

Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization

FY 09 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 H of the PIP requires the annual preparation of a report that describes and evaluates MUMPO's public involvement efforts for the preceding fiscal year.

Part I: FY 09 Public Involvement Efforts

A. Website

MUMPO updated the website as frequently as possible; however, for much of the fiscal year circumstances (see Part II) did not permit updates beyond the most essential information.

MUMPO, through a City of Charlotte contract, used WebTrends to document visits to mumpo.org. The City ended its association with WebTrends in early 2009, therefore reliable information was available only through January 2009. The following key statistics are estimates for the entire fiscal year based upon WebTrends data from July 2008 to January 2009, then extrapolated to the end of the fiscal year in June 2009:

▪ Total number of visits	8115
▪ Average number of visits per day	31
▪ Percentage of visitors visiting the site directly	41
▪ Percentage of visitors visiting through Google	22
▪ Day of the week with the most activity	Monday
▪ Day of the week with the least activity	Saturday

The data indicate that the total number of visitors to the website appears to have increased significantly. During FY 08, it was estimated that there were over 6100 visits to the website. By contrast, estimates for FY 09 were that there were just over 8100 visits, an almost 33% increase.

B. "MUMPO 101" Sessions

Staff periodically contacts its TCC and MPO members reminding them of its availability to conduct "MUMPO 101" sessions to their governing bodies, planning boards, the general public, etc. A standardized Power Point presentation has been developed that provides an overview of MUMPO's roles and responsibilities. The presentation, which is modified to meet the needs of the audience, was given four times during FY 09:

- Carolinas Clean Air Coalition (October 28, 2008)
- Union County elected officials (February 4, 2009)
- UNCC Transportation Planning class (April 7, 2009)
- Lake Norman Real Estate Alliance (June 11, 2009)

By comparison, three MUMPO 101 presentations were given in FY 08 and five in FY 07.

C. MPO Meetings

The bi-monthly MPO meetings are open to the public. The usual meeting place is the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center (CMGC), which 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. Meeting agendas are posted on MUMPO's website at least one week prior to the meeting. Each meeting agenda includes a general public comment period at which time anyone may discuss a transportation-related topic, regardless of whether or not the subject pertains to an agenda item. Public comments related to specific agenda items are usually made at the time that item is reached during the meeting.

D. 2035 Long-Range Transportation Plan

The adoption of the 2035 Long-Range Transportation Plan was originally planned for March/April 2009. Early in 2008, it was recognized that MUMPO would not be able to demonstrate air quality conformity on an LRTP that compared 2009 projected emissions against a probable 2009 motor vehicle emissions budget (MVEB). (Eventually, a 2008 MVEB was used instead of a 2009 MVEB). Therefore, it was decided to delay significant work on the Plan and to delay adoption until March/April 2010. Consequently, MUMPO did not pursue LRTP-related outreach, except for efforts related to the required Consultation process with local, state and federal agencies.

E. Thoroughfare Plan Changes

1. Northwest Huntersville Transportation Study

The Town of Huntersville adopted its Beatties Ford Road Small Area Plan in September 2007 which included a series of recommendations to modify the Thoroughfare Plan. The Town requested MUMPO's assistance in analyzing the recommendations. The third in a series of meetings was held on October 16, 2008 with approximately 70 residents in attendance. (Two previous meetings were held during FY 08.) Postcards were mailed to affected property owners notifying them of the meeting. Approximately 70 residents attended the meeting.

2. Prosperity Church Road Realignment

A minor change to the alignment of Prosperity Church Road at its intersection with Eastfield Road was the subject of a MUMPO-sponsored public meeting on September 16, 2008 at Independence Hills Baptist Church. Prosperity Church Road will eventually be extended beyond its current terminus, and the realignment effort was pursued in order to correct the angle at which it meets Eastfield Road in order to better facilitate the future extension. Approximately 40-50 people attended the meeting.

F. Charlotte Clean & Green (Earth Day)

Staff participated in Mecklenburg County's Earth Day event, called Charlotte Clean & Green, on Saturday, April 18, 2009. Staff had a variety of information available to educate the public on MUMPO's role in the transportation planning process. Due to the large turnout (the event attracted almost 4000 visitors¹), this was MUMPO's most noteworthy outreach effort.

G. Other Events/Activities

1. Public Involvement Plan, American Recovery & Reinvestment Act, Candidate Projects List & Unified Planning Work Program

A public meeting was held on February 26, 2009 to receive public input on the four issues listed above. A 30-day public comment period was held for the American

Recovery & Reinvestment Act, Candidate Projects List & Unified Planning Work Program: a 45-day public comment period was held for the Public Involvement Plan. The public comment periods were advertised in local newspapers and posted on the website.

2. *Catawba Area Plan*

MUMPO participated in two (July 8, 2008 and August 5, 2008) kick-off meetings of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department's Catawba Area Plan. Staffed manned a table that included material related to MUMPO and its activities. Approximately 400 people attended both meetings.

3. *Steele Creek Area Plan*

MUMPO participated in two (June 23, 2009 and June 25, 2009) kick-off meetings of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department's Steele Creek Area Plan. Staffed manned a table that included material related to MUMPO and its activities. Approximately 150-175 people attended both meetings.

Part II: FY 09 Public Involvement Evaluation

MUMPO's efforts to engage the public in meaningful outreach efforts have always been limited by its small staff. Fiscal year 2009 was particularly challenging due to an eight month long staff vacancy. The vacancy significantly limited MUMPO's outreach capacity due to the need to provide basic support to the MPO and the Technical Coordinating Committee. In addition, work associated with the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA) further limited opportunities for public involvement.

Despite the obstacles, MUMPO remained committed to engaging the public "because it believes public participation is not a simple 'add on' or 'after thought,' but a method that guarantees high quality transportation planning."² This commitment was manifested in the variety of outreach efforts conducted during the fiscal year.

¹ Charlotte Clean & Green website, www.charlottecleanandgreen.com

²MUMPO Public Involvement Plan, page 1