

CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Description

A Citizen Advisory Committee is a collection of representative stakeholders assembled to provide public input into the planning process. The committees have an obligation to keep their constituents informed of the development and operations of transportation projects in their area. They also serve as a representative body during meetings where project information is discussed. Committees often speak for or against projects on behalf of their constituents. These groups can lend credibility to a project or process, and help ensure that citizen feedback is representative of community interests and concerns.

Target Market

Citizen advisory committees are especially useful from the earliest stages of transportation projects. The committee composition should ensure that all interests are properly represented. Agencies should be available to assist the committees without interfering with their function.

How Will This Help?

- Interaction with a citizen committee provides for substantive and comprehensive public feedback.
- Committee participants can gain understanding of other perspectives, facilitating compromise.



Cost:	Moderate
Time:	Long
Impact:	Local/Region
Who:	Lead Agency
Hurdles:	Equal Representation



Success Stories

Citizen Advisory Committees have been used successfully in numerous situations. They can be formed at project initiation to guide the project development process, or they can act as ad hoc committees to provide input whenever it is needed.

Implementation Issues

A citizen advisory committee must include individuals who understand the needs of those they represent. The public must trust the committee to provide accurate information and adequately express their concerns regarding the project, even though the public may not always embrace the committee's recommendations, and the group may not always reach consensus. The committee process can be labor-intensive, so agencies must devote sufficient staff support for them to be productive.