

4. Sometimes even the best-intentioned efforts do not produce the desired results, and so a program's sponsors must be flexible and resourceful. One disappointment in the Austin program was underrepresentation of minority participants because they did not have sufficient leaders able to commit substantial amounts of time to the process. Thus, as a supplement to meetings in these communities, Capital Metro employed leadership interviews and on-board transit surveys.
5. Vigorous public involvement can be achieved, even during a short planning process. Such an effort can be extremely draining and creates a stressful environment for the staff and board, however, and is recommended only when absolutely necessary.
6. If your budget can accommodate lots of pots of strong coffee, Saturday mornings appear to be a very good meeting time.
7. By inviting people with applicable skills from business and university communities to become members of a CAC, it is often possible for an agency to get free help and advice. Having committed consultants willing to invest time in after-hours public involvement is also useful.
8. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, in order to have a successful CAC, the sponsoring agency must be committed to listening, and must be responsive to the feedback it gets. Capital Metro added routes to their service plan at the suggestion of citizens; routes were also deleted for the same reason. Other community themes which appear in the final service plan include more frequent service, more evening and weekend service, convenient transfers, more park-n-ride and express transit service, better service for the transportation-disadvantaged, and more expeditious implementation of light rail. Because Austin's decision makers made a genuine effort to have their plan be a "people's plan," they now enjoy the support and active assistance of their CAC.

FORT WAYNE RIDERS ADVISORY COUNCIL, by Diana F. Scott, Marketing Manager,
Fort Wayne Public Transportation Corporation, Fort Wayne, Indiana

The Fort Wayne Public Transportation Corporation (PTC) provides public bus service to the cities of Fort Wayne and New Haven, Indiana. The population of the service area is approximately 294,000. The PTC owns and operates a fleet of 65 buses, traveling 25,800 miles per week, Monday through Saturday. Sixty-eight bus operators, 17 maintenance people and 20 management and support personnel are employed by the PTC, which is governed by a Board of Directors appointed by the Mayor and the City Council.

Recently organized is our Riders Advisory Council, composed of volunteers representative of various segments of the riding public. Their sole

purpose is to act as liaison between the community and PTC; they have no governing power, as do the Board of Directors. Before we discuss the Advisory Council, its purpose and how it was formed, it is important to first understand the recent history of our bus company and the conditions which created the need for a citizen organization.

Ten years ago, the city of Fort Wayne proposed a downtown revitalization project with a transit development program as the major element and contributor. Over the last three years, the PTC has completed a series of large federally-funded capital improvements.

By the beginning of 1984, we were equipped with a fleet of buses, of which 82% were less than three years old. Newly designed bus stop signs replaced the old throughout the city. Bus shelters were erected at the more frequently-used stops. The city saw the completion of a new transit pedestrian mall which transformed the busy and heavily-congested Calhoun Street, for decades the center of activity and the hub of the transit system, into a beautiful and much-enjoyed business and shopping area, bringing new life and beauty to downtown Fort Wayne. At both ends of the mall are two park-like transfer facilities.

These capital improvements represented a completely new and modern bus system for the PTC. Unfortunately, during this same period, operating expenses increased and the PTC experienced serious budget problems. The people of Fort Wayne began 1983 with budget cuts and a fare increase of 25 cents, bringing the regular fare to 75 cents per ride. Even further budget cuts were expected in the next year, and additional farebox revenue was desperately needed.

Bus riders and operators also experienced construction detours created by the downtown development, which meant constant rerouting of the buses and revision of bus schedules. These detours caused a delay in on-time performance, creating a loss of confidence among loyal bus riders.

The major local manufacturer, International Harvester, closed operation, spawning a loss of many smaller businesses, causing high unemployment, and further reducing the number of regular weekday riders. These compounding factors contributed to a severe ridership loss of approximately 32% during 1983.

It was soon evident the fare increases and internal management controls already in place could not compensate for the declining operating revenues. In February, 1984, service was reduced by 33% and twenty-seven operation and maintenance personnel were laid off. This, as I'm sure you can imagine, created much outrage from the citizens of Fort Wayne who depend on public transportation.

At the following Board meeting, the directors were confronted by many bus riders, laid-off drivers and citizen groups who could not understand,

and rightly so, how the bus company could purchase new buses, build a transit mall, etc., and not be able to effectively operate these new buses. The media coverage was also very critical of the bus cuts.

Immediately after the Board meeting, PTC decided to establish an organized group to seek out citizen input. They believed they needed a community liaison group not only to represent system riders, but also to communicate information about their problem and fiscal situation to the public. Because PTC decided the new group would be more likely to succeed if it were independent of the transit company and the city, the project was placed under the auspices of the Chamber of Commerce, where the monthly meetings are held. A listing was made of businesses and service organizations, classifying them in various ridership categories. Because of PTC's experience with many irate bus riders at the last board meeting, they felt more could be accomplished at that time a selected membership.

Three membership requirements were established: (1) First, and most importantly, the person must ride the bus three or more days per week; (2) they must be a person who is willing and able to communicate the needs of their fellow riders, neighbors, and workers; and (3) they must also be willing and able to communicate PTC situations and programs to the public.

Letters with these requirements were sent to businesses from each ridership category. We requested their selection of a representative and, if necessary, to provide their employee one hour of meeting time each month. As a result of this first recruitment, we formed a committee of 19 representatives who included two personnel managers, social service personnel, a receptionist, factory workers, a college student, a computer analyst, neighborhood representatives, and many more. Certainly an elite group of our riders. After a six-month trial period, the group voted to continue with an open recruitment to seek representatives of all bus routes.

The Fort Wayne Riders Advisory Council, or RAC as they are called for short, became an independent organization after the first meeting and elected their own chairman, who is a training manager for the largest employer in the city. With his guidance, they established their own purpose and directional guidelines. They select their agenda topics, and invite PTC and city staff as guests.

Topics for the meetings have included a presentation by the PTC Controller to explain the difference between capital and operating funding procedures and requirements for public transit. A bus driver discussed his views from the "driver's seat" and there was a brainstorming session with the Marketing Manager to discuss marketing ideas. Their major topic of concern, however, was route planning and preparation with the PTC Service Manager.

The RAC was given the opportunity to review proposed service and route recommendations by a consulting firm, and encouraged to discuss its contents and suggestions for revision with other bus riders.

They helped to promote a televised public hearing for this new service. In November of 1984, PTC introduced a new route structure to complete the modernization of the new system -- these were the first major route changes in ten years, but with the advance public relations work of our advisory group, we received very little opposition from the community. On the introductory day for the new routes, free rides were given throughout the city. The riders advisory members helped to "spread the word" to achieve a rider increase for that day of over 200%. Since November, we have received virtually no criticism from the media or the public, and ridership is beginning to return.

Since the formation of our Riders Advisory Council, its members have attended Board meetings, written and distributed petition letters to federal and state legislators, and most importantly, distributed information to and from their fellow bus riders. They are now working to schedule a new "How to ride the bus" video presentation and are encouraging employee subsidy programs within their businesses. It always help to have an "inside person"!

The formation of a bus riders advisory council has certainly been a bonus for the city of Fort Wayne and its public transit.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL TRANSPORTATION POLICY: THE LOS ANGELES EXPERIENCE, by Wendell Cox, Member, Los Angeles County Transportation Commission.

Citizen committees have had a significant influence on transportation policy in Los Angeles County. This presentation will consider the experience of three particularly successful committees, seeking to identify the common elements.

The author was personally involved in each case. This included being chairman of the Mayor's Advisory Committee and the Diamond Lane Advisory Committee. The association with the Ventura Freeway Improvement Coalition was a board member representing the district in which improvements were sought.

The Mayor's San Fernando Valley Advisory Committee on Transportation operates under the auspices of the mayor of Los Angeles. During 1975 and 1976, the Committee faced a number of challenges relating to transit services. Without exception, the Committee was instrumental in obtaining a more favorable result than was proposed by the regional transit agency. The two experiences summarized below are representative of those successes.

In the middle 1970s, the Committee, among others, advocated the establishment of a comprehensive public transit system in the San Fernando Valley, a suburban sector of Los Angeles with more than one million residents. Such a system was implemented in 1975