

Evaluation of Public Participation Efforts on the Public Participation Plan

Documenting and evaluating our efforts to engage the public will help us refine our practices to more efficiently and effectively achieve our public participation objectives.

Public Participation Plan Ad-hoc Committee

The Public Participation Plan Ad-hoc Committee was central to the public input on Public Participation Plan.

The Ad-hoc Committee Procedures state:

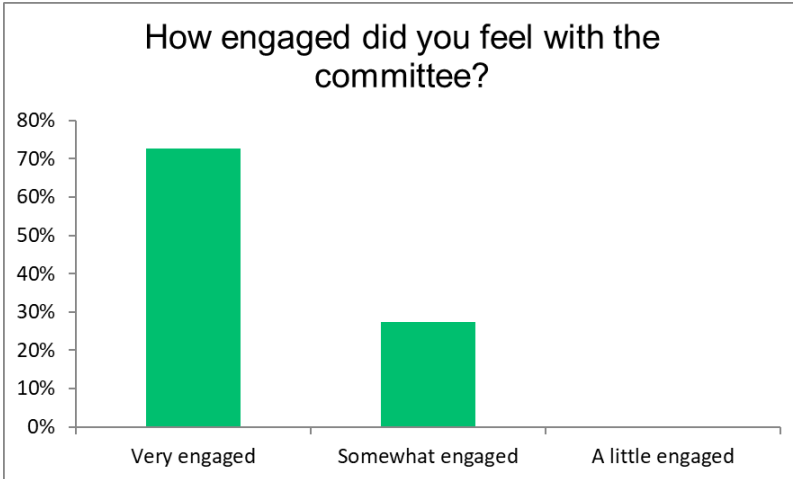
Following the adoption of the Public Participation Plan, the following criteria will determine whether the ad-hoc committee was successful.

- The Policy Board adopted a Public Participation Plan.
- Participants were actively engaged.
- Participants felt their participation was meaningful.
- Participants felt their advice was valued.

[Meeting minutes](#) of the ad-hoc committee provide evidence of the active engagement of participants.

Ad-hoc committee members were offered a survey after their last meeting to assess whether they felt their participation was meaningful and their advice valued. Twelve people completed the survey. The survey was anonymous. The results indicate that all respondents felt very engaged or somewhat engaged. Most respondents felt their input was valuable and that staff valued their input. Most respondents were unsure whether the Policy Board and/or TTC valued their input.

TPO POLICY BOARD: Cities of Roanoke and Salem; Counties of Bedford, Botetourt, Montgomery and Roanoke; Town of Vinton; Greater Roanoke Transit Company (*Valley Metro*); Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport; Virginia Department of Rail & Public Transportation; Virginia Department of Transportation

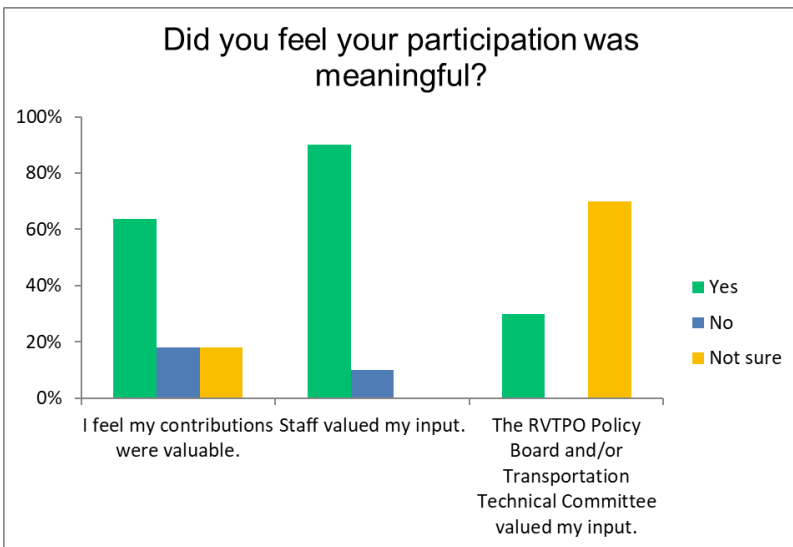


Very engaged: Attended several meetings, read most of the emails and other materials, and/or provided input in person or otherwise.

Somewhat engaged: Attended one or two meetings, read some emails and materials, and/or provided input in person or otherwise.

A little engaged: Did not attend meetings, read few emails or other materials, did not provide input.

Individual response to this question: I felt very engaged but dont want to add false positives to a group that we are aiming



Individual responses to this question: Received no feedback from Policy Board or Comm

I didn't feel like this was a waste of my time. They valued my comments but I valued theirs. It was a two-way street. It helped me to understand what was going on.

General individual responses:

Not sure I had the right expertise, but don't see this as a structural issue.

I was pleased to be a part of the committee.

The effort seemed greater than the task

Rachel did a good job of managing the committee.

I enjoyed it enough. It was one of the few committees I've been on that everyone felt that they were involved. They felt like what they had to say mattered. When they were there, I always felt they weren't just passing time.

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Broad public input

The RVTPO sought broad public input during the development of the plan and public comment on the draft plan. Federal laws mandates a 45-day public comment period. A summary of broad public input and public comments is available [here](#).

Tool	Criteria	Evaluation
Public hearing	Number of participants, number of participants reporting satisfactory interaction	0
Paid ads	Number of participants/ respondents indicating they saw the advertisement	0
Partners	Number of partners	30 agencies
Pop up booth	Number of interactions	20 interactions
Comment period	Number of comments	1 response received from library patron (copies placed in 14 libraries) 4 responses received from email solicitation to Ad-hoc Committee members
Social media	Number of messages, number of views	2 posts reached 67 and 134 people (201 views) 1 person shared the 1 st post 1 person 'liked' the 2 nd post.
Stakeholder group	Number of participants, number of participants who report feeling engaged	39 participants 12 of 12 survey respondents reported feeling "somewhat" or "very engaged"
Survey	Number of survey responses	82 responses
Website, blog	Number of blog articles	3 blog articles posted 1 st article – 45 views 2 nd article – 20 views 3 rd article – 15 views

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Conclusions

Ad-hoc committee

Having a clear purpose kept the committee engaged. Using a google doc for comments kept tedious word-smithing out of meetings.

Surveys

Some comments on the surveys indicate there is room for improvement. Staff are seeking training opportunities and pursuing partnerships to create better surveys. MetroQuest is an intriguing new survey tool that has a good record for high numbers of responses. MetroQuest offers public participation webinars that help with designing and marketing surveys and reaching Title VI populations. Virginia Tech professor, Dr. C.L. Bohannon, has provided some resources.

Final comment period and public hearing

The libraries are willing partners that reach a diverse cross-section of the population. The library system has a delivery service, but this should be used in conjunction with calling individual libraries to make sure the plans are placed in a visible location and that library staff can answer questions. Gluing an envelope to the back of the plan for completed comment forms and having instructions on the front explaining where to put completed comment forms was helpful. Instructions should include the end date for the comment period and RVARC contact information. Include a date field on the comment form.