

Section 2: Public Participation

2.1: 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.

2.2: Public Input, Review and Comment

Public engagement throughout the development of *Mapping the Future* provided 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 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.

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. 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 participants 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.

In addition to the public outreach discussed above, SPC provided numerous opportunities for the private sector, regional elected officials and the regional economic development community to participate in several SWOT exercises. They were also offered the opportunity to prioritize the policy goals and strategies the Economic Development District (EDD) should pursue.

Review and comment on the draft CEDS will be solicited in a 30-day public review process, in accordance with federal requirements. During this review process from December 14, 2016 through January 17, 2017, public comment will be accepted via mail, email or fax at any time during the public comment period. More detail is provided in the Public Notice below in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 NOTICE OF PUBLIC COMMENT AND REVIEW PERIOD

SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA (CEDS)

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) is seeking your input and will open a 30-day public comment period for the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). **The public comment period will open Wednesday, December 14, 2016 and close Tuesday, January 17, 2017, at 4:00 p.m.**

SPC is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Economic Development District (EDD) for Southwestern Pennsylvania and is responsible for regional transportation planning and economic development activities.

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is an implementation element of *Mapping the Future: The Southwestern PA Plan*. The CEDS is a public-sector plan prepared by SPC and approved by the Economic Development Administration (EDA) of the U.S. Department of Commerce. The CEDS provides a strategy action plan for SPC as the Economic Development District.

Interested parties may view the CEDS online at www.spcregion.org. Copies of the document are also available for review at the offices of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission; at the Pittsburgh Department of City Planning; at County Planning Department Offices in SPC member counties; and, at many public libraries in Southwestern Pennsylvania.

Written comments regarding the CEDS can also be submitted by email to comments@spcregion.org, by mail to SPC Comments (RE: CEDS), at Two Chatham Center, 112 Washington Place, Suite 500, Pittsburgh, PA 15219, or by fax to SPC Comments at (412) 391-9160.

All comments must be received by 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 17, 2017.

Upon consideration of the public comments received, the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission will consider approving the CEDS for submission to the Economic Development Administration at its meeting at 4:30 p.m. on January 30, 2017. This meeting will be held at Two Chatham Center, 112 Washington Place, Suite 400, Pittsburgh, PA 15219. This meeting is open to the public, and those requiring transit options or special needs can be assisted using the information below.

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) is committed to compliance with nondiscrimination requirements of civil rights statutes, executive orders, regulations and policies applicable to the programs and activities it administers. Accordingly, SPC is committed to ensuring that program beneficiaries receive public participation opportunities without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability or economic status. Meeting facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities and the location is reachable by public transit. SPC will provide auxiliary services for individuals with language, speech, sight or hearing needs, provided the request for assistance is made 3 days prior to the meeting. SPC will attempt to satisfy requests made with less than 3 days notice as resources allow. Please make your request for auxiliary services to Matt Pavlosky at (412) 391-5590, Ext. 361, or mpavlosky@spcregion.org. If you believe you have been denied participation opportunities, or otherwise discriminated against in relation to the programs or activities administered by SPC, you may file a complaint using the procedures provided in our complaint process document or by contacting SPC's Title VI Coordinator by calling (412) 391-5590. For more information, or to obtain a Title VI Discrimination Complaint Form, please see our website at: www.spcregion.org or call 412-391-5590.

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.

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