

Local Aid & Economic Development

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Strategies to Enhance Public Involvement



Virtual Public Involvement

Virtual public involvement supports agencies' efforts to engage the public more effectively by supplementing face-to-face information sharing with technology.

Innovative virtual public involvement techniques provide State departments of transportation (DOTs), transit agencies, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), and rural transportation planning organizations (RTPOs) with a platform to inform the public and receive feedback. These strategies create efficiencies in how information is disseminated and how input is collected and considered, which can potentially accelerate planning and project development processes.



Virtual public involvement tools include online surveys, visualization, and telephone town halls.

ENCOURAGING PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Public involvement is a critical component in the transportation decision-making process, allowing for meaningful consideration and input from interested individuals. As daily users of the transportation system, the public has useful opinions, insights, and observations to share with their State DOT, MPOs, and local agencies on the performance and needs of the transportation system or on specific projects. Timely and strong public engagement has the potential to accelerate project delivery by helping identify and address public concerns early in the planning process, thereby reducing delays from previously unknown interests late in the project delivery process.

Nearly all State DOTs and most MPOs and local agencies use websites to post information about their activities. With the increased use of social media tools and mobile applications, the public can access user-friendly features such as online videos, podcasts, crowdsourced maps, and other interactive forums to receive information and provide input.

These new opportunities for information sharing and public involvement in the transportation planning, programming, and project development process include, but are not limited to, telephone town halls, online meetings, pop-up outreach, social meetings/meeting-in-a-box kits, story maps, quick videos, crowdsourcing, survey tools, real-time polling tools, social media following, visualization, and working with bloggers.



A heat map illustrates responses from citizens when they were asked where future subways should be built. Source: San Francisco Municipal Transportation Authority

BENEFITS

- ▶ **Efficiency and Low Cost.** Virtual tools and platforms can efficiently be made accessible to communities, many at a lower cost than traditional public engagement methods.
- ▶ **Accelerated Project Delivery.** Robust public engagement helps identify issues early in the project planning process, which reduces the need to revisit decisions.



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT EFFECTIVENESS MEASUREMENT TOOLKIT



NCHRP Report 905

Valid and "Do-able" Surveys and Scoring Tools

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WHY IS MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS NEEDED?

- Consultation with the public is not only required, but fundamental to the development of transportation plans and projects.
- This outreach is also crucial for securing adequate funding for transportation infrastructure and building public support for transportation projects.
- While there are widespread resources for conducting public outreach and a growing body of literature and experience on how to engage the public, there are few practical methods to measure the effectiveness of public involvement.

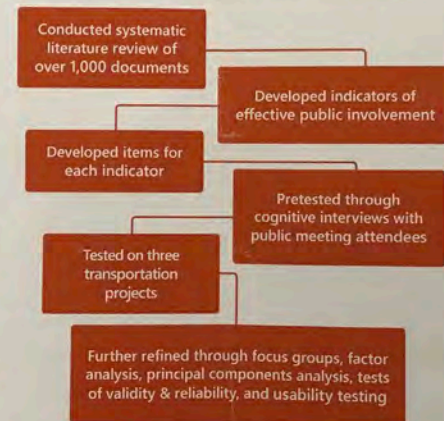
WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

- Target areas for improvement
- Track improvement over time
- Improve relationships with affected communities
- Demonstrate seriousness of public involvement efforts

CAN BE USED FOR WHAT TYPES OF PROJECTS?

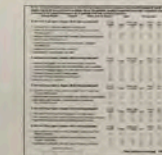
- New construction
- Infrastructure repair
- Tolling
- Long range plans
- Etc.

HOW WAS THE TOOLKIT DEVELOPED?

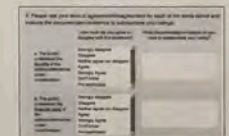


WHAT ARE THE TOOLKIT CONTENTS?

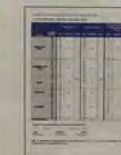
Survey for use with the public



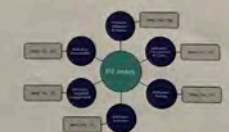
Survey for use by the agency to score itself



Excel scoring tool



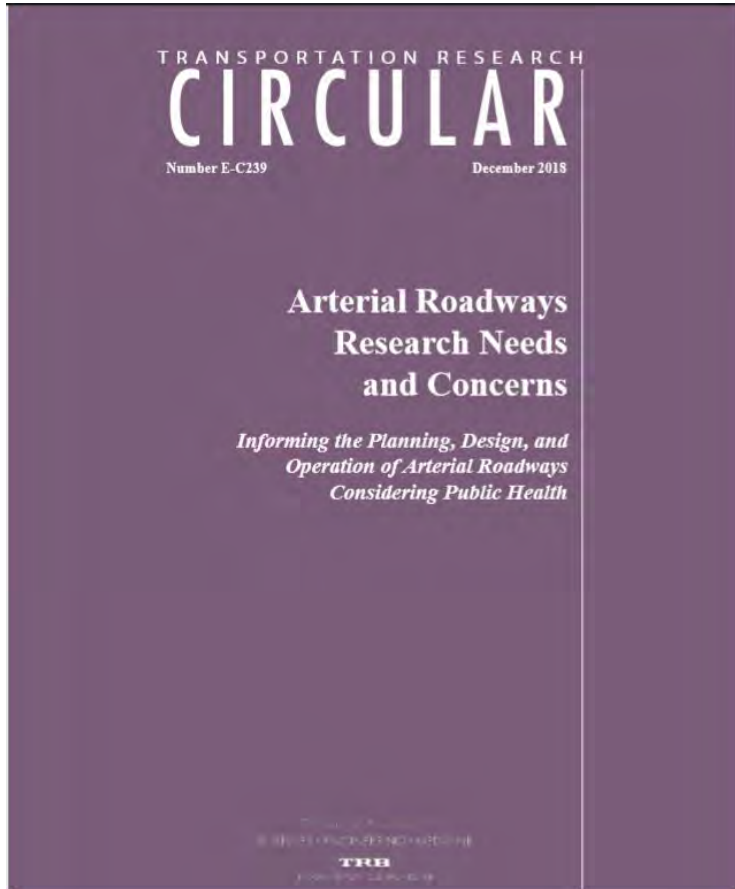
Guidelines for using the surveys and scoring tool



NCHRP Report 905 -- Measuring the Effectiveness of Public Involvement in Transportation Planning and Project Delivery (forthcoming)

For more information, please contact Bruce Brown at bbrown@prrbiz.com

Transportation & Public Health



Intersecting issues for Transportation and Health

Safety

Physical Activity/Active Transportation

Air Quality

Connectivity and Access

Evacuation and Emergency Response

Equity

NCHRP 25-25/Task 105

Connecting Transportation and Health: A Guide to Communication and Collaborations