

Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization

FY 2010 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 2010 Public Involvement Efforts

A. Website

The website remains the single most important method of reaching the public. With the staffing situation stabilized in FY 2010, a strong emphasis was placed on making significant improvements to the website. MUMPO continued to track website visits; however, the services used by the City have not been consistent across fiscal years, thereby making year-to-year comparisons difficult. For example, WebTrends was used during only a part of FY 2009, leaving a five month data gap. Google Analytics is now being used, but there are no data for the first five months of FY 2010.

One noteworthy aspect of using Google Analytics is the ability to separate website visits by the service provider. This allows us to get a more accurate visit count because visits from City of Charlotte can be removed from the total number of visits. (Staff frequently uses the website for quick access to information.) For the period when FY 10 data was available (December 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010), the total number of visits (excluding City of Charlotte visits), was 7252.

B. Newsletter

Since its adoption in 2005 MUMPO's Public Involvement Plan (PIP) has recommended the preparation of a newsletter, and provided guidelines for its production and distribution. The intent of the newsletter is to provide information about transportation planning in the region, as well as provide updates on MUMPO-related activities. Fiscal year 2010 represents the inaugural year for MUMPO's newsletter.

The MUMPO Newsletter is produced quarterly and is distributed by email to approximately 1,000 individuals from various organizations, as well as constituents who have requested to receive it. The distribution list continues to be updated as new requests are made for names to be added. In addition, the newsletter is posted on MUMPO's website. Four newsletters were produced and distributed in FY 2010, fulfilling the strategy outlined in the PIP.

C. "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 one time during FY 10:

- UNCC Transportation Planning class (April 26, 2010)

By comparison, four MUMPO 101 presentations were given in FY 09, three in FY 08 and five in FY 07.

D. 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.

E. 2035 Long-Range Transportation Plan & Air Quality Conformity

Significant work on the 2035 LRTP resumed in FY 10, resulting in final adoption of the Plan and making a conformity determination in March, 2010. The following outreach efforts were conducted in order to receive public input on the Plan and the conformity determination report:

1. *Financially Constrained Project List Public Meetings-August, 2009*

In July, 2009, the MPO endorsed four funding scenarios which staff then used to develop draft project lists. The lists were presented to the public at two public meetings: Monday, August 24, 2009 at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center and Monday, August 31, 2009 at Indian Trail Town Hall. The meetings were advertised in the following local media outlets: Charlotte Observer; Monroe Enquirer-Journal; Charlotte Post; La Noticia; Lake Norman Herald. In addition, the City's Corporate Communications Department distributed a media release to all local newspapers, television and radio stations. Stories about the meetings aired on the following channels: WCCB-TV; WSOC-TV.

2. *Draft LRTP and Draft Conformity Determination Report Public Comment Period and Public Meetings-February, 2010*

The MPO authorized the release of the draft 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan and the draft Conformity Determination Report in January, 2010. A public comment period began on February 5, 2010. In advance of the start of the comment period, copies of both documents were sent to city/town halls in MUMPO's jurisdiction as well as the following libraries: Main, Morrison, North County, South County, University City, West Boulevard and Beatties Ford (Mecklenburg) and Main, Union-West and Waxhaw (Union). Notification was provided via a press release sent to all regional media outlets, advertisements in the Charlotte Observer and its regional publications ("Neighbors"), advertisements in the Monroe Enquirer-Journal, and posting on MUMPO's website.

In addition to the public comment period, two public meetings were held: February 24, 2010 (Charlotte-CMGC) and February 25, 2010 (Indian Trail-Civic Building). Notification was provided via a press release sent to all regional media outlets, advertisements in the Charlotte Observer and its regional publications ("Neighbors"), advertisements in the Monroe Enquirer-Journal, and by posting information on MUMPO's website.

F. Title VI Project Outreach

MUMPO, with the assistance of a consultant, has been reaching out to environmental justice communities as a part of the ongoing Title VI analysis. Attached is a list of the FY 10 outreach efforts.

G. Earth Day

1. *Charlotte Clean & Green*

Staff participated in Mecklenburg County's Earth Day event, called Charlotte Clean & Green, on Saturday, April 17, 2010. 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 7,000 visitors¹) this was one of MUMPO's most noteworthy outreach efforts.

2. *Indian Trail Earth Day/Arbor Day*

Staff participated in Indian Trail's Earth Day/Arbor Day event on Saturday, April 24, 2010. Staff had a variety of information available to educate the public on MUMPO's role in the transportation planning process.

H. Cinco de Mayo/Fanta Festival

Staff participated in the Latin American Coalition's Cinco de Mayo Fanta Festival at McAlpine Park on Sunday, May 2, 2010. Staff had a variety of information available to educate the public on MUMPO's role in the transportation planning process. A bookmark with MUMPO information in English and Spanish was distributed, and random attendees were surveyed about MUMPO's outreach efforts. According to the Coalition, approximately 30,000 people attended the event.

I. Other Events/Activities

1. *Elizabeth Area Plan*

MUMPO participated in two meetings of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department's Elizabeth Area Plan. Staff manned a table that included material related to MUMPO and its activities. Approximately 180 people attended both meetings.

2. *Back Creek Church Road "Farm-to-Market" Project*

MUMPO participated in a public meeting on September 17, 2009 sponsored by the City of Charlotte's Engineering & Property Management Department. Staffed manned a table that included material related to MUMPO and its activities.

Part II: FY 2010 Public Involvement Evaluation

MUMPO's public outreach efforts improved considerably in FY 2010. The primary reason for the improvement was the filling of a vacant staff position in April 2009. Filling the position allowed for a renewed focus on website updates and maintenance and to achieve a significant milestone with the publication of the MPO's first newsletter.

The profile of the MPO was raised significantly by its presence at several well-attended community celebrations, including two Earth Day events and the Cinco de Mayo Fanta Festival.

While it was not possible to engage every attendee, the venues provided a level of exposure for the MPO that could not be realized in traditional meeting settings.

The Title VI outreach efforts were of major importance for the MPO. In the past, MUMPO has not made a significant effort to engage minority or low-income residents, and while the efforts were usually conducted on a one-on-one or small group basis, they helped establish an awareness of the MPO in the leadership of these communities and to lay the groundwork for future, more comprehensive efforts. On a very large scale, participation in the Cinco de Mayo Fanta Festival was major step in reaching out to the region's growing Latino population.

¹Source: Charlotte Clean & Green staff