

Section 3. Public Participation

Introduction

As the cooperative forum for regional collaboration, planning, and public decision-making, and as the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Local Development District, SPC is charged with developing both the regional long range transportation plan and the regional comprehensive economic development strategy for Southwestern Pennsylvania. While mandated by different federal regulations and requirements, SPC integrates these two plans into a coordinated regional program of projects and actions that are guided by the principle that the relationship between economic development and the region's transportation system is fundamental.

SPC brings transportation planning directly to the region's communities through Public Participation Panels that host public input meetings in each of the ten counties

Public Input, Review and Comment

Public engagement throughout the development of the long range plan provides important opportunities for the public, planning partners and interested parties to share information, ideas, needs and priorities as we work together to build our region's future.

SPC's Public Participation Program offers a variety of opportunities for the public to participate in the regional transportation planning process. SPC brings planning directly to our member counties through Public Participation Panels (Panels). Panels are comprised of more than 300 individuals reflecting the demographic diversity, needs, and concerns of communities throughout our 10-county region. The Panels help to conduct outreach, identify needs and resources, suggest alternatives, and assist in the evaluation of implementation strategies in the planning process.

Early Input: The TIP Update

In developing the long range plan, SPC offered numerous opportunities for public participation, beginning with early input as part of the 2015-2018 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) update from Spring 2013 to Summer 2014. As the TIP represents the first stage of the long range plan, public input into the TIP is relevant to the long range plan. During the TIP update, SPC offered an online input form for the public to give input on a variety of transportation topics, from roads and bridges, public transportation, bicycle and pedestrian, etc. SPC worked with its standing committees which are comprised of representatives from county and city planning agencies, PennDOT, transit operators, bicycle and pedestrian organizations and freight interests, to review this input for common linkages to current and future TIP projects to carry forward as input into the long range plan.

Joining SPC in Mapping the Future: Regional Forums and Online Surveys

After the TIP was adopted in Summer 2014, SPC launched the next phase of public participation as part of *Mapping the Future: The Southwestern PA Plan*. For initial input, SPC hosted four regional forums to review available data and discuss potential performance measures related to transportation and economic development. The forums were attended by SPC's Public Participation Panel members and their invitees in order to gain input on the initial draft performance measures. The four forums were held:

- Wednesday, November 12, 2014 (Murrysville)
- Thursday, November 13, 2014 (Mars)
- Friday, November 14, 2014 (Washington)
- Monday, November 24, 2014 (City of Pittsburgh)

Those in attendance were asked to assist SPC in the selection and focus of draft performance measures for possible inclusion in the plan. From a selection group of 90 measures in transportation and economic development categories, SPC utilized an electronic voting system in which participants could prioritize their individual selections, and also ask questions of SPC staff and planning partners who attended the events. Nearly 100 citizens turned out for these events, and their questions and feedback were vital to the next step in the process.

Based on this feedback from the regional meetings, SPC then developed an online Performance Measures Survey to obtain broader input from the region to develop a draft set of performance measures for inclusion in *Mapping the Future: The Southwestern PA Plan*. The survey was organized into three sections: Communities; People, Jobs & Economy; and, Mobility & Infrastructure.

SPC released a follow-up community survey in February 2015 on Investment Priorities. The survey asked respondents for their priorities on strategies and how they would spend money on transportation in the region. For example, would they focus on fixing and maintaining what we already have? Would they focus on building onto what we already have? Would they do both? In addition to their priorities, participants were also asked about projects that are important to them. For example, did they have a project in mind or know of one that reflected their investment priorities that would help to implement the Regional Vision. More than 1,000 surveys were completed throughout the SPC region. More details about public input and the online surveys are presented in later sections.

Review and comment on the draft plan was solicited in a 30-day public review process, in accordance with federal requirements. During this review process from May 13, 2015 through June 12, 2015, public comment was accepted at ten Public Participation Panel meetings and via mail, email or fax at any time during the public comment period. More detail is provided in the Public Notice below in Figure 3.1.

Mapping the Future: The Southwestern PA Plan
June 2015

Figure 3.1 Public Notice

NOTICE OF PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD AND PUBLIC MEETINGS

Mapping the Future: The Southwestern PA Plan

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) is currently updating its long range plan to meet the needs of the region to the year 2040. **The Southwestern PA Plan** is the regional long range transportation and development plan for Southwestern Pennsylvania, and is the mechanism for connecting the Regional Vision to the region's official, coordinated implementation program of projects and actions.

SPC is seeking comments from the public on important draft documents prior to their adoption:

- Mapping the Future: The Southwestern PA Plan
- Environmental Justice Benefits and Burdens Assessment for The Southwestern PA Plan
- Air Quality Conformity Determination for the Pittsburgh Transportation Management Area
- Southwestern Pennsylvania Public Transit Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan Update

Starting Wednesday, May 13, 2015, these draft documents will be available for public review on the internet at www.spcregion.org, at offices of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, at the Pittsburgh Department of City Planning, at County Planning offices, and at many public libraries around Southwestern Pennsylvania.

Attend a Public Participation Panel meeting to hear presentations, look at maps, ask questions, and submit your comments:

May 20, 3:00 p.m., Room 104, Courthouse Square, 100 West Beau Street, Washington

May 26, 2:00 p.m., Public Meeting Room, County Government Center, 124 W. Diamond Street, Butler

May 27, 3:00 p.m., Commissioners Meeting Room, Beaver County Courthouse, 810 3rd Street, Beaver

May 28, 5:00 p.m., Commissioners Meeting Room, Courthouse Square, 2 N. Main Street, Greensburg

May 28, 6:00 p.m., Commissioners Conference Room, Armstrong Courthouse Annex, 450 Market Street, Kittanning

June 3, 5:00 p.m., Kovalchick Convention & Athletic Complex, Conf. Rooms 6 & 7, 711 Pratt Drive, IUP Campus, Indiana

June 4, 6:00 p.m., SPC Conference Center, Two Chatham Center, 112 Washington Place, 4th floor, Downtown Pittsburgh

June 9, 3:00 p.m., Conference Room, Fayette Chamber of Commerce, 65 West Main Street, Uniontown

June 10, 6:00 p.m., Stover Hall, 3rd Floor, 51 W. College Street, Waynesburg University, Waynesburg

June 11, 2:00 p.m., Commissioners Meeting Room, Lawrence County Courthouse, 430 Court Street, New Castle

Verbal and written comments will be taken by SPC representatives at each meeting. Written comments can also be submitted online at www.spcregion.org; by mail to: SPC Comments, Two Chatham Center, 112 Washington Place, Suite 500, Pittsburgh, PA 15219; by fax to SPC Comments, 412-391-9160; or by email to comments@spcregion.org.

All comments must be received by SPC by 4:00 p.m. on Friday, June 12, 2015.

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission will consider these draft documents for action at their meeting on June 29, 2015 at 4:30 p.m., Two Chatham Center, 112 Washington Place, 4th Floor, Pittsburgh, PA 15219.

SPC is committed to compliance with the non-discrimination requirements of applicable civil rights statutes, Executive Orders, regulations and policies. Each meeting facility is accessible by persons with disabilities. Accommodations may be provided for those with special needs related to language, sight or hearing with 72 hours advance notice. If you have a request for special accommodations or desire additional information, please contact Matt Pavlosky at (412) 391-5590, Ext. 361, or mpavlosky@spcregion.org.

TRANSIT SERVICE INFORMATION

For information regarding transit services in Allegheny County, please call Port Authority Customer Service at 412-442-2000. For transit information in other counties, please visit: www.commuteinfo.org/comm_trans.shtml or call 1-888-819-6110.

This notice satisfies the program-of-projects requirements of the Urbanized Area Formula Program of the Federal Transit Administration.

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