



Tech Talk! WEBINAR

What Happens Now? Virtual Public Engagement During and Beyond Covid-19

October 6, 2021

Welcome! Here are some Webinar Logistics:

- Please submit questions using “Q&A” at the bottom of your screen which will be submitted to the host.
- Questions will be addressed after all the presentations.
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Edward J. Bloustein School
of Planning and Public Policy

NJDOT Tech Talk! Webinar Virtual Public Engagement During & Beyond COVID-19

Trish Sanchez and Andrea Lubin

**Public Outreach and Engagement Team (POET)
Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center (VTC)
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey**

October 6, 2021



Our Agenda for Today

- I. Session Overview**
- II. Panel Presentations**
- III. Moderated Q&A**



Voorhees Transportation Center (VTC)

- Transit planning and analysis
- Non-motorized transportation
- Transportation and the built environment
- Transportation and social equity
- Transportation finance and the economy
- Transportation security and evacuation planning
- Transportation safety
- Environmental impacts of transportation



Signature VTC Programs and Initiatives

- **Public Outreach and Engagement Team (POET)**
- National Transit Institute (NTI)
- NJ Bicycle and Pedestrian Resource Center
- NJ Safe Routes Resource Center
- Together North Jersey
- NJTIP @ Rutgers

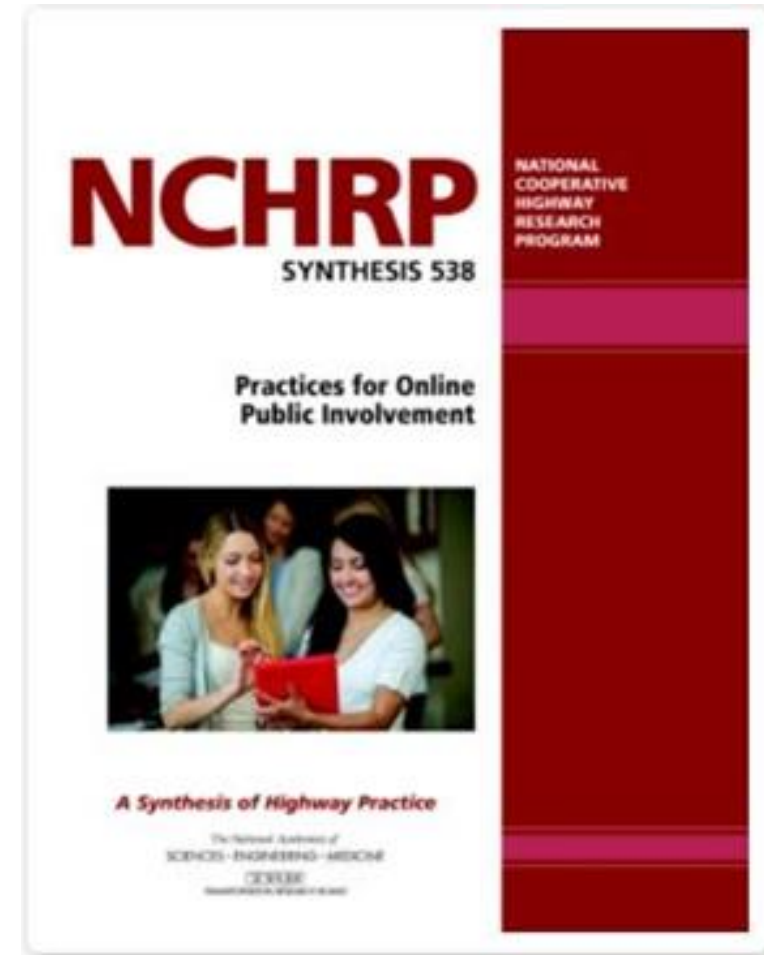


VPI Research

National Cooperative Highway Research Board (NCHRP) – Synthesis 538

Practices for Online Public Involvement (2019)

- ***Our work:*** Provide the current state of online public involvement tools used by state DOTs.
- ***VPI*** - Online survey and informant interviews
- ***Key findings***
 - Communicate efficiently and reach more people
 - Websites, blogs and social media most common tools
 - Supplement in-person outreach
 - Challenges – digital divide, internet access, staffing



VPI Research

NCHRP 08-142

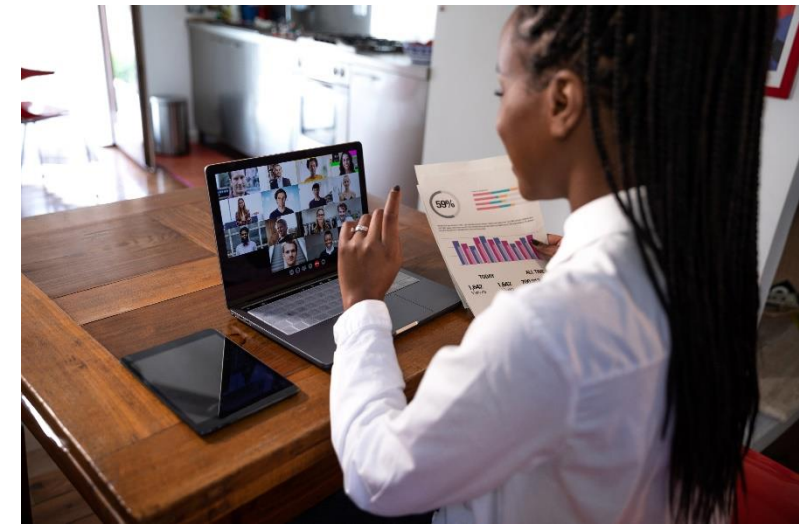
VPI: A Manual for Effective, Equitable, and Efficient Practices for Transportation Agencies (research underway)

- **Phase 1 work:** Research and guidance on VPI during the pandemic with DOTs and practitioners
- **Phase 2 work** – Create a manual on VPI best practices through additional data collection from DOTs, practitioners, experts, and the public.



VPI Practice

- **Multilingual Outreach for South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization (SJTPO)**
- **Somerset County Communication & Outreach Assessment**
- **Middlesex County Destination 2040 Strategic Plan**
- ***Key takeaways***
 - No “one size fits all” – experiment with social media, hybrid engagement,
 - Welcoming and beneficial for participants – part of decision making not just approving what is already decided.
 - Build local partnerships and trust
 - Targeted outreach – work with community organizations and local libraries
 - Social media and videos
 - Multiple languages



Engaging with Underserved Populations

Kessler Foundation study
Spring 2020-Spring 2021

- VPI – “Meet” people where they are



Engaging with Underserved Populations

Interview Takeaways from Community Organizations & Social Service Agencies:

- Limit group size when working with populations needing technical support
- Offer assistance on virtual platforms
- Do not limit virtual engagement opportunities to web-based, offer “low-tech” & “no-tech” options
- Strong support for VPI for underserved populations as a means to promote connectivity and expand universe of participants



Today's Panelists

- Rickie Clark, Transportation Specialist, FHWA
- Jamille Robbins, Community Studies & Visualization Group Leader, North Carolina DOT Public Involvement
- Alison Hastings, Associate Director Communications, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC)
- Vanessa Holman, Deputy Chief of Staff, NJDOT
- Megan Fackler, Director of Government and Community Relations, NJDOT



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