



PUBLIC COMMENTS DATA ANALYSIS

Years 2010-2012

5) Overall Conclusions

The following paragraphs address each of the four ATRT Public Comments Recommendations and the extent to which any findings in this data analysis relate to the implemented improvements.

Recommendation #15: Stratification-Prioritization

No data was collected that would enable assessing the effectiveness of having introduced a categorization scheme for each Public Comments topic. Similarly, prioritization was handled by providing community members supplementary fields such as context, next steps, et al. Additional research would be needed to determine the benefit of these measures, possibly employing a survey instrument or focus group.

Recommendation #16: Comment-Reply Cycles

The median number of total comments posted was approximately 5 before and after the ATRT enhancements were implemented in 1Q 2012; therefore, there is no supporting quantitative evidence that community participation levels have been materially affected (see Section 4-C, Chart 5).

In terms of the Reply Cycle experience, after cleaning up the raw data to remove entries that did not meet the criteria (over 70%), the average number of replies to Public Comments solicitations between Mar-Dec 2012 was just under 1 (see Section 4-D, Chart 10); moreover, just under 70% of all solicitations received no qualified Replies (see Section 4-D, Chart 9) and 18% received one Reply.

This analysis identifies that the Reply Cycle protocol is not being utilized according to the published instructions and may be misconstrued by some community members. In addition, the low number of legitimate reply contributions, averaging less than 1 per Forum, suggests that a deeper investigation be commissioned to understand the behavior patterns and, ultimately, the extent to which the intended enhancement is achieving or can be amended to achieve its original goals.

Recommendation #17: Timelines

No data was collected to determine whether or not fixed minimum timeframes for Comment and Reply periods have impacted any dependent variables relating to Public Comments efficiency, effectiveness, or participation⁸.

⁸ Independent of this data analysis, Staff is aware that some community members have requested that the length of time for Comments (Avg=32 days) and Replies (Avg=23 days) be extended beyond the current levels.



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The analysis has determined that the overall length of solicitations has increased by 15 days (see Section 3-C, Chart 3) attributable to the addition of a Reply Cycle averaging 23 days while having only shortened the original average comment period (40 days) by 8 (23-8=15). There is no evidence, based upon the data analyzed from 2010-2012, that lengthening the entire period by just over two weeks has resulted in any measurable change to the response or participation rate.

Recommendation #21: Upcoming Topics

No data was available for analysis that would help assess the extent to which forecasting and publishing [Upcoming Topics](#) has been beneficial to community members.

The scheduled annual request for information was not released this past December 2012 according to Staff procedures; therefore, the information is now approaching a full year without having been refreshed.

To evaluate the value and benefit of this particular enhancement would require additional research, possibly incorporating a survey instrument or focus group.