

Long Range Transportation Public Engagement Plan

Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of the Public Engagement Plan for the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), ConnectRVA2045, is to outline strategies to garner meaningful input from the community on the future transportation and connectivity needs for the region.

Background

The LRTP is a particularly significant decision tool meant to guide how the Richmond Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RRTPO) and its partners will meet the transportation needs of the Richmond region over the next 20+ years. Through outreach during all phases of plan development, the RRTPO will aim to help all stakeholders including the public, understand, follow, and participate in developing this important policy, planning and programming document. Federal regulation requires MPOs “to provide meaningful citizen input for the metropolitan transportation planning and programming process through effective citizen involvement activities, open and accessible information, and opportunities for participation.”

Audience

The 2045 LRTP update will be informed by input from individuals and groups including, but not limited to, the following:

- Citizens
- Affected public agencies
- Representatives of public transportation employees
- Freight shippers
- Private providers of transportation
- Representatives of users of public transportation
- Representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities
- Representatives of the elderly and individuals with disabilities
- Agencies or entities responsible for safety/security operations
- Providers of non-emergency transportation services receiving financial assistance from a source other than title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53
- Other interested parties



Public engagement for ConnectRVA2045 will include a concerted effort to reach out to previously underserved populations or those persons with unique transportation needs and challenges, such as:

- People with low incomes
- People of minority populations
- People with limited English proficiency (LEP)
- People of zero car households

Goals

The goals for this public engagement plan will be to:

1. Engage the public at all levels and throughout the development of ConnectRVA2045.
2. Ensure that a variety of engagement strategies are implemented to establish inclusive public input.
3. Strengthen relationships with local governments, agencies, and stakeholder groups to ensure equal outreach to all regional jurisdictions.

Organizational structure

- PlanRVA staff
- Advisory committee
- Elected officials
- Stakeholder groups
- Other interested parties



Public Engagement Strategy

Public engagement will be vital to the success of the ConnectRVA2045 plan. Throughout the entire planning process the RRTPO board and staff will be reaching out to the public through meetings, workshops, and surveys to receive feedback on each section of the plan. The general process flow is included below. Each point of public outreach will be thoroughly advertised across multiple mediums to ensure that all citizens and stakeholders are given the opportunity to participate in the planning process.

Pre-Planning

Promotion and Awareness

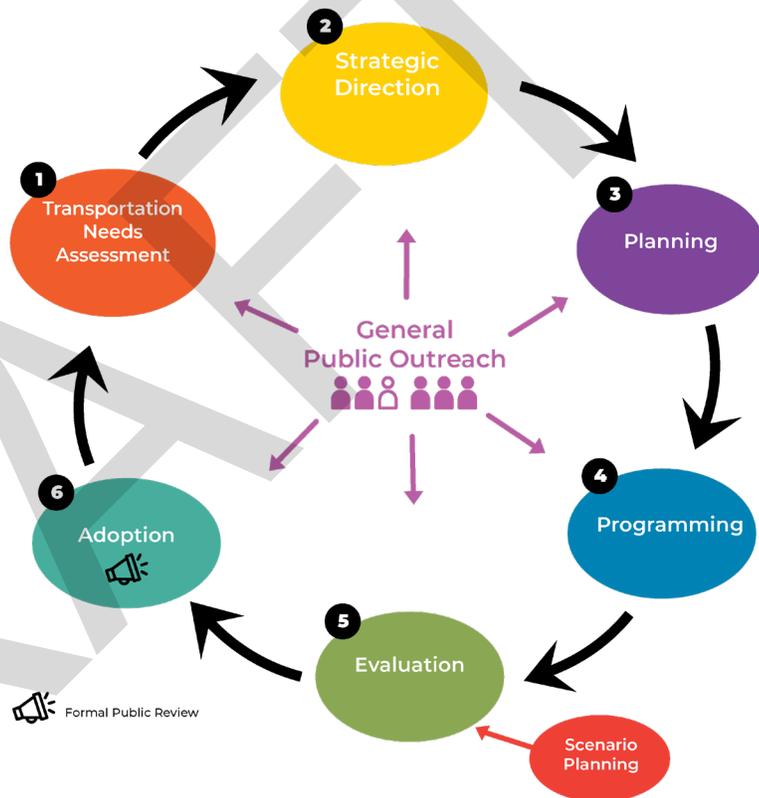
Before beginning the first phase of public engagement PlanRVA staff, advisory members, and stakeholders will be tasked with promoting all the upcoming public engagement events through any channel they have available. ConnectRVA staff will promote the engagement process through:

Website: RRTPO has established a dedicated website for the development of the plan, www.connectrva2045.org, to serve as the “front door” where information and updates on the plan and engagement opportunities can be found.

Media coverage: Press releases, meeting notices, and ads. PlanRVA has an existing list of regional media contacts and ad specs for various publications. All notices should be designed to reflect the look and feel of the ConnectRVA2045 brand and be used to inform the public about upcoming participation events.

Email notices: PlanRVA currently has an email list of approximately 200 subscribers.

Social media: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn are the primary channels PlanRVA will use to promote meetings, surveys, and public comment periods. Members of the advisory committee will be encouraged to share posts on their personal or locality accounts.





Phase One: Vision

The first phase of the ConnectRVA2045 public engagement process will focus on assessing what the community feels are the current needs for transportation and their vision for future regional transportation. This initial round of community feedback will take place in two different formats: Community living rooms and visioning open houses. Initial education and participation-building will take place by meeting community organizations and groups where they are. Organized conversation and feedback will take place at multiple “visioning” open houses held at different geographically accessible locations in the region (exact locations to be determined by the Advisory Committee). These open houses will have a similar format and will be the starting point for all future public engagement efforts. The visioning open houses will have five stations.

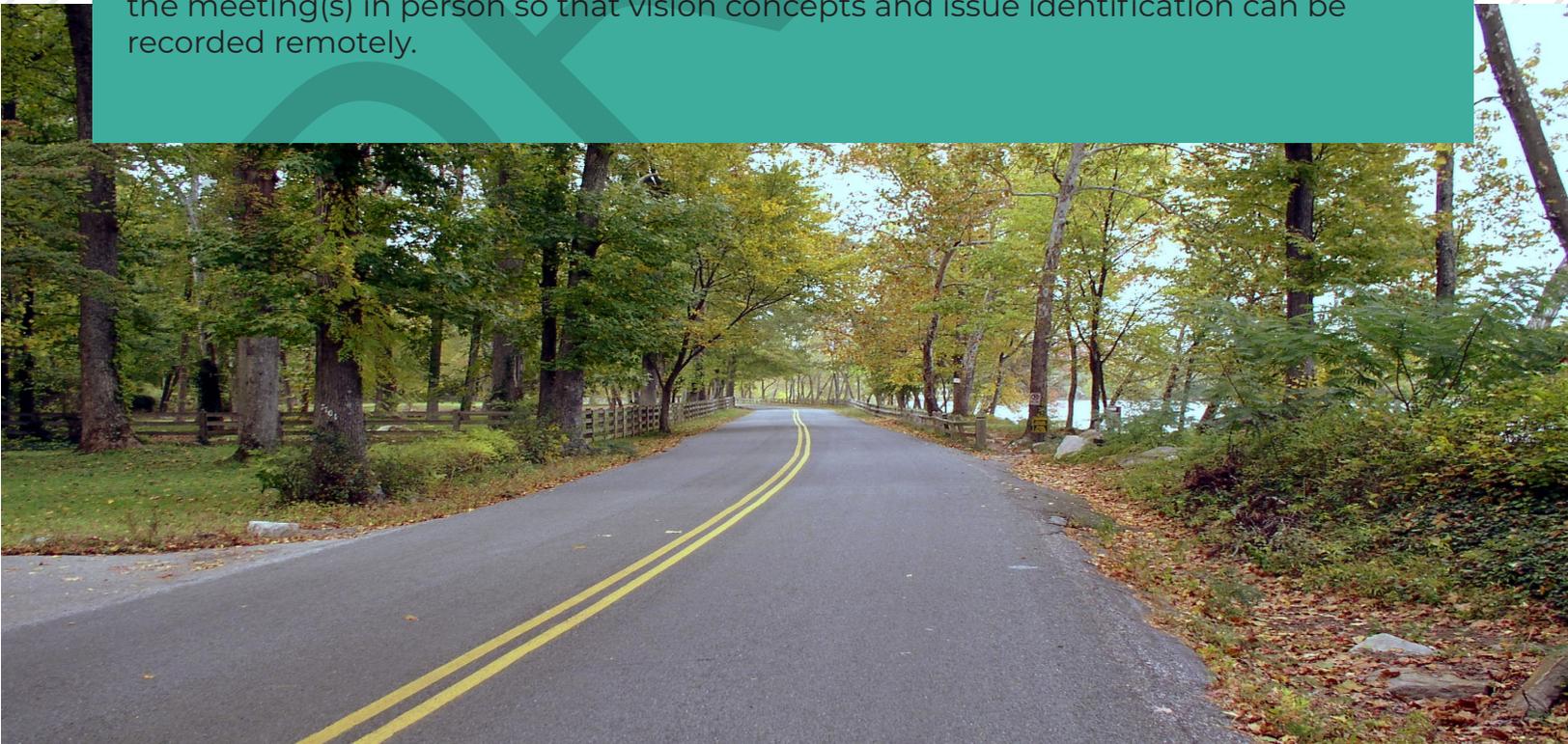
Community Living Rooms

In order to provide opportunity to as many people as possible in our region, the PlanRVA staff will utilize regional stakeholders, local interest groups, and nonprofit organizations to solicit input on the development of ConnectRVA2045. These forums will complement larger, region-wide workshops or meetings and stand as an opportunity for the PlanRVA staff to meet with the public where they live. These sessions can either be facilitated by PlanRVA staff or local ambassadors.

Open House

1. **Registration:** Each attendee will be asked to provide some basic demographic information to give a sense of the diversity of participants. Demographic information will be optional. Participants will also have the option to provide an email address to stay informed about the ConnectRVA2045 planning process.
2. **Background Information:** This station will provide participants some basic information about the LRTP process, past plans, regional data, and the RRTPO.
3. **Big Ideas:** In this station participants will be asked to share their grand visions for the region or for their locality. Since the focus of ConnectRVA2045 is how our region will change and adapt over the next 20+ years, participants will also be asked to think about the future of our region. Visuals such as icons, maps and photos will display various topic areas related to transportation: Congestion, Safety, Interconnectivity, Multi-Modal Transport, Bicycle and Pedestrian Connectivity, Accessibility, and Environmental Impact.
4. **Issues Identification:** This station will focus on identification of current and projected transportation issues that are important to participants. The goal is to verify issues provided by RRTPO staff and to identify additional concerns that need to be assessed through the planning process. Using a variety of maps, participants will be able to identify specific problem areas related to the big picture topics in the previous activity. Tools (sticky notes, push pins, stickers) will be available for participants to note their concerns.
5. **Evaluation:** The final station will ask participants to give feedback on the meeting and any additional comments. Fliers with information on the next public engagement event or surveys will also be distributed at this station.

Bonus: There will also be an online tool available for anyone who is not able to attend the meeting(s) in person so that vision concepts and issue identification can be recorded remotely.





Phase Two: Strategic Direction

After gathering the vision statements and issues for the region from the first phase of public engagement, PlanRVA staff will combine this public feedback with ongoing research and data analysis to establish the vision, goals and objectives for the 2045 plan. Using the identified issues and their location, staff will develop a set of regional needs geocoded to particular locations when possible.

During this phase of public engagement, the community will be asked to share their reaction to the drafted vision, goals and objectives and to validate the regional needs through face-to-face meetings, online engagement tools, and stakeholder outreach.

- **Stakeholder meetings:** Using established community organizations, PlanRVA staff will solicit direct feedback on the plan.
- **Advisory committee meetings:** Throughout the ConnectRVA2045 process the ConnectRVA advisory committee will meet regularly to provide feedback on the plan thus far. During these meetings PlanRVA staff will encourage members to share any community feedback they have received from their localities or stakeholder groups.
- **Surveys and online tools:** Citizens will be engaged online during this phase of the Connect RVA process. Depending on the feedback required, surveys may include a mapping exercise, a questionnaire, and/or an open-ended prompt.



Phase Three: Planning and Programming

The third phase of public engagement will be the culmination of all the outreach and research gathered by PlanRVA staff. During this phase the transportation needs and deficiencies, defined in the previous phases, will be converted into projects by staff and the advisory committee and broken down into categories with expected project cost. The public will be asked to help determine if this universe of projects addresses the identified needs. Engagement during this phase will be done in geographically diverse workshops.

Planning Workshops

1. **Registration:** Each attendee will be asked to provide some basic demographic information to give a sense of the diversity of participants. Demographic information will be optional. Participants will also have the option to provide an email address to stay informed about the ConnectRVA2045 planning process.
2. **Universe of projects:** PlanRVA staff will give a presentation on what has been accomplished so far in the ConnectRVA2045 plan and briefly introduce all the regional projects identified by staff and the public.
3. **Maps:** Attendees will review large scale maps and place markers on areas where projects have not been identified or where there is a need for intervention.
4. **Evaluation:** Participants will be asked to give feedback on the meeting and any additional comments. Fliers with information on the next public engagement event or surveys will also be provided.

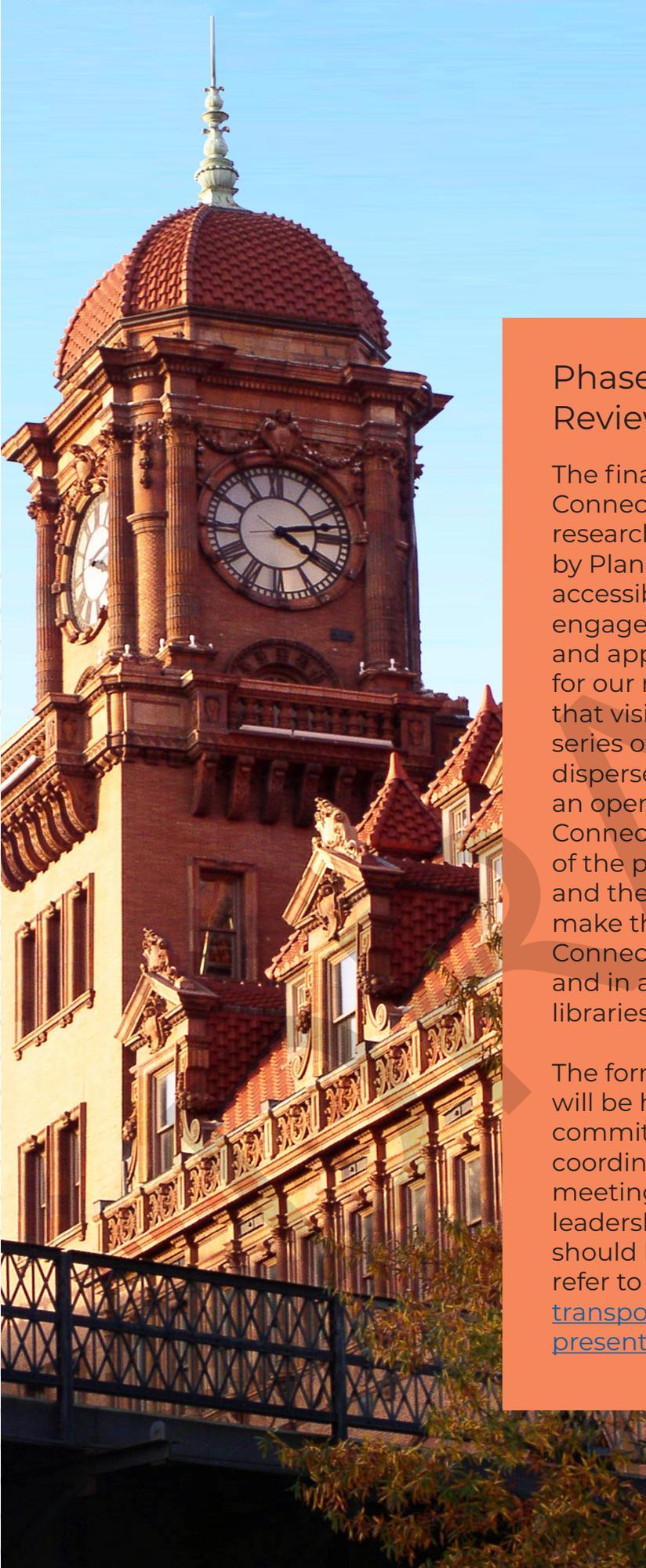
Note: Opportunities to provide feedback online will be made available for those not able to attend the face-to-face workshops.



Phase Four: Evaluation and Prioritization

The fourth phase of public engagement will be held solely online except for any regularly scheduled advisory committee meetings. During this phase, the public will be asked to evaluate the universe of projects selected during the planning and programming stage (Phase 3) of the ConnectRVA2045 plan. The outcome of this engagement effort will be to determine which of the broad range of regional transportation projects the public feels are most important to achieve the vision for our region. This feedback will be shared with the advisory committee to supplement the technical evaluation and project scoring that PlanRVA staff performs.

The public will be asked to provide feedback through surveys distributed by email and social media, and available on the ConnectRVA2045 website.



Phase Five: Final Formal Public Review and Plan Adoption

The final phase of public engagement for the ConnectRVA2045 plan will combine all the research, analysis, and evaluation conducted by PlanRVA staff into one well designed and accessible document. This last stage of the engagement process will be the final public check and approval of the vision, goals and objectives for our region and the projects that will achieve that vision. Public engagement will be through a series of similar public meetings geographically dispersed throughout the Richmond region in an open house format. During the open house, ConnectRVA2045 staff will present all five phases of the plan through maps, graphics, visuals and the draft document. For those who cannot make the public meetings, a draft copy of the ConnectRVA2045 plan will also be available online and in a hard-copy format available in public libraries across the region.

The formal public hearing and adoption process will be held through the RRTPO advisory committees and Policy Board. The hearings will be coordinated with the regularly scheduled monthly meetings of each committee unless committee leadership determine that special meetings should be held. For regular meeting schedules, refer to the RRTPO website at <https://planrva.org/transportation/meeting-agendas-minutes-and-presentations-tpo/>

Public Engagement Tools

Meeting in a Box

A critical part of effective public outreach is meeting people where they are, however it is not always possible for PlanRVA staff to attend every stakeholder meeting or event throughout the region. The Connect RVA meeting in a box will provide all the necessary tools and resources for local groups to hold their own meetings regarding the LRTP process. The items in each box will be the same and can be updated to reflect the current phase of public involvement. Boxes will contain:

1. A large-scale regional map: where citizens can refer problem areas.
2. Public comment cards: where citizens can write down their feedback or concerns.
3. Advertising materials: fliers or handouts with information about the next public workshop or links to current surveys
4. Discussion questions: depending on which phase of the LRTP process the meeting takes place these discussion questions will vary but questions should be used to guide public discussion.

Key Communication Tools

- Social media: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn
- ConnectRVA2045 website
- Newspaper ads: public notices for community engagement opportunities
- Digital banners: posted on regional news websites
- Email listserv: generated emails for upcoming events or action items

