Virtual Public Involvement – Then, Now, and Going Forward

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Today’s Presentation

• Then - Long-Range Plan 2050 Visioning outreach (Spring/Summer 2020)

• Now(ish) - Ben Franklin Bridge Eastbound Access (Fall 2020/Winter 2021)

• Going forward – Equity Checklist, Challenges, and Hybrid meetings
DVRPC’s approach to transitioning to Virtual Public Involvement

- Accessibility & Accommodations
- Applicability to Public Meetings
- Ground Rules & Security
VPI Roles for a public meeting/webinar

- Lead facilitator (timing of meeting, controls)
- Response facilitator (chat box)
- Technical Assistance (one-on-one help)
- Presenter (subject matter expert)
- Convener (MC, chair)
Long Range Plan 2050 Outreach
Top Themes for Vision for 2050

Over 1,300 open-ended responses from 700+ individuals for 2050 vision questions via survey and online meetings
Connections 2050 Public Comments

- 30+ days (July-August 2021)
- Two public comment webinars (August 11 & 18).
- Lots of ways to make public comments
- Advertised by in traditional media and social media
- 492 public comments received!
  - 219 - Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia & the Circuit Coalition.
  - 106 - No roadway widening
  - 26 - Opposition to I-95 reconstruction (no widening).
Local Area Study – Ben Franklin Bridge: Eastbound Access

- Study area in Philadelphia includes Old City, Chinatown, and Callowhill neighborhoods.
- In-person public involvement greatly restricted and/or prohibited
- Very active, involved communities going through change
- Chinatown has history of being ignored, marginalized, and literally bulldozed
BFB: Outreach Plan

- EVERYTHING in English, Simplified Chinese, and Spanish
- Webmap to collect input
- Social media campaign to get people to webmap
- Postcard mailing to get more people to webmap
- Video explaining how to use webmap
- Opportunity to sign up for project updates (Google Forms)
- Follow-up survey to capture demographics and evaluate engagement
Between 10/24 and 11/23 -- 25,000 web views, 90 original comments; 70 comments on comments.
Going Forward: Equity checklist

- **Understand demographics**
  - Use ACS data to identify crucial populations & set goals

- **Provide resources & incentives**
  - Communicate why this meeting is worthwhile; provide stipends, offer translation, make meetings more flexible

- **Build contact lists**
  - Good spreadsheet skills; detail-oriented team member; easy ways for people to sign up for more info

- **Try different outreach methods**
  - Not every person is reached in the same way. Try social media, postcards, emails, more! (old and new)

- **Prep your team**
  - Online meetings maybe easier to schedule but are harder to make engaging and run smoothly. Keep the meeting to a tight schedule, on-time

- **Evaluate!**
  - Evaluate meeting; ask demographic questions
VPI still does not meet...

- Internet access and literacy
- Childcare burden
- Low-paying wages
- Class and race trauma
- Provide resources & incentives
- Trust in government
VPI & Hybrid Roles for a public meeting/webinar

Lead facilitator (in-person)
Response facilitator (online)
Greeter (in-person)
Technical Assistance (online)
Speakers (online)
Speakers (in-person)
Chair/Convener (in-person or online)
Thank You!

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