
Strategic Approaches to Policy Development and Engaging Diverse Community Customers

Presented by:

Nikki Tishler, Title VI Strategist, MassDOT

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Moderated by:

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Overview

I. Organizational infrastructure

II. Internal process

III. External public engagement

- i. New approach to public engagement in policy development
- ii. Maintaining adaptability
- iii. Turning testimony into policy and operational inputs

Our strategic management strategies for engagement

- Weekly senior leadership meetings that include Office of Diversity and Civil Rights
- Public Participation Plan adopted in 2014
- Clear institutional understanding of public participation obligations under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Engagement tools to assist practitioners

Engage

- GIS-based Title VI public engagement tool
- Joint effort between Office of Transportation Planning and Office of Diversity and Civil Rights



Engage

Engage offers a suite of tools to comprehensively identify equity considerations in your programs, projects, and activities. It is designed to assist you with all of your public engagement efforts and provide the tools you need to assure that your activities and projects are compliant with relevant civil rights obligations, such as Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), executive orders on Environmental Justice (EJ), among other considerations and obligations.

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Highway Project Impact



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Community Contacts



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Accessible Meeting Locations



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Internal Organizational Strategy



What we knew:

- Obligation to include the public
- Complex policy
- Difficult to communicate and receive feedback

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Strategic Approaches to Public Participation

Convene Stakeholders

- Advocates
- Community Organizations
- Academics
- Provide pre-meeting materials

What we requested:

- Input on policy details
- Test messaging to public
- Assist with outreach

Plan to adapt and course correct



Adaptability

- Strategic infrastructure in place
- Direct community engagement
- Meet people where they are



What we heard

“The current schedules are designed around 9-5 work commutes. That is no longer the rule, especially in a city that is a medical hub. Customers need service at other times of day.”

“My 27 year old son works at the airport and needs to get there by 5am. **He is taking an Uber while he saves to buy a car because there is no public transit to get him to work.** This is inequitable. We want to facilitate supporting the young black men in our neighborhood to be successful. Transportation is part of supporting them.”

“We have a **vibrant senior citizen community** in our neighborhood. They are living without vehicles, getting to doctor’s appointments; fostering grandchildren. The busses need to be more reliable for this demographic and we need more bus shelters so our seniors aren’t braving the cold and snow.”

“Thank you for coming to **our neighborhood** and hearing our thoughts and ideas.”

From testimony to policy



Key Takeaways

- Engaging the public is part of strategic management
- Lean in to challenges
- Take time to understand and utilize public input

Thank you!

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