

# Engaging Stakeholders & Developing Effective Partnerships:

USING COORDINATION TO CREATE A PLAN YOU CAN WORK



# Stakeholders Vs. Partners

## Stakeholder

- ▶ Provides input or feedback
- ▶ Attends meetings
- ▶ Completes surveys and questionnaires
- ▶ Affected by the outcome of the project

## Partner

- ▶ Contributes resources to the planning effort
- ▶ Takes an active role in planning
- ▶ Provides input or feedback
- ▶ Attends meetings
- ▶ Completes surveys and questionnaires
- ▶ Affected by the outcome of the project
- ▶ May play a role in the outcome of the project



# Who We Approach:

- ▶ Individuals who may be at risk for transit dependency
- ▶ Members of the general public
- ▶ Individuals who have skills or knowledge necessary for the completion of the plan
- ▶ Agency representatives who work with target populations
- ▶ Individuals whose positions mesh with coordination goals
- ▶ Individuals who have inquired about transportation options on behalf of clients
- ▶ Individuals who have worked with us in the past
- ▶ Individuals who express interest



# Getting Their Attention:

- ▶ Focus on how coordination activities will benefit the prospective stakeholder or partner
- ▶ Initiate the interaction
- ▶ Tell them how they can participate
- ▶ Invite the prospective stakeholder or partner to attend a meeting



# Explain the Value of the Regional Coordination Planning Process:

- ▶ Maximizes resources
- ▶ Allows agencies, providers, and the public to all participate in the process
- ▶ Allows the region to take advantage of resources that become available
- ▶ Fills gaps
- ▶ Offers solutions for program needs
- ▶ Prevents missed funding opportunities



# Make Sure the Stakeholder or Partner Knows What is Expected:

- ▶ Communicate expectations
  - ▶ One-on-one meetings
  - ▶ Group meetings
  - ▶ Telephone
  - ▶ Email
- ▶ Explain expectations during Steering Committee or Public Meetings
- ▶ Follow-up via email, telephone, or in-person, depending on the preference of individual stakeholders
- ▶ Show the Stakeholder or Partner how they benefit from the process
- ▶ Our agency does not use formalized agreements for partnerships



# Communicating with Stakeholders and Partners:

- ▶ Face-to-Face Meetings
- ▶ Email
- ▶ Steering Committee Meetings
- ▶ Public Meetings
- ▶ Focus Groups
- ▶ Telephone
- ▶ Comment Forms



# Our Approach to Stakeholder Engagement:

- ▶ Take a comprehensive approach to attaining public input:
  - ▶ Use a variety of methods
  - ▶ Go to the stakeholders
  - ▶ Remember the value of stakeholder input
- ▶ Actively seek to engage stakeholders
- ▶ Make meetings/workshops interactive
- ▶ Empower stakeholders
- ▶ Invite attendees of public meetings to attend Steering Committee meetings
- ▶ Use a translator to meet language needs



# Stakeholders:

- ▶ Members of the public who attended meetings, workshops, or participated in the focus group
- ▶ Human Service Agencies
- ▶ Economic Development Agencies
- ▶ Nonprofits
- ▶ Transportation Providers
- ▶ Representatives of Governmental Entities



# How did we engage stakeholders?

- ▶ Plan Review Committee
- ▶ Focus Groups
- ▶ Public Meetings and Workshops
- ▶ Steering Committee Meetings



# Plan Review Committee

- ▶ Provided extensive guidance and input into the plan update
- ▶ Included representatives from area agencies:
  - ▶ Transit Providers
  - ▶ Human Service Agencies
  - ▶ Workforce Centers
  - ▶ Transit Funding Providers
  - ▶ Governing Bodies



# Focus Groups

- ▶ 3 focus group sessions
- ▶ One session held at a public library
- ▶ Two sessions held at local nonprofits
  - ▶ Resource Information Support Empowerment Center (RISE) – Serves individuals with disabilities
  - ▶ Beaumont Housing Authority



# Public Meetings and Workshops

- ▶ Public meetings and workshops are held in series
- ▶ The same meeting is held at locations spread throughout the region
- ▶ Meetings and workshops are heavily advertised
  - ▶ Flyers
  - ▶ Posters
  - ▶ Public service announcements to all media
  - ▶ Email list
  - ▶ SETRPC website
  - ▶ Meeting notices sent to organizations and neighborhood associations



# Steering Committee Meetings

- ▶ Existing stakeholders and partners are included
- ▶ Attendees to public meetings are invited to join the steering committee
- ▶ Meetings are held quarterly
- ▶ Allow for feedback and input on planning projects, draft documents, and regional coordination in general



# Keeping Stakeholders Engaged:

- ▶ Show appreciation
- ▶ Accommodate schedules
- ▶ Say “Thanks!”
- ▶ Pay attention



# Resources Committed by Partners:

- ▶ Feedback or Input
- ▶ Data
- ▶ Information Regarding Needs
- ▶ Knowledge/Expertise
- ▶ Survey and Questionnaire Completion
- ▶ Distribution of Public Surveys to Clients/Agency Databases
- ▶ Time
- ▶ Facilities for Meetings



# Partners:

- ▶ Consultant Partner
- ▶ Human Service Agencies
- ▶ Economic Development Agencies
- ▶ Nonprofits
- ▶ Transportation Providers
- ▶ Representatives of Governmental Entities



# Why Collaboration is Essential:

- ▶ Knowledge and expertise
- ▶ Data
- ▶ Access to additional skill sets
- ▶ Assistance with surveys/access to databases
- ▶ Use of facilities
- ▶ Relationships with at-risk populations



# Lessons

- ▶ Host the same meeting at locations across the region
- ▶ Provide translators to meet language needs
- ▶ Focus on the benefit to stakeholders/partners
- ▶ Continuously pursue stakeholders and partners