



NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION OF MPOs PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

December 20, 2023

Virtual

1:30 PM – 3:00 PM

MEETING NOTES

Participating

- BMTS – Brian Cohen
- BMTS – Leigh McCullen
- CRTM – Stephen Maples
- DCTC - Emily Dozier
- GBNRTC – Angelica Gonzalez
- GTC – Lori Maher
- HOCTC – Adam Palmer
- NYMTC - Stephanie Brooks
- NYMTC – Sherry Southe
- SMTM – Meghan Vitale
- WJCTC - Jennifer Docteur
- FHWA - Benjamin Fischer
- Planning4Places – Kathy Ember

1. Introductions

The group introduced themselves. Lori and Angelia were introduced as Chair and Co-Chair. Lori Maher summarized the agenda for today's meeting. Meeting notes were approved for the October 12, 2023, meeting with no changes.

2. Presentation on the Draft Public Participation Plan

- Stephen Maples discussed the Draft Public Participation Plan for the Capital Region Transportation Council. They are looking at equity as equity integration. Steven discussed the framework for public participation plan (i.e., requirements including the Civil Rights and Title VI, environmental justice, etc.). Limited English Proficiency (LEP) will be an appendix to Public Participation Plan. He discussed the goal of how to reach a broader audience. There will be activity-specific public participation plan documents (such as the MTP, TIP, etc.). There will be amendments to the MTP going forward. The Transportation Council is also looking at possible engagement methods. Steven also reviewed the social media outreach and engagement policy. They are looking at quantitative measures for public engagement such as number of events, attendance, number of comments, responses, etc. The Transportation Council will be doing an equity analysis of attendees and participants in engagement efforts and there will also be an annual evaluation report.
- Meghan Vitale asked who was involved in the development of the plan. Stephen Maples noted that this plan was developed internally. Stephen noted the Transportation Council will be reestablishing an equity committee.
- Lori Maher brought up the question that she noticed when reviewing other PPPs – whether these are plans or policies. After discussion, the Working Group agreed they are

a “plan” not a “policy.” Meghan Vitale stated that SMTC has a menu of options. Some others used the term public engagement plan rather than public participation plan. Stephanie Brooks noted that a lot of the plans are based on policy. Stephen Maples stated that the document is responding to federal laws (a form of policy). Angelica Gonzalez noted that people shy away from the word “policy” as the language is more intimidating than “plan.”

- Lori Maher asked if there were references to the federal guidelines. Stephen Maples stated the guidelines were described rather than citing them.
- Stephen noted that the intent is that the document will be easily understandable to the public. Angelica Gonzalez agreed that it was easy to understand.
- Adam Palmer asked about the metrics for evaluation. Stephen Maples stated that they will be working that out and there is a 45-day review period for this document. The idea now is at the end of the year there will be a meta-analysis to evaluate how we did.
- Adam Palmer stated that HOCTC just put a 45-day review period for their PPP. The metrics will help decide what works and what didn't with their public participation methods.

3. Public Engagement Working Group and Work Program

- Lori Maher and Angelica Gonzalez asked for feedback from the group on the Work Program. No additional comments were offered.
- Lori Maher asked about training and the potential for shared public engagement software. Kathy Ember noted that NYSAMPO is exploring trainings for Adobe Creative Cloud and Canva. If there is interest in a specific program, Kathy can pass on the request to the NYSAMPO Executive Committee.
- Lori Maher noted we will be setting up a calendar for the year for Public Engagement Working Group meetings.

4. Discussion on Public Engagement for Regional Safety Plans

- Lori Maher asked if anyone has other information to share. It was noted that at this point members of the Working Group are in the beginning stages of the Regional Safety Plans, so this topic will be revisited later.

5. Other Topics

- The group discussed the process for developing public participation plans. Adam Palmer asked the Working Group what “reasonable public engagement” means.
- The group discussed how to memorialize conversations at tabling events (Meghan can share how SMTC reported comments from tabling events).

6. Meeting Schedule and Next Steps

- The group decided to meet a bimonthly in the afternoon between 1:30-3 PM. The next meeting will be in February (generally the last week of the month). Kathy Ember will check for conflicts with other NYSAMPO meetings. Thursday or Monday were suggested meeting dates.
- Lori Maher reminded the Working Group about the Google Drive and Wix Forum.