming the committee

☐ Not applicable

15. *Did committee reflect the community's or project area's diversity (check all that apply)?*

☐ Ethnic

☐ Geographic

☐ Not applicable

☐ Other _____

16. *Did the committee include members who required special accommodations (e.g., translation services)?*

☐ Yes

☐ No

How did you accommodate members who required special accommodations?

17. *Did the committee include members who had limited experience interacting with government or serving on advisory committees?*

☐ Yes

☐ No

If so, how did you educate these members about how to fulfill their role?

18. *How many members did the committee include?*

☐ Less than 10

☐ 10–15

☐ 16–20

☐ 21–25

☐ More than 25

COMMITTEE START-UP AND ORGANIZATION

19. *Did the committee agree to ground rules or protocols at the beginning of the process?*

☐ Yes

☐ No

20. *What topics did the ground rules and protocols include?*

☐ Committee member responsibilities

☐ Meeting guidelines

☐ Internal communication

☐ External communication

☐ Decision-making process

☐ Decision-making quorum

☐ Dispute resolution

☐ Not applicable

☐ Other _____

21. *Were the protocols generally enforced or followed by group members?*

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Sometimes

☐ Not applicable

22. *How many times did the committee meet?*

☐ Fewer than five times

☐ Five to eight times

☐ Nine to twelve times

☐ More than twelve times

☐ On-going, permanent committee

☐ Other _____

23. *Did the committee meet according to a regular schedule or according to project or program milestones?*

☐ According to milestones

☐ Regularly recurring schedule

☐ Other _____

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24. *If the committee met on a regular schedule, what was the frequency of meetings?*

    ☐ Weekly

    ☐ Monthly

    ☐ Quarterly

    ☐ Not applicable

    ☐ Other _____

25. *How long were meetings?*

    ☐ 1 hour

    ☐ 2 hours

    ☐ 3 hours

    ☐ Longer than 3 hours

26. *How did you communicate with the committee between meetings (choose all that apply)?*

    ☐ Phone

    ☐ E-mail

    ☐ Individual meetings

    ☐ Mail

    ☐ Did not communicate between meetings

    ☐ Other _____

27. *At the beginning of the project, did the agency plan topics for all or most of the committee meetings (even if they changed as the project progressed)?*

    ☐ Yes

    ☐ No

FACILITATION AND ROLE OF CHAIR

28. *Did the committee have a chairperson?*

    ☐ Yes

    ☐ No

    Please answer these questions if your committee included a chairperson:

29. *If your committee had a chairperson, how was he or she selected?*

    ☐ Selected by agency

    ☐ Selected by committee members

    ☐ Other _____

30. *Please select all of the chairperson's responsibilities:*

☐ Assistance in agenda setting

☐ Meeting management

☐ External spokesperson

☐ Media spokesperson

☐ Other _____

31. *Who facilitated committee meetings?*

☐ Elected official

☐ Staff member

☐ Consultant

☐ Not facilitated

☐ Other _____

32. *If the committee was facilitated by a staff member or consultant, did the facilitator have specific expertise in committee facilitation?*

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not applicable

☐ Unsure

33. *How effective was the facilitator?*

☐ Very effective

☐ Somewhat effective

☐ Neutral/don't know

☐ Somewhat ineffective

☐ Very ineffective

☐ Not applicable

34. *Who developed meeting agendas?*

☐ Agency/consultant developed agendas

☐ Agency/consultant developed agendas in consultation with chairperson

☐ Agency/consultant developed agendas in consultation with committee

☐ Committee developed agendas

☐ Not applicable

☐ Other _____

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COMMITTEE PURPOSE AND ROLE

35. *Was the committee assigned a specific charge by the agency? (If your committee was given a charge, please consider e-mailing the charge to kristin.hull@ch2m.com.)*

    ☐ Yes

    ☐ No

36. *If the committee had a charge, who assigned it?*

    ☐ Board of directors

    ☐ Other policy-making body

    ☐ Staff

    ☐ Not applicable

    ☐ Other _____

37. *Was this advisory committee's role specified in your agency's charter, policies or bylaws, or was the committee formed in response to a specific agency or project need on an ad-hoc basis?*

    ☐ Role specified

    ☐ Ad-hoc basis

    ☐ Not applicable

    ☐ Other _____

38. *What functions did the committee fulfill (check all that apply)?*

    ☐ Sharing information with community members

    ☐ Gathering information from community members to share with agency

    ☐ Acting as spokesperson (e.g. speaking engagements, media contacts)

    ☐ Providing input

    ☐ Developing recommendations

    ☐ Making decisions

    ☐ Other _____

39. *How did committee members interact with the media?*

    ☐ The media did not contact committee members

    ☐ A committee spokesperson represented the group

    ☐ An agency spokesperson represented the group

    ☐ All committee members were free to speak with the media

    ☐ Other _____

40. *Was this media protocol agreed upon ahead of time?*

    ☐ Yes

    ☐ No

    ☐ Not applicable

41.   Did the committee accept comment from public observers at meetings (choose all that apply)?

☐ Verbal comment

☐ Written comment

☐ Public comment was not accepted

☐ Other _____

42.   How much of a typical committee meeting consisted of the following activities?

	Less than 10%	10–25%	26–50%	51–75%	67–100%
Presentations from staff or consultants	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Question and answer periods or discussion	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Presentations from committee members	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Public comment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other _____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other _____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

COMMITTEE DECISION MAKING

43.   What was the committee's highest level of authority?

☐ Community liaison

☐ Individual input/sounding board

☐ Advice/recommendations

☐ Decisions

44.   What kinds of decisions or milestones were committee members asked to provide input about (choose all that apply)?

☐ Issues related to project scope, schedule or budget

☐ Issues related to public involvement or outreach

☐ Evaluation framework or criteria

☐ Technical issues (e.g., design, alignment, alternatives)

☐ Policy issues

☐ Not applicable

☐ Other _____

45.   To whom did the committee primarily provide input?

☐ Agency board of directors, councilor or other policy makers

☐ Multi-agency policy committee or steering committee

☐ Executive-level management

☐ Program or project managers

☐ The committee did not provide input

☐ Other _____

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46. *How were minority viewpoints captured (choose all that apply)?*

☐ In meeting notes

☐ In a minority report

☐ In verbal reports

☐ Not captured

☐ Not applicable

☐ Other _____

47. *How was committee input communicated (choose all that apply)?*

☐ Written reports by staff

☐ Verbal reports by staff

☐ Verbal reports by committee member

☐ Written report by committee member

☐ Meeting minutes

☐ Individual written letters or statements from committee members

☐ The committee did not provide input

☐ Other _____

48. *If the committee's input was not reflected in final decisions, how was this explained and communicated to committee members?*

☐ Not applicable

☐ Not explained or communicated

☐ Explained by e-mail or in writing

☐ Explained in committee meeting

☐ Not applicable

☐ Other _____

49. *How did the group make decisions or recommendations?*

☐ Consensus or modified consensus

☐ Majority voting

☐ Did not make group decisions or recommendations

☐ Other _____

Please answer the following questions if the committee made decisions or recommendations by consensus.

50. *How was consensus defined by the committee?*

☐ 100% agreement and support

☐ 100% willing to accept the outcome as best for the group as a whole

☐ 50% support

☐ Some other level of support between 50% and 100%

☐ Consensus was not defined

☐ Not applicable

☐ Other _____

51. *If committee members could not reach consensus, how did the group move forward (choose all that apply)?*

☐ Tabled discussion until more information was available

☐ Continued discussions in the hope of reaching a compromise

☐ Asked minority opinion holders what changes would be required to gain their support

☐ Voted and noted majority and minority viewpoints

☐ Designated a sub-committee to develop more options for the committee's consideration

☐ Designated a sub-committee to resolve issue

☐ Not applicable

☐ Other _____

FEEDBACK AND MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS

52. *Were committee members asked about the committee's effectiveness and their satisfaction with participation during the process (choose all that apply)?*

☐ Yes—through a written questionnaire

☐ Yes—through individual interviews or phone calls

☐ Yes—during a meeting

☐ No

53. *Were committee members asked about the committee's effectiveness and their satisfaction with participation at the end of the process (choose all that apply)?*

☐ Yes—through a written questionnaire

☐ Yes—through individual interviews or phone calls

☐ Yes—during a meeting

☐ No

54. *Were individual meetings evaluated (choose all that apply)?*

☐ Yes—through a written questionnaire

☐ Yes—through individual interviews or phone calls

☐ Yes—during a meeting

☐ No

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55. *Were committee meetings or other practices changed based on feedback?*

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not applicable

Please explain.

56. *Did the agency evaluate the effectiveness of the CAC in reaching agency goals?*

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, how was the evaluation done?

STAFF SUPPORT AND BUDGET

57. *How many staff or consultants generally attended committee meetings?*

☐ 1

☐ 2–4

☐ 5–7

☐ More than 7

58. *How many hours did staff or consultants generally spend preparing for, conducting and following up from each meeting?*

☐ 0–5 hours

☐ 5–10 hours

☐ 10–15 hours

☐ More than 15 hours

59. *How were meetings documented or recorded?*

☐ Meeting minutes or summaries prepared by staff person or consultant

☐ Meeting minutes or summaries prepared by a committee member

☐ Meeting minutes or summaries were not prepared

OTHER INFORMATION

60. *Which aspects of the advisory committee process worked well?*

61. *Which aspects of the advisory committee process would you change?*

62. *Would you be willing to participate in a one-hour telephone interview if your agency is selected to be featured in a case study for this synthesis report?*

☐ Yes

☐ No

APPENDIX B
LIST OF RESPONDENTS

AGENCY	CITY	STATE
Access Services	Los Angeles	CA
ACCESS Transportation Systems	Pittsburgh	PA
Alaska Railroad Corporation	Anchorage	AK
Allegany County Transit	Cumberland	MD
Altamont Commuter Express	Stockton	CA
Anaheim Transportation Network	Anaheim	CA
Annapolis Dept. of Transportation	Annapolis	MD
Area Plan Commission of Tippecanoe County	Lafayette	IN
Area Transportation Authority of NC PA	Johnsonburg	PA
Arrowhead Regional Development Commission	Duluth	MN
Ashland Area MPO/FIVCO Area Development District	Grayson	KY
Atlanta Regional Commission	Atlanta	GA
ATS	Miami	FL
Baltimore Metropolitan Council	Baltimore	MD
Bangor Area Comprehensive Transportation System	Bangor	ME
Bannock Planning Organization	Pocatello	ID
Beaver County Transit Authority	Rochester	PA
Bend Area Transit (City of Bend)	Bend	OR
Bend MPO	Bend	OR
Berks County Planning Commission	Reading	PA
BHJ Metropolitan Planning Commission	Steubenville	OH
Bismarck/Mandan MPO	Bismarck	ND
Blacksburg, Christiansburg, Montgomery Area MPO	Christiansburg	VA
Bloomington/Monroe County MPO	Bloomington	IN
Bloomington–Normal Public Transit System	Bloomington	IL
Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization	Boston	MA
Butte County Assoc. of Governments/Butte Regional Transit	Chico	CA
Capital District Transportation Authority	Albany	NY
Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency	Bristol	CT
Central Mass. Metropolitan Planning Organization/Worcester Regional Transit Authority	Worcester	MA
Charles County Department of Community Services	Port Tobacco	MD
Charlotte County–Punta Gorda MPO	Port Charlotte	FL
Chatham Area Transit Authority	Savannah	FL
Chattanooga Area Regional Transportation Authority	Chattanooga	TN
Cheyenne MPO	Cheyenne	WY
Cheyenne Transit Program	Cheyenne	WY
City of Asheville	Asheville	NC
City of High Point	High Point	NC

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AGENCY	CITY	STATE
City of Jefferson–Jefftran	Jefferson City	MO
City of Laguna Beach	Laguna Beach	CA
City of Las Cruces—RoadRUNNER Transit	Las Cruces	NM
City of Lompoc	Lompoc	CA
City of Loveland Transit	Loveland	CO
City of Modesto	Modesto	CA
City of Moorhead—Metro Area Transit	Moorhead	MN
City of Nashua NH—Nashua Transit	Nashua	NH
City of Newark	Newark	OH
City of San Luis Obispo/SLO Transit	San Luis Obispo	CA
City of Sioux City, Iowa	Sioux City	IA
City of Thousand Oaks	Thousand Oaks	CA
City of Tucson, DOT	Tucson	AZ
City of Turlock, California	Turlock	CA
Coast Transit Authority	Gulfport	MS
Community Coach	Paramus	NJ
Concho Valley Transit District	San Angelo	TX
Corpus Christi MPO	Corpus Christi	TX
COTPA/METRO Transit	Oklahoma City	OK
County of Muskegon—Muskegon Area Transit System	Muskegon Heights	MI
Cowlitz–Wahkiakum COG	Kelso	WA
Crater Planning District Commission	Petersburg	VA
CTTRANSIT	Hartford	CT
Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission	Philadelphia	PA
DMMPC	Muncie	IN
Dubuque MPO	Dubuque	IA
Duluth Transit Authority	Duluth	MN
DVRPC	Philadelphia	PA
East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission	Menasha	WI
East–West Gateway Council of Governments	St. Louis	MO
Endless Mountains Transportation Authority	Athens	PA
Erie County Regional Planning	Sandusky	OH
Erie Metropolitan Transit Authority	Erie	PA
Escambia County Area Transit	Pensacola	FL
Everett Transit	Everett	WA
Fairfax County Department of Transportation	Fairfax	VA
FAMPO	Fredericksburg	VA
Fayette Area Coordinated Transportation	Lemont Furnace	PA
Fayetteville Area System of Transit	Fayetteville	NC
Fort Bend County Public Transportation Department	Sugar Land	TX
Galveston Island Transit	Galveston	TX
Great Falls Transit District	Great Falls	MT
Greater Bridgeport Transit	Bridgeport	CT
Greene County Transit Board	Xenia	OH

AGENCY	CITY	STATE
GRTC Transit System	Richmond	VA
Hernando County MPO	Brooksville	FL
Indian River MPO	Vero Beach	FL
King County Dept. of Transportation/Metro Transit Division	Seattle	WA
KIPDA	Louisville	KY
Knoxville Area Transit	Knoxville	TN
Kokomo/Howard County Governmental Coordinating Council	Kokomo	IN
Kootenai Metropolitan Planning Org.	Spokane	WA
La Crosse Area Planning Committee	La Crosse	WI
Lafayette, Louisiana MPO	Lafayette	LA
Lane Transit District	Eugene	OR
Lee County Transit	Fort Myers	FL
Lee–Russell Council of Governments	Opelika	AL
Lima Allen County RPC	Lima	OH
Lincoln–Lancaster County Planning Dept. (also MPO)	Lincoln	NE
Long Island Rail Road	Jamaica	NY
Longview Transit	Longview	TX
Los Angeles County MTA (Metro)	Los Angeles	CA
Loudoun County Transit	Leesburg	VA
Madera County Transportation Commission	Madera	CA
Mass Transportation Authority	Flint	MI
McLean County Regional Planning Commission	Bloomington	IL
Memphis/Shelby County Dept. of Regional Services	Memphis	TN
METRA Transit System	Columbus	GA
Metro	Los Angeles	CA
METRO—Valley Metro/RPTA	Phoenix	AZ
Metro–North Railroad	New York	NY
METROPLAN ORLANDO	Orlando	FL
Metropolitan Area Planning Agency	Omaha	NE
Metropolitan Council	St. Paul	MN
Metropolitan Transit Authority	Nashville	TN
Miami County Public Transit	Troy	OH
Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission	Dayton	OH
Miami–Dade MPO	Miami	FL
Michiana Area Council of Governments	South Bend	IN
Midland Odessa Urban Transit District	Odessa	TX
Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission	Columbus	OH
Milwaukee County Transit System	Milwaukee	WI
Monterey–Salinas Transit	Monterey	CA
Montgomery County Division of Transit Services	Rockville	MD
MOTOR MPO	Midland	TX
Mount Carmel Borough/LATS	Mount Carmel	PA
Mountain Line Transit Authority	Morgantown	WV
Mountainland MPO	Orem	UT

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AGENCY	CITY	STATE
MTA Metro–North	New York	NY
Municipality of Anchorage	Anchorage	AK
NAIPTA	Flagstaff	AZ
Nashville MTA	Nashville	TN
New Castle Area Transit Authority	New Castle	PA
Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority	Buffalo	NY
NIRCC	Fort Wayne	IN
North Florida Transportation Planning Organization	Jacksonville	FL
Opportunity Enterprises	Valparaiso	IN
Orange County Transportation Authority	Orange	CA
Pace	Arlington Heights	IL
Palm Beach MPO	West Palm Beach	FL
Palm Tran	West Palm Beach	FL
PARTA	Kent	OH
PCACS	Valparaiso	IN
Petaluma Transit	Petaluma	CA
Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG)	Colorado Springs	CO
Pima Assoc. of Governments	Tucson	AZ
Port Authority of Allegheny County	Pittsburgh	PA
Port Authority of New York and New Jersey	Jersey City	NJ
Portland Streetcar, Inc.	Portland	OR
Razorback Transit	Fayetteville	AR
Red Rose Transit Authority	Lancaster	PA
Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada	Las Vegas	NV
Richland County Transit	Mansfield	OH
Rock Hill–Fort Mill Area Transportation Study (RFATS)	Rock Hill	SC
Rock Island County Metro Transit District	Moline	IL
Rockford Metropolitan Agency for Planning	Rockford	IL
Rogue Valley Council of Governments	Central Point	OR
Rogue Valley Transportation District	Medford	OR
Rome-Floyd Co. Planning Department	Rome	GA
RTC	Vancouver	WA
Saginaw Transit Authority Regional Services (STARS)	Saginaw	MI
Salem–Keizer Transit	Salem	OR
San Antonio–Bexar County MPO	San Antonio	TX
San Diego Metropolitan Transit System	San Diego	CA
San Luis Obispo Council of Governments	San Luis Obispo	CA
San Mateo County Transit District	San Carlos	CA
Santa Barbara County Assoc. of Governments	Santa Barbara	CA
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority	San Jose	CA
Sarasota/Manatee MPO	Sarasota	FL
Savannah MPO	Savannah	GA
Savannah MPO and Chatham Area Transit Authority	Savannah	GA
SCAG	Los Angeles	CA

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AGENCY	CITY	STATE
SEMCOG	Detroit	MI
Senior Services of Snohomish County	Mukilteo	WA
SEPTA	Philadelphia	PA
Shasta County Regional Transportation Planning Agency	Redding	CA
Southwestern Pennsylvania Planning Commission	Pittsburgh	PA
St. Cloud Area Planning Organization	St. Cloud	MN
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners	St Augustine	FL
St. Johns County Council on Aging, Inc.	St. Augustine	FL
St. Lucie TPO	Fort Pierce	FL
Star Tran/Public Works & Utilities Department	Lincoln	NE
StarMetro	Tallahassee	FL
Stateline Area Transportation Study	Beloit	WI
Sun Cities Area Transit System, Inc.	Peoria	AZ
Texarkana Urban Transit District	Texarkana	TX
THERTA	Worcester	MA
Toledo Area Regional Transit Authority	Toledo	OH
Toledo Metro Area Council of Governments (MPO)	Toledo	OH
Triangle Transit	RTP	NC
TriMet	Portland	OR
UNC–Charlotte	Charlotte	NC
Union City Transit	Union City	CA
Unitrans/UC Davis	Davis	CA
University of Michigan—Parking & Transportation Services	Ann Arbor	MI
Venango County Transportation	Franklin	PA
Virginia Railway Express	Alexandria	VA
VVTA	Hesperia	CA
Warren County Transit Authority	Warren	PA
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority	Washington	DC
Wave Transit	Wilmington	NC
Wenatchee Valley Transportation Council	Wenatchee	WA
Western Contra Costa Transit	Pinole	CA
Western Piedmont COG	Hickory	NC
Westmoreland County Transit Authority	Greensburg	PA
Whatcom Transportation Authority	Bellingham	WA
Wilmington Area Planning Council (MPO)	Newark	DE
Yolo County Transportation District	Woodland	CA
Yuba–Sutter Transit	Marysville	CA

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APPENDIX C
RESPONSES TO MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. HAS YOUR AGENCY INCLUDED A CITIZEN/COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE, STAKEHOLDER WORKING GROUP OR OTHER ADVISORY COMMITTEE PRIMARILY COMPRISED OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN A PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM TO SUPPORT TRANSIT PLANNING OR OPERATIONS IN THE PAST THREE YEARS?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Yes	83.2%	193
No	16.8%	39
	answered question	232
	skipped question	1

2. WHY DOES YOUR AGENCY CHOOSE NOT TO INVOLVE ADVISORY COMMITTEES (CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY)?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
We are not planning capital improvements or making operational changes that require public involvement	50.0%	10
Advisory committees are ineffective	20.0%	4
Advisory committees are expensive or time consuming to implement	5.0%	1
Advisory committee members expect to have decision-making authority	20.0%	4
Community members are not interested in serving on advisory committees	35.0%	7
Other public involvement methods are more effective	55.0%	11
Agency has had negative experiences with advisory committees in the past	10.0%	2
Other (please specify)		14
	answered question	20
	skipped question	213

3. WHAT KINDS OF TRANSIT PROJECTS OR PROGRAMS HAVE YOUR AGENCY INVOLVED ADVISORY COMMITTEES IN DURING THE PAST THREE YEARS (CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY)?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
General agency operations	56.2%	104
Major capital project (e.g., new light rail line, park-and-ride development)	40.0%	74
Planning for service changes	55.7%	103
Standing committee on a specific operational issue (e.g., ADA service, budget oversight)	42.7%	79
Other (please specify)	30.3%	56
	answered question	185
	skipped question	48

4. WHAT TYPE OF COMMITTEE ARE YOU REPORTING ON WITH THIS QUESTIONNAIRE (NOTE: YOU MAY COMPLETE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONNAIRES TO REPORT ON OTHER COMMITTEE TYPES)?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Standing committee on general agency operations	44.5%	81
Major capital project (e.g., new light rail line, park-and-ride development)	14.3%	26
Planning for service changes	15.4%	28
Standing committee on a specific operational issue (e.g., ADA service, budget oversight, etc.)	15.4%	28
Other (please specify)	22.5%	41
	answered question	182
	skipped question	51

5. IF THE COMMITTEE IS A STANDING COMMITTEE, HOW LONG ARE MEMBERS' APPOINTMENTS?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Less than 1 year	0.0%	0
1–2 years	22.1%	40
3–4 years	18.2%	33
Longer than 4 years	2.2%	4
Indeterminate	31.5%	57
Not a standing committee	26.0%	47
	answered question	181
	skipped question	52

6. IN GENERAL, HOW EFFECTIVE HAS YOUR AGENCY FOUND ADVISORY COMMITTEES TO BE?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Very effective	34.2%	63
Somewhat effective	49.5%	91
Neutral	9.2%	17
Somewhat ineffective	5.4%	10
Very ineffective	1.6%	3
	answered question	184
	skipped question	49

7. HOW WERE MEMBERS SELECTED (CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY)?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Open, advertised application process	31.4%	55
Agency invited specific community organizations to appoint members	42.9%	75
Agency invited local jurisdictions or other partners to appoint members	38.9%	68
Agency invited specific individuals to participate	40.0%	70
Other (please specify)	21.1%	37
	answered question	175
	skipped question	58

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8. WHO DID COMMITTEE MEMBERS REPRESENT?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Own viewpoints (at-large members)	45.5%	80
A geographic area	36.4%	64
Neighborhood association	18.8%	33
Community, business or civic organization	55.1%	97
Interest not representing a formal organization (e.g., commuters, freight)	26.7%	47
Other (please specify)	26.7%	47
	answered question	176
	skipped question	57

9. DID COMMITTEE MEMBERS REPRESENT MORE THAN ONE VIEWPOINT OR ORGANIZATION?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Yes	51.4%	90
No	40.6%	71
Not applicable	8.0%	14
If yes, how did the committee member acknowledge his/her various roles?		51
	answered question	175
	skipped question	58

10. DID THE COMMITTEE INCLUDE ELECTED OFFICIALS OR AGENCY STAFF MEMBERS IN ADDITION TO COMMUNITY MEMBERS (CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY)?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Elected officials	35.9%	61
Agency or jurisdictional staff	60.6%	103
Only community members	45.3%	77
If the committee was comprised of a mix of community members and elected officials or agency staff, what benefits and drawbacks do you think this approach had?		92
	answered question	170
	skipped question	63

11. IF ELECTED OFFICIALS SERVED ON THE COMMITTEE, WHAT WAS THEIR ROLE (CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY)?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Participant	34.8%	54
Observer or non-voting member	5.2%	8
Chair	9.7%	15
Not applicable	55.5%	86
Other (please specify)	1.9%	3
	answered question	155
	skipped question	78

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12. IF THE COMMITTEE INCLUDED AGENCY STAFF OR ELECTED OFFICIALS, DID ALL COMMITTEE MEMBERS PARTICIPATE IN DECISION MAKING?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
All members participated in decision making	50.0%	84
Only community members participated in decision making	11.9%	20
Committee did not make decisions or recommendations	3.0%	5
Not applicable	31.0%	52
Other (please specify)	4.2%	7
	answered question	168
	skipped question	65

13. DID YOUR AGENCY IDENTIFY COMMITTEE MEMBERS WITH THE PURPOSE OF INCLUDING ALL LIKELY VIEWPOINTS?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Yes, we tried to include all likely viewpoints	75.4%	129
No, we did not consider members' viewpoints in forming the committee	10.5%	18
Not applicable	14.0%	24
	answered question	171
	skipped question	62

14. DID COMMITTEE REFLECT THE COMMUNITY'S OR PROJECT AREA'S DIVERSITY (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Ethnic	43.7%	76
Geographic	67.2%	117
Not applicable	15.5%	27
Other (please specify)	32.8%	57
	answered question	174
	skipped question	59

15. DID THE COMMITTEE INCLUDE MEMBERS WHO REQUIRED SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS (E.G., TRANSLATION SERVICES)?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Yes	52.6%	91
No	47.4%	82
How did you accommodate members who required special accommodations?		94
	answered question	173
	skipped question	60

16. DID THE COMMITTEE INCLUDE MEMBERS WHO HAD LIMITED EXPERIENCE INTERACTING WITH GOVERNMENT OR SERVING ON ADVISORY COMMITTEES?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Yes	76.6%	134
No	23.4%	41
If so, how did you educate these members about how to fulfill their role?		101
	answered question	175
	skipped question	58

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17. HOW MANY MEMBERS DID THE COMMITTEE INCLUDE?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Less than 10	26.3%	46
10–15	37.1%	65
16–20	16.0%	28
21–25	8.0%	14
More than 25	12.6%	22
	answered question	175
	skipped question	58

18. DID THE COMMITTEE AGREE TO GROUND RULES OR PROTOCOLS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE PROCESS?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Yes	77.6%	132
No	22.4%	38
	answered question	170
	skipped question	63

19. WHAT TOPICS DID THE GROUND RULES AND PROTOCOLS INCLUDE?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Committee member responsibilities	64.8%	105
Meeting guidelines	64.8%	105
Internal communication	32.1%	52
External communication	27.8%	45
Decision-making process	52.5%	85
Decision-making quorum	40.7%	66
Dispute resolution	16.0%	26
Not applicable	13.6%	22
Other (please specify)	20.4%	33
	answered question	162
	skipped question	71

20. WERE THE PROTOCOLS GENERALLY ENFORCED OR FOLLOWED BY GROUP MEMBERS?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Yes	75.6%	124
No	1.2%	2
Sometimes	7.3%	12
Not applicable	15.9%	26
	answered question	164
	skipped question	69

21. HOW MANY TIMES DID THE COMMITTEE MEET?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Fewer than five times	14.1%	24
Five to eight times	13.5%	23
Nine to twelve times	8.8%	15
More than twelve times	2.9%	5
On-going, permanent committee	51.2%	87
Other (please specify)	9.4%	16
	answered question	170
	skipped question	63

22. DID THE COMMITTEE MEET ACCORDING TO A REGULAR SCHEDULE OR ACCORDING TO PROJECT OR PROGRAM MILESTONES?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
According to milestones	21.8%	37
Regularly recurring schedule	67.6%	115
Other (please specify)	10.6%	18
	answered question	170
	skipped question	63

23. IF THE COMMITTEE MET ON A REGULAR SCHEDULE, WHAT WAS THE FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Weekly	1.3%	2
Monthly	44.7%	71
Quarterly	17.6%	28
Not applicable	16.4%	26
Other (please specify)	20.1%	32
	answered question	159
	skipped question	74

24. HOW LONG WERE MEETINGS?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
1 hour	24.3%	41
2 hours	73.4%	124
3 hours	2.4%	4
Longer than 3 hours	0.0%	0
	answered question	169
	skipped question	64

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25. HOW DID YOU COMMUNICATE WITH THE COMMITTEE BETWEEN MEETINGS (CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY)?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Phone	59.4%	101
E-mail	91.2%	155
Individual meetings	17.1%	29
Mail	51.8%	88
Did not communicate between meetings	3.5%	6
Other (please specify)	8.2%	14
	answered question	170
	skipped question	63

26. AT THE BEGINNING OF THE PROJECT, DID THE AGENCY PLAN TOPICS FOR ALL OR MOST OF THE COMMITTEE MEETINGS (EVEN IF THEY CHANGED AS THE PROJECT PROGRESSED)?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Yes	72.5%	121
No	27.5%	46
	answered question	167
	skipped question	66

27. DID THE COMMITTEE HAVE A CHAIRPERSON?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Yes	72.4%	123
No	27.6%	47
	answered question	170
	skipped question	63

28. HOW WAS THE CHAIRPERSON SELECTED?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Selected by agency	16.4%	20
Selected by committee members	75.4%	92
Committee did not have a chair	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)	8.2%	10
	answered question	122
	skipped question	111

29. PLEASE SELECT ALL OF THE CHAIRPERSON'S RESPONSIBILITIES:

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Assistance in agenda setting	78.9%	97
Meeting management	96.7%	119
External spokesperson	50.4%	62
Media spokesperson	21.1%	26
Not applicable	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)	8.1%	10
	answered question	123
	skipped question	110

30. WHO FACILITATED COMMITTEE MEETINGS?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Elected official	3.5%	6
Staff member	70.0%	119
Consultant	7.1%	12
Not facilitated	7.1%	12
Other (please specify)	20.0%	34
answered question		170
skipped question		63

31. IF THE COMMITTEE WAS FACILITATED BY A STAFF MEMBER OR CONSULTANT, DID THE FACILITATOR HAVE SPECIFIC EXPERTISE IN COMMITTEE FACILITATION?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Yes	50.6%	85
No	22.6%	38
Not applicable	19.0%	32
Unsure	7.7%	13
answered question		168
skipped question		65

32. HOW EFFECTIVE WAS THE FACILITATOR?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Very effective	49.4%	82
Somewhat effective	24.7%	41
Neutral/don't know	9.6%	16
Somewhat ineffective	1.2%	2
Very ineffective	0.0%	0
Not applicable	15.1%	25
answered question		166
skipped question		67

33. WHO DEVELOPED MEETING AGENDAS?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Agency/consultant developed agendas	35.3%	60
Agency/consultant developed agendas in consultation with chairperson	25.3%	43
Agency/consultant developed agendas in consultation with committee	14.1%	24
Committee developed agendas	12.9%	22
Not applicable	1.2%	2
Other (please specify)	11.2%	19
answered question		170
skipped question		63

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34. WAS THE COMMITTEE ASSIGNED A SPECIFIC CHARGE BY THE AGENCY?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Yes	50.3%	82
No	49.7%	81
	answered question	163
	skipped question	70

35. IF THE COMMITTEE HAD A CHARGE, WHO ASSIGNED IT?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Board of Directors	19.1%	29
Other policy-making body	7.2%	11
Staff	15.1%	23
Committee did not have a charge	2.6%	4
Not applicable	36.8%	56
Other (please specify)	19.1%	29
	answered question	152
	skipped question	81

36. WAS THIS ADVISORY COMMITTEE'S ROLE SPECIFIED IN YOUR AGENCY'S CHARTER, POLICIES OR BYLAWS, OR WAS THE COMMITTEE FORMED IN RESPONSE TO A SPECIFIC AGENCY OR PROJECT NEED ON AN AD-HOC BASIS?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Role specified	38.8%	64
Ad-hoc basis	34.5%	57
Not applicable	15.2%	25
Other (please specify)	11.5%	19
	answered question	165
	skipped question	68

37. WHAT FUNCTIONS DID THE COMMITTEE FULFILL (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Sharing information with community members	72.7%	120
Gathering information from community members to share with agency	74.5%	123
Acting as spokesperson (e.g., speaking engagements, media contacts)	15.8%	26
Providing input	91.5%	151
Developing recommendations	86.7%	143
Making decisions	23.6%	39
Other (please specify)		12
	answered question	165
	skipped question	68

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38. HOW DID COMMITTEE MEMBERS INTERACT WITH THE MEDIA?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
The media did not contact committee members	47.6%	79
A committee spokesperson represented the group	5.4%	9
An agency spokesperson represented the group	10.2%	17
All committee members were free to speak with the media	21.7%	36
Other (please specify)	15.1%	25
	answered question	166
	skipped question	67

39. WAS THIS MEDIA PROTOCOL AGREED UPON AHEAD OF TIME?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Yes	25.2%	41
No	27.6%	45
Not applicable	47.2%	77
	answered question	163
	skipped question	70

40. DID THE COMMITTEE ACCEPT COMMENT FROM PUBLIC OBSERVERS AT MEETINGS (CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY)?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Verbal comment	83.5%	137
Written comment	63.4%	104
Public comment was not accepted	7.9%	13
Other (please specify)	15.2%	25
	answered question	164
	skipped question	69

41. HOW MUCH OF A TYPICAL COMMITTEE MEETING CONSISTED OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES (PLEASE ESTIMATE, ANSWERS DO NOT NEED TO TOTAL 100%)?

Answer Options	Less than 10%	10–25%	26–50%	51–75%	76–100%	Response Count
Presentations from staff or consultants	11	39	65	40	7	162
Question and answer periods or discussion	2	69	65	16	10	162
Presentations from committee members	71	47	11	3	2	134
Public comment	94	29	9	3	1	136
What other activities did committee meetings include?						24
					answered question	164
					skipped question	69

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42. WHAT WAS THE COMMITTEE'S HIGHEST LEVEL OF AUTHORITY?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Community liaison	1.2%	2
Individual input/sounding board	11.0%	18
Advice/recommendations	76.7%	125
Decisions	8.6%	14
Other (please specify)	2.5%	4
	answered question	163
	skipped question	70

43. WHAT KINDS OF DECISIONS OR MILESTONES WERE COMMITTEE MEMBERS ASKED TO PROVIDE INPUT ABOUT (CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY)?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Issues related to project scope, schedule or budget	48.8%	79
Issues related to public involvement or outreach	62.3%	101
Evaluation framework or criteria	34.0%	55
Technical issues (e.g., design, alignment, alternatives)	56.2%	91
Policy issues	61.1%	99
Not applicable	1.2%	2
Other (please specify)	12.3%	20
	answered question	162
	skipped question	71

44. TO WHOM DID THE COMMITTEE PRIMARILY PROVIDE INPUT?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Agency board of directors, councilor or other policy makers	48.5%	79
Multi-agency policy committee or steering committee	15.3%	25
Executive-level management	36.8%	60
Program or project managers	33.7%	55
The committee did not provide input	0.6%	1
Not applicable	0.6%	1
Other (please specify)	9.2%	15
	answered question	163
	skipped question	70

45. HOW WERE MINORITY VIEWPOINTS CAPTURED (CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY)?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
In meeting notes	69.8%	113
In a minority report	3.7%	6
In verbal reports	23.5%	38
Not captured	3.7%	6
Not applicable	17.3%	28
Other (please specify)	6.2%	10
	answered question	162
	skipped question	71

46. HOW WAS COMMITTEE INPUT COMMUNICATED (CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY)?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Written reports by staff	55.6%	90
Verbal reports by staff	40.7%	66
Verbal reports by committee member	27.8%	45
Written report by committee member	17.3%	28
Meeting minutes	72.2%	117
Individual written letters or statements from committee members	20.4%	33
Not applicable	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)	8.0%	13
	answered question	162
	skipped question	71

47. IF THE COMMITTEE'S INPUT WAS NOT REFLECTED IN THE FINAL DECISION, HOW WAS THIS EXPLAINED AND COMMUNICATED TO COMMITTEE MEMBERS?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Not applicable	58.1%	90
Not explained or communicated	1.9%	3
Explained by email or in writing	3.2%	5
Explained in committee meeting	31.6%	49
Other (please specify)	5.2%	8
	answered question	155
	skipped question	78

48. HOW DID THE GROUP MAKE DECISIONS OR RECOMMENDATIONS?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Consensus or modified consensus	48.8%	80
Majority voting	38.4%	63
Did not make group decisions or recommendations	7.9%	13
Other (please specify)	4.9%	8
	answered question	164
	skipped question	69

49. HOW WAS CONSENSUS DEFINED BY THE COMMITTEE?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
100% agreement and support	3.8%	3
100% willing to accept the outcome as best for the group as a whole	39.2%	31
50% support	0.0%	0
Some other level of support between 50% and 100%	22.8%	18
Consensus was not defined	30.4%	24
Other definition of consensus was used	3.8%	3
	answered question	79
	skipped question	154

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50. IF COMMITTEE MEMBERS COULD NOT REACH CONSENSUS, HOW DID THE GROUP MOVE FORWARD (CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY)?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Tabled discussion until more information was available	35.4%	28
Continued discussions in the hope of reaching a compromise	38.0%	30
Asked minority opinion holders what changes would be required to gain their support	13.9%	11
Voted and noted majority and minority viewpoints	12.7%	10
Designated a sub-committee to develop more options for the committee's consideration	7.6%	6
Designated a sub-committee to resolve issue	5.1%	4
Not applicable	38.0%	30
Other (please specify)	6.3%	5
	answered question	79
	skipped question	154

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51. WERE COMMITTEE MEMBERS ASKED ABOUT THE COMMITTEE'S EFFECTIVENESS AND THEIR SATISFACTION WITH PARTICIPATION DURING THE PROCESS (CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY)?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Yes—through a written questionnaire	7.9%	13
Yes—through individual interviews or phone calls	9.7%	16
Yes—during a meeting	37.0%	61
No	52.1%	86
	answered question	165
	skipped question	68

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52. WERE COMMITTEE MEMBERS ASKED ABOUT THE COMMITTEE'S EFFECTIVENESS AND THEIR SATISFACTION WITH PARTICIPATION AT THE END OF THE PROCESS (CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY)?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Yes—through a written questionnaire	9.4%	15
Yes—through individual interviews or phone calls	9.4%	15
Yes—during a meeting	30.8%	49
No	56.6%	90
	answered question	159
	skipped question	74

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53. WERE INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS EVALUATED (CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY)?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Yes—through a written questionnaire	4.9%	8
Yes—through individual interviews or phone calls	6.2%	10
Yes—during a meeting	14.2%	23
No	79.6%	129
	answered question	162
	skipped question	71

54. WERE COMMITTEE MEETINGS OR OTHER PRACTICES CHANGED BASED ON FEEDBACK?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Yes	46.3%	76
No	18.9%	31
Not applicable	34.8%	57
Please explain		52
	answered question	164
	skipped question	69

55. DID THE AGENCY EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CAC IN REACHING AGENCY GOALS?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Yes	25.9%	42
No	74.1%	120
If yes, how was the evaluation done?		30
	answered question	162
	skipped question	71

56. HOW MANY STAFF OR CONSULTANTS GENERALLY ATTENDED COMMITTEE MEETINGS?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
1	10.9%	18
2–4	70.9%	117
5–7	11.5%	19
More than 7	6.7%	11
	answered question	165
	skipped question	68

57. HOW MANY HOURS DID STAFF OR CONSULTANTS GENERALLY SPEND PREPARING FOR, CONDUCTING AND FOLLOWING UP FROM EACH MEETING?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
0–5 hours	40.2%	66
5–10 hours	32.3%	53
10–15 hours	14.0%	23
More than 15 hours	13.4%	22
	answered question	164
	skipped question	69

58. HOW WERE MEETINGS DOCUMENTED OR RECORDED?

Answer Options	Response Frequency	Response Count
Meeting minutes or summaries prepared by staff person or consultant	84.2%	139
Meeting minutes or summaries prepared by a committee member	9.7%	16
Meeting minutes or summaries were not prepared	2.4%	4
Other (please specify)	3.6%	6
	answered question	165
	skipped question	68

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