

Land Use and Transportation Study Coordinating Group

October 4th Brainstorming Exercise – Narrative Synthesis

Note: These brainstorming ideas were generated by Coordinating Group members at their October 4th meeting. Members broke out into 6 small groups, each guided by a staff member or facilitator. Members were offered a list of questions that were developed by the RFP Subcommittee. These questions were offered to help guide idea development, but ideas shared in the brainstorming session were not limited to the scope of these questions.

Staff compiled the notes from the six breakout groups and organized them, unedited, into four core categories: Process/Techniques, Tasks and/or What the Study/Plan Should Address, Desired Outcomes, and Other Needs and Observations. These notes were presented to the RFP Subcommittee at their October 10th meeting. At the meeting, members requested that staff synthesize the comments into a concise narrative summary. The following narrative briefly describes the broad themes and issues that were presented by brainstorming session participants.

Overview

Brainstorming session participants' ideas were process, product, and outcome-oriented. Participants shared their ideas about study process techniques, data gathering and public involvement techniques and needs, tasks the study process should include, and desired products and outcomes of the study process.

Study Process and Public Involvement Themes

The importance of bringing people from diverse groups together through the visioning and planning process was a common theme. Incentivizing and engaging a broad range of stakeholders in a welcoming way also emerged as a theme. Several participants also identified the importance of implementing early successes in the process.

Surveying and other public input methods were mentioned as a means to gather information about community values, vision, and perceptions about growth management strategies.

Ideas for public involvement methods included:

- the use of electronic town hall meetings,
- holding meetings at non-traditional times such as weekends,
- using small focus groups
- involving teachers and students
- having a mail-in survey distributed as an ad in the Record-Eagle
- involving the elderly, employers, workers, summer residents, and out-of-town shoppers in public input sessions and surveys

The importance of the relationship with the media and the effective use of internal communication networks (such as the school systems) were also mentioned.

Data Needs and Analytical Methods

Many participants mentioned that existing studies and data needed to be gathered in order to evaluate what was missing. Some put this in the context of developing a “briefing book” that would be made available to the Coordinating Group and the public.

Participants also mentioned a need for the inclusion of an origin and destination study in the process. Other specific data needs that were identified included land use and master plan information; forecast data; demographic data; natural features inventory; and current transportation needs, including multi-modal needs. Participants suggested working with MSU, the Farm Bureau, local planning commissions, NWMCOG, and independent consultants to gather and synthesize existing data.

Desired Products and Outcomes

One theme that emerged was the desire for a plan that could/would be implemented. The desire to have better intergovernmental communication and coordinated implementation was a strong theme. A set of regional principles and priorities was also a strong theme related to outcomes. The need for specific, focused transportation recommendations and solutions was also a theme. Additional desired outcomes included the preservation of farmland, transfer of development rights, open space preservation, lineal parks, non-motorized access, a bypass around town, and existing road improvements.