Public Participation in Planning
SHOW OF HANDS

Interactive exercise for the room.
Raise your hand if the question applies to you and your experience.
GROUND RULES

- Let everyone have a chance to speak
- Ok to disagree
- But... disagree with the idea, not the person.
- Do not interrupt one another
DVRPC’s Records Policy & Public Participation Plan

June 26, 2018 PPTF Meeting

Alison Hastings
Manager, Office of Communications & Engagement
What is a Records Policy?

- Gives citizens the right to access government records.
- All government information is presumed to be available to the public, unless exempted.
- Protects government body from exorbitant requests.
- Gives government body guidelines for responding to requests.
- In NJ - Open Public Records Act (OPRA)
- In PA - Right-to-Know Law (RTK)
- Federal agencies - Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)
DVRPC’s Records Policy

- An Appendix to DVRPC’s Public Participation Plan, adopted by Board in March 2014.
- Intended to balance benefits of general public access to records with other considerations of privacy, confidentiality, informed decision-making, and security.
- Contracts with other public/private entities may prohibit us from disclosing information, reports, etc.
- Best Practice: Put information on website to begin with.
DVRPC’s Records Policy con’t

● DVRPC did not have a robust policy before 2014.
● Between 2010 and 2012, DVRPC received a large number of requests for records; but we didn’t have a policy to guide responses to requesters.
● PA Court Case - Commonwealth Court - July 2013 decision found that DVRPC is not subject to PA RTK
● NJ quasi-judicial - NJ Government Records Council - June 2013 found that DVRPC is not subject to NJ OPRA
● DVRPC drafted a Public Records Policy throughout 2013; released for public comment; and approved by Board in March 2014.
2017: Reexamination of Records Policy

Staff and co-counsel found that:

- Current exemptions are not specific enough.
- Current policy has no guidelines on response timeline.
- Member governments fall under two different state disclosure laws.
- Different member governments in same state may interpret same law differently. Ex. “Ownership” vs. “Access.”
- Information requested may be governed by contracts.
Proposed Policy

- Modeled on Delaware River Port Authority’s policy. DRPA is a “sister agency” in that it was also created by interstate compact law.
- Public Comment period from 4/4/2018 to 5/21/2018. Received 3 public comments. One comment after public comment period.
- Right now, could go to the Board for adoption in July 2018.
Proposed Policy

- 13 exemptions.
  - Current policy has 7 exemptions
  - PA’s Right-To-Know policy has 30+ exemptions.
- New section on “Commission’s Response,” which would tie staff to a timeline for responding.
- Revised Request Form that creates better documentation for staff to track request, determination, and response.
Proposed Policy -
Examples of Exemptions

- Personnel Records
- Copyrighted or proprietary information (ex. Purchased data)
- Information that would give another entity an unfair advantage if released
- Records that contain personal information (ex. Social security numbers, home mailing addresses)
- Information that would endanger public safety and security (ex. Some technical engineering drawings)
DVRPC’s Public Participation Plan
Legislative Basis

Starting with 1991 Federal Transportation Legislation - Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) - MPOs were mandated to create, adopt, and follow public participation plans.
Legislative Basis

Each federal transportation act slightly changes Public Participation requirements. Example:

Definition of Interested Parties: In general.—Each metropolitan planning organization shall provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, public ports, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation (including intercity bus operators, employer-based commuting programs, such as a carpool program, vanpool program, transit benefit program, parking cash-out program, shuttle program, or telework program), representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the transportation plan.

DVRPC’s Public Participation Plans

- 1990s - Required by ISTEA
- 2001 - Public Participation Plan
- 2004 - Update - added public disclosure policy and Environmental Justice analysis (related to Title VI Compliance)
- 2008 - Update - complied with SAFETEA-LU
- 2014 - Revision - Included updated Public Disclosure Policy (DVRPC’s current records policy; not proposed policy).
DVRPC’s Public Participation Plan - A Strategy for Citizen Involvement (2014)

DVRPC Activities covered by the Public Participation Plan

- Long-Range Plan
- Transportation Improvement Program
- DVRPC Board meetings
- DVRPC committee meetings
- Public Participation Task Force
- Regular Evaluation
DVRPC’s Public Participation Goals:

- Provide opportunities for interested parties to identify regional concerns and priorities;
- Encourage public involvement among our various audiences, including traditionally underserved groups;
- Increase the public’s awareness of opportunities and activities to actively participate in DVRPC plans and programs;
- Obtain meaningful public input to inform the Commission’s planning and decisionmaking process; and
- Inform and educate our stakeholders, share information, and increase overall awareness of regional planning.
How do we do we meet those goals?

Meetings

Different types of meetings depending on audience, project/plan, and available resources:

- Open houses
- Workshops
- Information Sessions
- Listening Sessions
- Public meetings (legally noticed; opportunity to make public comments on the record)
- Webinars, web conferences, or virtual meetings
- Road Shows
How do we meet those goals?

Accessible Meetings

- **Always** held in ADA-accessible facilities
- When possible, in transit-accessible locations
- Held at various times: evenings, lunch meetings, on weekends
- Translation and interpretation available upon request (seven days before scheduled meeting)
- **Partner with a local host organization or member government**
How do we meet those goals?

Public Input

- Hold public comment periods for mandated documents
- Use public comments
- Respond to public comments that are specific to document out for public comment (not all organizations, government agencies have to do this).
- Document changes based on public comments
How do we meet those goals?

Communications

• Robust website that complies with accessibility standards
• Event calendar for public meetings/events and agendas (10 days ahead of time)
• Data resources - GIS Data Downloads, Map Viewers, Data Bulletins and Analytical Reports (narrative reports)
• Actively Managed Social Media Channels (real-time information)
• Monthly Newsletter (proactive communications)
• Product Search
• Actively Managed Contact Lists
How do we meet those goals?

Other Ways

Accessible Staff

DVRPC Resource Center (on-site)
Speakers Bureau (Subject Matter Experts)

*Planner’s Methodology* - to be updated in FY2019
- Opportunity to expand Public Participation Plan
- Best practices
- Ask PPTF for involvement, contributions, guidance
Roles of the PPTF

- Provide ongoing public access to the regional planning and decision-making process;
- Review timely issues;
- Serve as a conduit to organizations and communities across the region for DVRPC’s data and projects; and
- Assist the Commission in implementing public outreach strategies.

Opportunities: co-host an event/meeting in your community; serve on a grant review committee; forward info to your contacts/networks; “test-run” engagement activities at PPTF meetings; leadership positions; serve on Regional Technical Committee
We can always do better

We value PPTF’s time, commitment and input.

Mid-Year Check-in and Survey

1) Sending emails announcing public notices directly to PPTF members instead of relying on HTML email distribution.
   - Mailing those materials to PPTF member if that member requests.
2) Providing more updates between meetings.
3) Asking chairs to plan and lead meetings.
4) Planning PPTF meetings around your interests.
THANK YOU!
Reviving Vine
Improving Multimodal Connections on Vine Street
Al Beatty, DVRPC
Public participation strategy:
Open House

Project background:
● Increase neighborhood connections
● Enhance multimodal, inclusive mobility
● Improve safety and rebalance roadway uses
● Transform Vine Street into a safe, attractive, community-oriented public space
Strategy in practice:
- Location: Holy Redeemer
- Partner: PCDC
- Data: survey, conversations
- DVRPC Staff: 15
- Other Considerations: translation, promotion, followup surveys

How feedback/data will be used:
- Quantitative analysis, qualitative review
- Ideas informed final recommendations
- Analysis included in report
Camden Health Element

Amy Verbofsky, DVRPC
Public participation strategy:
Roadshow

Project background:
● Element of the City’s Master Plan
● Provide a high-level vision to promote health as a priority for Camden’s future growth and development
● Generate policies and actions for improving opportunities for everyone to be healthy
Strategy in practice:
- We come to you
- Flexible presentation that can be adapted to different meeting lengths and formats
- Many smaller meetings with opportunities for discussion
- Ongoing process: March until...
- Requires at least 2 DVRPC staff per meeting

Challenges:
- Finding groups that want to host us
- Scheduling takes a long time
- Finding community groups to meet with
How feedback/data will be used:

- Develop a vision for a healthy Camden
- Prioritize what areas to focus on
  - Strategies around homelessness, mental health, and addiction will be included as a result of the roadshows
- Future versions of the roadshow may focus on proposed recommendations. Feedback would be used to develop and prioritize strategies and policies.
TWEET or HEADLINE from the FUTURE

Camden city goes entire year without any housing evictions at all.

Camden city is first city in nation where VAS respondents said they experienced no stress.

Camden voted best place to live in Camden County!

Camden named among to destinations to visit in NJ.

TWEET or HEADLINE from the FUTURE

Camden air quality meets EPA regulations. Less truck traffic.

Camden schools turn on water fountains.

TWEET or HEADLINE from the FUTURE

Local farmers and producers get opportunity to sell products.

#farmersmarkets #TCSI

District school food is good and meets with youth input and voice!

#Waterfountains are clean and work all of Camden's green fruits and...
Station Area Planning for the King of Prussia Rail

Andrew Svekla, DVRPC
Public participation strategy: Stakeholder Workshop

Study goals:
1. Develop strategies to enhance pedestrian and bicycle access to the proposed stations
2. Identify opportunities for transit-supportive development.
Strategy in practice:
- Small group dynamics
- Diverse perspectives and experience
- “Hands-On” structured activities
- Reporting back to the group

How feedback/data will be used:
Workshop comments and outputs inform the recommendations made by the study team
Insert an image if you have one. Right click the pic and choose “Change Background”.
Or use this one if you want a pic with words on the side

Please only choose the big picture or the one with words! Not both.
Marcus Hook Grade Crossing Study

Mike Ruane, DVRPC
Public participation strategy:
Steering Committee

Project background:
● Evaluate existing conditions on 4th Street
● Identify improvements for crossing safety
● Explore options to minimize negative impacts to local community
Strategy in practice:

- Meetings in the borough
- Project staff: 2 (varies)
- Agencies, local officials and staff, business stakeholders
- Several meetings throughout project
- Short technical presentations with discussion

How feedback/data will be used:

- Guided scope and improvement strategies
- Educational to project team and community members
- Serves as a foundation for ongoing coordination
Panel questions

Discussion and questions about public participation strategies