



M E C K L E N B U R G - U N I O N
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

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WESLEY CHAPEL

WINGATE

TO: MPO Members
FROM: Robert W. Cook, AICP
MUMPO Secretary
DATE: December 14, 2006
SUBJECT: FY 06 Public Involvement Performance & Evaluation Report

MUMPO's Public Involvement Plan (PIP) requires the preparation of an annual performance and evaluation report. Attached please find the report for fiscal year 2006. Please contact me at 704-336-8643, or via email at rwcook@ci.charlotte.nc.us, if you have any questions.

Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization

FY 06 Annual Performance & Evaluation Report on Public Involvement

This document has been prepared in accordance with the Public Involvement Plan (PIP) of the Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization (MUMPO). Chapter IV, Section G of the PIP requires the annual preparation of a report that describes and evaluates MUMPO's public involvement efforts for the preceding fiscal year.

FY 06 Public Involvement Efforts

Brochure

The first MUMPO brochure was prepared during FY 06. The brochure provides an introduction to MUMPO to those unfamiliar with its roles and responsibilities. Upon publication, it was distributed to the member jurisdictions' city/town halls and to libraries in Mecklenburg and Union counties. It is also distributed at public meetings organized or attended by MUMPO staff.

Website

Staff expended considerable time during FY 06 to make the website a more useful tool for disseminating information to its customers. Efforts were made to ensure that all pertinent information was available, e.g. the UPWP, public meeting information, etc.

“MUMPO 101” Sessions

Staff has developed a standardized Power Point presentation that provides an overview of MUMPO's roles and responsibilities. The presentation, which is usually modified to meet the needs of a particular audience, was given five times during FY 06:

- Village of Marvin Council
- Village of Wesley Chapel Council
- Regional Logistics Network of the Centralina Economic Development Commission
- UNCC Transportation Planning class
- Streetscape Corridor Team-City of Charlotte

WBT Radio Interview

The MUMPO secretary was interviewed on WBT radio during its morning drive-time talk show.

Public Involvement Plan

MUMPO staff worked with a graphic artist on its lead planning agency (LPA) staff (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission) to improve the appearance and increase the readability of its Public Involvement Plan (PIP). This was done as part of a larger

objective to make all MUMPO publications less bureaucratic in appearance, thereby increasing the likelihood that they will actually be read by customers. The intended result is a raised awareness of MUMPO and its role in the regional transportation planning process.

Monroe Bypass Public Meetings

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) sponsored two public meetings regarding the Monroe Bypass (April 27 and May 3). MUMPO stations were established at both meetings allowing staff to discuss MUMPO's role in the process to add Section A to the Thoroughfare Plan and Long-Range Transportation Plan, as well as its role in the regional transportation planning process.

MPO Meetings

The bi-monthly MPO meetings are open to the public. The usual meeting place is the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center (CMGC). The CMGC is centrally located in MUMPO's planning area, is fully handicapped accessible, and is located two blocks from the Charlotte Area Transit System's transportation center. Meeting notifications are supplied to local media outlets.

Chestnut Lane Realignment Public Meetings

Two public meetings were held during FY 06 (February and May) to discuss the effort to define an alignment for the proposed realignment of Chestnut Lane. A total of over 4000 postcards were mailed to area residents. Approximately 120 people attended the two meetings. Both meetings were held at the Antioch Elementary School.

McKee Road Thoroughfare Plan Amendment Meeting

MUMPO held a public meeting on September 8, 2005 at Matthews Town Hall to discuss amending its Thoroughfare Plan in response to a proposed realignment of McKee Road. The realignment was in response to a development proposal for an auto mall. Approximately 75 people attended the meeting.

Matthews-Area Thoroughfare Plan Amendments Meeting

MUMPO held a drop-in meeting on September 8, 2005 at Matthews Town Hall to discuss a series of eleven changes to its Thoroughfare Plan. The changes were related to: adding seven roads to the Plan; downgrading the status of three roads from major thoroughfare status to minor; removing one proposed road from the Plan. The drop-in format made it difficult to obtain a count of attendees, however this meeting was held in conjunction with the McKee Road meeting mentioned above so it can be reasonably assumed that at least 75 people were able to review the information being presented. A number of people came to Town Hall solely to learn about this issue.

2030 Long-Range Transportation Plan Amendment/TIP Conformity Determination Public Involvement

MUMPO held meetings on August 24, 2005 in Monroe and August 25, 2005 in Charlotte to receive public comment on a conformity determination associated with the 2006-2012 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the related amendment to the 2030

Long-Range Transportation Plan. Postcards were sent to the 7000 (approximate) names on MUMPO's database. Advertisements were placed in the Charlotte Observer, Monroe Enquirer-Journal, Charlotte Post and Que Pasa newspapers notifying the public of the meetings as well as informing them that documents associated with the proposed actions were available in local town/city halls and public libraries.

FY 06 Public Involvement Evaluation

MUMPO made significant advancements in its public involvement efforts during FY 06. The continued use of the database for the conformity determination process allowed us to reach a large number of citizens from throughout the region. The brochure was a noteworthy accomplishment; prior to its publication there was virtually nothing published that attempted to provide the general public with an understanding of the MPO's roles and responsibilities. In addition, the "MPO 101" sessions allowed staff to spread the word to diverse audiences. The various public meetings were opportunities to talk about MUMPO to hundreds of people, many of whom likely never heard of a metropolitan planning organization. And based upon anecdotal evidence, the website is being used more and more frequently.

While there were successes during the fiscal year, there were also challenges. The adoption of the 2006-2012 TIP should have been an opportunity to gather meaningful input from the public on its opinions regarding needed transportation improvements, but due to the compressed time frame imposed from outside MUMPO, little if any input was possible. As a result, the public's only opportunity to comment was at the MPO meeting.

Staffing is the most significant obstacle to engaging in meaningful dialogue with the public. A three person staff is capable of undertaking only a limited effort due to the fact that a broad-based public involvement effort requires many hours of preparation in addition to the time devoted to the meetings themselves. Staffing problems are also manifested in our ability to constantly update the website. The LPA staff member responsible for website revisions provides exceptional service, but can do so only when information is provided by MUMPO staff.

The key to an improved public involvement program will be to leverage resources from other agencies. In particular, member jurisdictions will have to be called upon to assist in MUMPO's efforts on a more frequent basis. Staff already is a major user of the services of the City of Charlotte's Corporate Communications office.