

TR NEWS

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Public Involvement in Transportation: Best Practices, New Approaches

3 Introduction **Public Involvement in Transportation: Collaborating with the Customers**

Margaret Campbell Jackson

A transition from the “decide, announce, defend” approach to collaborative and consensus-based approaches involving the public in transportation decision making is under way, according to this author, a planning consultant.

4 **Effective Public Involvement in Transportation: A Primer for Practitioners**

Ted M. Matley

Public involvement is difficult to do well, but good public involvement usually pays off, and bad public involvement invariably backfires, says this veteran transportation project planner. He offers practical, insider tips for success in engaging the public in decision making but warns that each effort will be unique, difficult, frustrating, and rewarding—and possibly will lead in unanticipated directions.

6 **Public Involvement in Long-Range Transportation Planning: Benchmarking Study Identifies Best Practices**

Lori Byrd and Sabrina David

8 **Citizen-Generated Design Plans**

Donal R. Simpson

9 **Cutting-Edge Visualization Tools: Graphic Simulations That Stimulate Project Understanding and Decision Making**

Marie S. Keister and Dan Moreno

The right graphics at the right time can increase the public’s understanding of transportation projects and can lead the way to consensus, helping audiences picture project alternatives within the landscape and community, according to the authors, high-tech communications specialists. Many agencies are finding that the high-priced tools and techniques of graphic visualizations prove cost-effective and are producing accurate and compelling renderings with illustration, photo simulation, animation, three-dimensional images, and multimedia, often in combination with geographic information systems and the Internet, early in the planning process.

16 **Enhancing Public Involvement Through High Technology**

Keiron Bailey, T. Grossardt, and Joel Brumm

18 **Public Involvement and the Organizational Landscape: State Departments of Transportation Undergo Culture Shift**

Lynda J. South

A culture shift is occurring in several state departments of transportation (DOTs) with a renewed commitment to public involvement—public involvement professionals are becoming part of the organizational landscape, reports the author, a DOT insider. These new hires are not engineers but apply conflict management, presentation, problem solving, negotiation, and team-building skills while working in regional offices, close to the publics they serve. Pioneering programs at Wyoming, Kansas, and Utah DOTs provide practical insights and models.

20 **“Any Time, Anywhere, with Anybody”: Agency’s Public Involvement Mantra Pays Off**

Bruce Mansfield



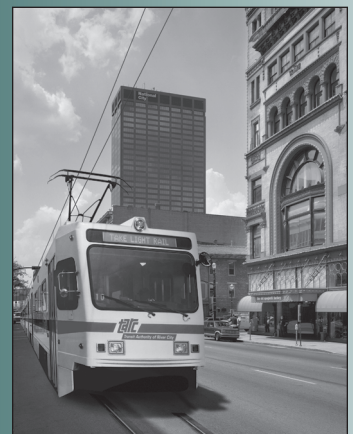
9



18



25



Cover: Computer image of light rail transit vehicle on Market Street in Louisville, Kentucky, used to stimulate public response and gain project support (image by Joe Humphrey, courtesy of Transportation Tomorrow—Transit Authority of River City).

TR NEWS

features articles on innovative and timely research and development activities in all modes of transportation. Brief news items of interest to the transportation community are also included, along with profiles of transportation professionals, meeting announcements, summaries of new publications, and news of Transportation Research Board activities.

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22 Positive Feedback in the High Desert: Community Outreach in Rural Arizona

Debra Brisk and Joan Beckim

25 Public Involvement by Minorities and Low-Income Populations: Removing the Mystery

Jennifer L. Weeks

Achieving transportation equity requires the involvement of communities that can be hardest to reach—racial and ethnic minorities and low-income populations, notes the author, a transportation consultant. Successful outreach calls for an agency's dedication, persistence, flexibility, and understanding of cultural, language, and community frameworks, as several practical examples show. But according to the author, research is needed to convince some agencies that public involvement by minority and low-income communities should be a priority.

30 Successful, Substantive Community Participation: Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative Model

Marian Bell

32 Measuring Up to Environmental Justice

Marie S. Keister

34 Louisville Transit Outreach: Building Consensus, Defusing Controversy

Nina Walfoort

35 Measuring the Effectiveness of Public Involvement Approaches

Joseph S. Szyliowicz

Public involvement is not a panacea for the difficulties in achieving sustainable transportation systems, according to this scholar. Despite considerable public policy support, few efforts at public involvement have made an impact and few researchers have attempted rigorous evaluations of the processes and outcomes. Research is needed to identify the most effective ways of minimizing conflict, using available mechanisms productively, and developing new mechanisms to enhance the quality of transportation decisions, the author maintains.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

39 Calendar

40 Research Pays Off

Marc Fish and Richard Lane

Innovative Management System for Rock Cuts: Assessing Roadway Hazards in New Hampshire

42 Profiles

Public Policy Center Director and Professor David J. Forkenbrock and Highway Safety Researcher Jane C. Stutts.

44 TRB Highlights

CRP News, 44

47 Bookshelf

TRB Publications, 47

COMING NEXT ISSUE



A special issue on inland waterways transportation draws a variety of feature articles to dock, delivering information and insights on safety and security, fuel efficiency, service levels, and research needs—plus how almost everything about transportation can be learned on the Erie Canal.

Junction of the Erie Canal and the Hudson River, Albany, New York (photo by Catherine Lawson).