Tech Talk
Virtual Public Involvement

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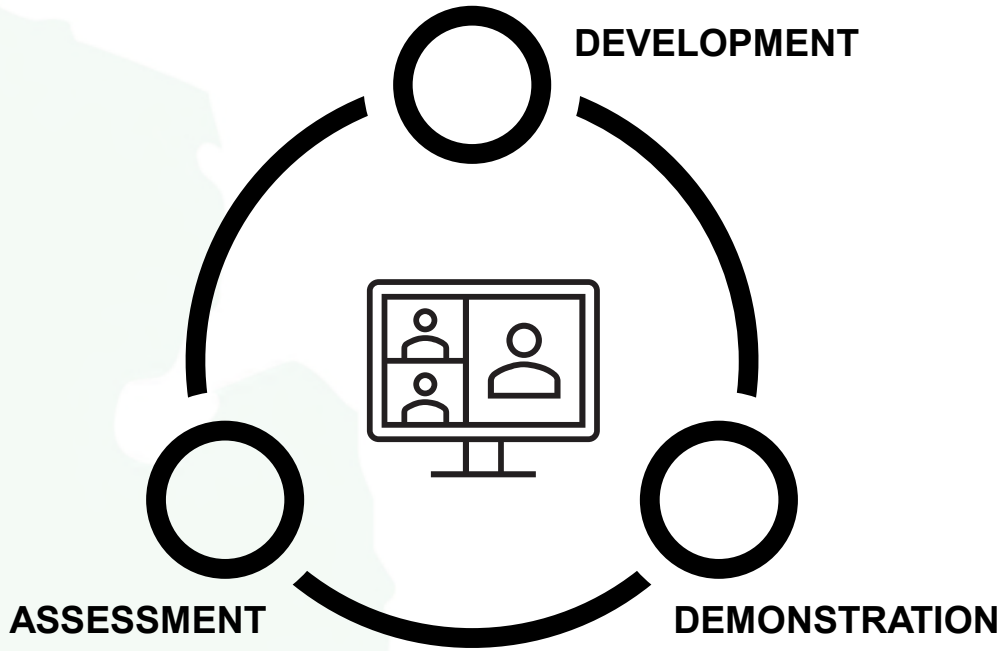
Every Day Counts
Innovation for a Nation on the Move

STIC

MDOT VPI Initiatives

- FHWA STIC Grant was awarded to MDOT to:
  - Capture best practices & lessons learned
  - Develop informational brochure
  - Institutionalize VPI
- EDC-5 Regional Summit
  - October 2018
  - VPI: 1 of 5 of the innovations discussed
  - Pilot VPI in Michigan with future goal for deployment
    - Development, Demonstration, Assessment Stages
    - MDOT & City of Ann Arbor
  - Initiative Champions:
    - Kimberly Zimmer, MDOT
    - Ruth Hepfer, FHWA
- Continuing VPI as part of EDC-6



MDOT VPI Initiatives

- MDOT Pilot Projects:
  - I-94 Ann Arbor/Saline to US-23 Feasibility Study
  - M-28 Reconstruction, city of Munising, Alger County
  - US-12 PEL Study from Campus Martius to I-96, city of Detroit, Wayne County
  - US-131/I-96 Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study, city of Grand Rapids, Kent County
  - MDOT State Long Range Plan

- City of Ann Arbor Pilot Projects:
  - Nixon Road Corridor Design Project
  - Ann Arbor Quiet Zone Study

Project Selection Criteria:

- ✓ Have different characteristics, demographics and site conditions (urban, rural, commuters, tourists, accessibility to technology, multi-modal, end users).
- ✓ Be at different stages and piloting different tools.

M-28 Reconstruction, City of Munising

VPI Tools Used:

- MDOT Project Webpage
- MDOT Social Media
- MDOT Press Release
- Videos
- Livestreaming (attempted)
- Narrated PowerPoint with closed captioning
- MI Drive
- Crowdsourcing/survey

Barriers:

- Low broadband quality and no available IT expert on-site led to failed livestream event
- Learning curve with VPI tools
- Challenging to reach people in rural areas with no broadband
- Some negative feedback from the public who prefer attending in-person meetings

MDOT Michigan Mobility 2045 (State Long Range Plan)

VPI Tools Used:

- MDOT Project Webpage
- MDOT Social Media
- MDOT Press Release
- Dedicated project email, email lists
- Metro Quest and Survey Monkey surveys
- Videos
- GIS mapping
- Telephone Town Halls
- Virtual meetings (Zoom, GoToWebinar, Microsoft Teams)
- Narrated PowerPoint with closed captioning
- ADA transcribers
- Electronic comment forms
- Advertising (radio, print, digital)

Barriers:

- Level of comfort with technology/learning curve varies from region to region so something that works in one region may not in another.
- Had to alternate survey options because MetroQuest did not meet ADA accessibility needs.
- Some tools are not as mobile-friendly.
- Hard to reply to comments when they are submitted through a survey – you lose the reciprocal back and forth opportunity.
- Making sure people can log in to virtual meetings, have a strong enough connection, etc.
- Some firewall issues with vendors. Worked through it with IT.
- Not all staff have laptops and had to borrow equipment.

VPI Guidebook

- Introduction to Virtual Public Involvement
- Lessons Learned and Best Practices
- VPI in Practice: Choosing the Right Tools
- Virtual Meetings 101
- Accessibility and VPI Best Practices
- Resources
- VPI Tool Comparison Matrix
- https://bit.ly/VPIGuide

Category/Cost	Use	Tool	Selection Criteria	Production Time	Learning Curve	Synchronous or Asynchronous*	Notes
Comprehensive VPI Platform $$$$	Managing stakeholder interactions and correspondence across all projects	Initial deployment	Deploys a comprehensive management approach to manage, track and document VPI efforts using a department-wide platform such as PIMA	4 weeks	Intermediate	Asynchronous	Deploy once. Can use on many projects (single source of truth for stakeholder interactions). Includes: test and production deployment environments configured/branded for MDOT; initial project setup, testing and dry run of 1 online meeting; training for MDOT staff on how use access and use
		Support, maintenance		n/a	n/a		
Virtual Reality Spaces $$$	Virtual equivalent to open houses, public meetings, project offices, community information centers	VR template, small space	As a single project application, consider using for large complex corridor projects that will have numerous engagement points or are presenting new concepts to a community	2 weeks	Advanced	Asynchronous	Template created for small space, up to 6 interactions. Can be further customized per project event using a single, small-space template. Does not include the development of content at each interaction station
		VR template, large space		3 weeks			Template created for large space, up to 10 interactions. Can be further customized per project event using this template. Does not include the development of content at each interaction station
		Small-space customization (per event)		1 week			Update template to include project-specific content
		Large-space customization (per event)		<2 weeks			Update template to include project-specific content
Static Online Meetings $	Open houses, public meetings at which live presentation is not required	Pre-recorded streaming video	Traditional format that has been widely used by many stakeholders throughout Michigan. Likely to be a familiar format to local communities	<2 weeks	Easy	Asynchronous	Great for creating a linear narrative that viewers can play and watch all the way through. Typically developed as a screen-recorded PowerPoint with voiceover; different format options available for streaming, but YouTube is recommended. Assumes most content is already developed, such as proje narrative, exhibits, mapping data, etc. Capture attendance and comments through PIMA, when integrated with the video as an online meeting
		StoryMaps					Great for creating a non-linear story, allowing viewers to jump to sections of content in which they are most interested. Can include embedded video rich text, graphics and PDF links, as well as interactive maps. Assumes most content is already developed, such as project narrative, exhibits, mappin data, etc. Capture attendance and comments through PIMA, when integrated with the video as an online meeting
Live Virtual Meetings $	Public meetings, public hearings, or advisory group sessions where being live is required; assumes baseline presentation materials established would be in place before meeting	YouTube Live	MDOT has a YouTube channel through which a meeting can be livestreamed or posted on the web for later viewing. Comments can be turned on or off; if turned on, then must respond – either during the live event or later if meeting is posted on the web	1 week	Easy	Synchronous	Can be streamed through a comprehensive platform such as PIMA online live meeting, and all attendees and comments are stored and responded to for reporting
		WebEx/ Microsoft Teams	MDOT's Microsoft Teams limits the ability to include an external group due to organizational security that blocks other VPNs		Intermediate		For live public meetings, WebEx can be streamed through PIMA, capturing participants and comments; Teams cannot (currently). If no storage for attendance or comments is needed, can use WebEx or Teams as a private, smaller event to share project status updates or advisory group meetings
		Zoom	Includes accessibility enhancements but some may need to be purchased as add-ons				If no storage needed during meeting for attendance or comments, this option is quite simple for anyone to join. Includes the option for breakout "room
Telephone Town Hall $-$$	Work well when Internet access is limited or when trying to engage people who do not use the Internet. Cost for these services vary	Broadnet	Recommend for only audio-only events. Dial out to registered list to ensure they get a call	1 month	Intermediate	Synchronous	Works best when using only audio component. When adding "access live" video, becomes overly complex and does not work well for comment perio
		Zoom/ Microsoft Teams/ WebEx	Can use these platforms and opt to not turn video portion on	1 week			May include additional fees that can be explored for toll free numbers and dial-out
Online Surveys $-$$$	Useful for collecting Title VI data and/or project comments or preferences; tools can vary in cost and use	Survey Monkey	ADA-friendly and good for Title VI data collection	2 weeks	Intermediate	Asynchronous	Preferably integrated with a PI management system to relate survey participation with other stakeholder metrics time is variable depending on the length of the survey and testing or iteration that may be required. Shorter surveys can take as few as 40 hours, while more complex surveys might require more than 100 hours
		ArcGIS Survey123	Very mobile-friendly				
		Metro Quest	Use with statewide or large projects. Great for reaching commuters and younger age groups on purpose and need and alternatives selection. Does not work well with iPad or certain mobile devices. Need backup survey or fillable PDF for enhanced accessibility. After survey is live, it cannot be edited or changed; plan for extra time to develop content, review	4 weeks	Advanced		Typically contained within its own platform and not integrated with other PI management systems. Shorter surveys can take as few as 80 hours, whil more complex surveys might require more than 160 hours
Project Web Presence $-$$$	Project website should be the hub for public involvement. Many other VPI tools can be added to the project website, clearly communicating the pathways for public engagement	Single webpage template	Update and inform large groups and individuals. Repository of all project information	<2 weeks	Easy	Asynchronous	
		Single webpage		<1 week			Hosting through CloudAccess using Joomla as the content management system or CMS. Additional hours may be required to support custom graphi branding, and logos. Content is the responsibility of the PI/communication team and not included in this estimate
		5-page Website		<3 weeks	Intermediate		Hosting through CloudAccess using Joomla as the CMS. Additional hours may be required to support custom graphics, branding and logos. Content i the responsibility of the PI/Communication Team and is not included in this estimate
		Web Domain		<1 week	n/a		IF NOT USING CLIENT PROCURED OR OTHER EXISTING DOMAIN: Procure URL through GoDaddy.com
		SSL Certificate					
Fillable Comment Form	Document with several options for submission. Can be emailed or printed and mailed. It can contain open-ended survey questions	Microsoft Word	Offers a structure for comments and questions. Can be used to develop a project contact list while obtaining input. Can be used as basis for Q&A document or website	n/a	Easy	Asynchronous	
		Adobe PDF					
Narrated Presentation	This is a great tool for sharing project updates. The presentation can be saved as a video and added to the project website; availability of the video can be communicated through social media and shared in a news release	Microsoft PowerPoint	Project and construction updates	<1 day	Easy	Asynchronous	Make sure to turn on closed captions.
Social Media -$$	Use MDOT social media channels to share in coordination with other strategies for increasing participation and awareness. Share meeting notices in advance and day-of on social media channels. Useful for quick and immediate information sharing	Facebook	Recommend using all for greater engagement	n/a	Easy	Asynchronous	No cost; however, costs can be incurred if conducting paid advertising to reach a broader audience in targeted area
		Instagram					
		Twitter					
Public Access Cable TV -$$	Meeting recordings, videos, and/or narrated PowerPoint presentations can be broadcast	n/a	Great strategy to use in coordination with other tools. Internet connection is not needed	Depends on broadcasting	Depends on broadcasting	Asynchronous	Easy to moderate
Drive-In Meetings $-$$	Identify a location with strong Wi-Fi and designate it as a place for people to park and log into a virtual meeting. This strategy can be used to distribute information and for in-person meetings if sound and presentation equipment is available	n/a	Excellent alternative to virtual meetings in areas with limited Internet access	1 week	Easy	Synchronous	

Next Steps – VPI Phase II Project

Community Profiles

- Using project data and census data profiles provide a qualitative narrative for the reach of the project.
- Analysis of who the project reached and their:
  - Age
  - Ethnic/racial make up
  - Residents
  - Commuters
  - Level of participation

Equity Focus

- Developing a methodology for what type of demographic data should be collected for future VPI/hybrid projects.
- A prototype equity dashboard is under development, and a technical memorandum developed that will lay out the next steps including data to seek for future engagement opportunities.

M-28 RECONSTRUCTION, MUNISING, MI

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Rebuild and resurface M-28 in Munising in Alger County, located within three Census tracts, construct a shared-use pathway, and conduct utility and streetscape improvements.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Virtual Public Involvement tools used included a project webpage, livestreamed public meetings, a slideshow posted on Twitter, an online survey, social media posts, news releases, emails, links shared by stakeholder organizations, and a project I-800 phone line.

The M-28 Munising Virtual Public Involvement pilot program coupled in-person engagement with virtual involvement opportunities. The in-person public meeting in July 2019 was attended by 78 people, 11 of whom signed the Title VI survey, and seven of whom provided written comments. That meeting was accompanied by a livestream, but some users had difficulty connecting.

The project also utilized an online survey, which was taken by 90 respondents. Overall, the project received 97 responses.

For the purpose of this analysis, the project area is defined by the limits of construction within three Census tracts.

84% OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS WERE WHITE

84% OF THE PROJECT AREA IS WHITE

PROJECT PARTICIPATION

PROJECT AREA DEMOGRAPHICS

TOTAL POPULATION: 9,151

AGE:
- 4% <5
- 12% 5-17
- 60% 18-64
- 25% 65+

RACE:
- 84% White
- 8% Black
- 4% Indian/ Alaskan
- 3% 2+ Races
- 1.6% Hispanic/ Latino
- 0.1% Asian

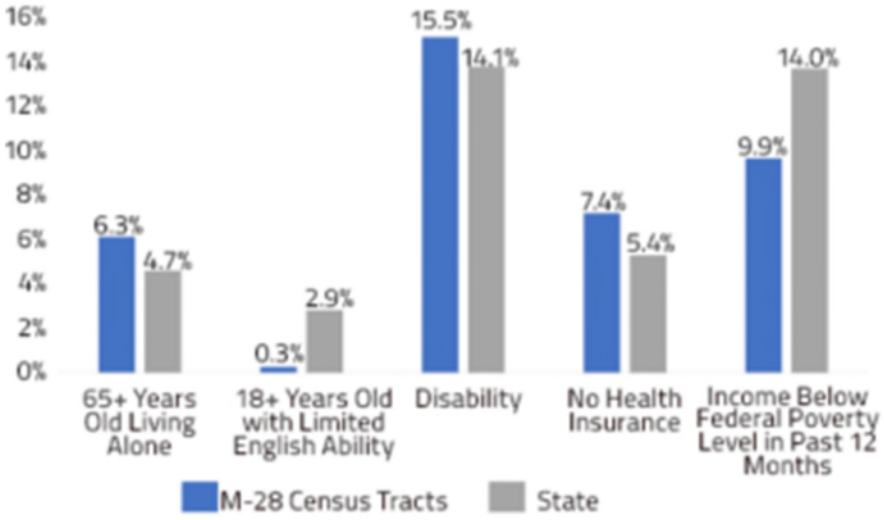
HOUSEHOLDS:

46% HAVE NO SMARTPHONE

20% HAVE NO INTERNET ACCESS

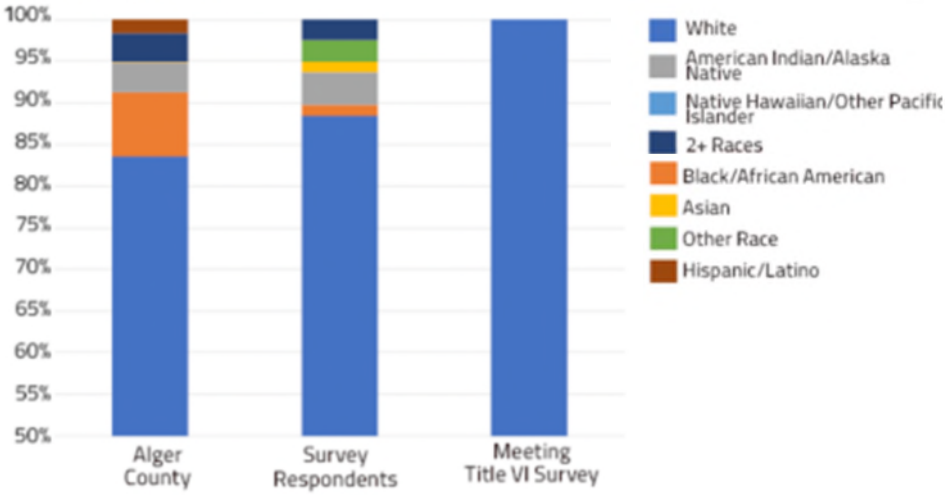
6% HAVE NO VEHICLE AVAILABLE

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS



Sources: American Community Survey (2016-2020) and MDOT (2021).

RACE AND ETHNICITY



MDOT HNTB

MICHIGAN MOBILITY 2045 PLAN

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Create the Michigan Mobility 2045 (MM2045) 25-year state transportation plan, including the State Rail and Freight Plans.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Virtual Public Involvement and traditional engagement tools used included a project webpage and website, public meetings, virtual workshops, presentations, online, mailed, and telephone surveys, telephone town hall meetings, social media posts and advertisements, news releases, links shared by stakeholder organizations, and the ability to comment online, via email and mail, and using social media.

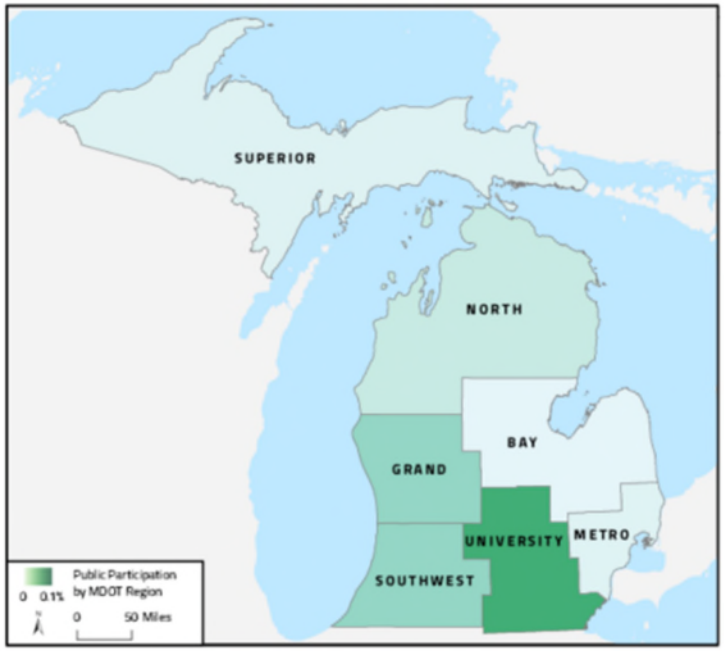
The MM2045 Virtual Public Involvement program coupled in-person engagement with virtual involvement opportunities. There were 1.2 million touchpoints with the public made during Phase I alone.

The surveys received 9,237 responses. 6,352 people participated in the telephone town halls. 10,848 people visited the project website. Over 550 people participated in various types of public meetings. More than 1,800 comments were received during the process.

12% OF THE AUGUST AND OCTOBER 2021 TITLE VI WERE MINORITIES

25% OF THE STATE IS A MINORITY

PROJECT PARTICIPATION MAP



STATE DEMOGRAPHICS

TOTAL POPULATION: 9,965,265

AGE:
- 6% <5
- 16% 5-17
- 61% 18-64
- 17% 65+

RACE:
- 75% White
- 14% Black
- 5% Hispanic/ Latino
- 3% Asian
- 2.5% 2+ Races
- 0.5% Indian/ Alaskan
- 0.1% Other

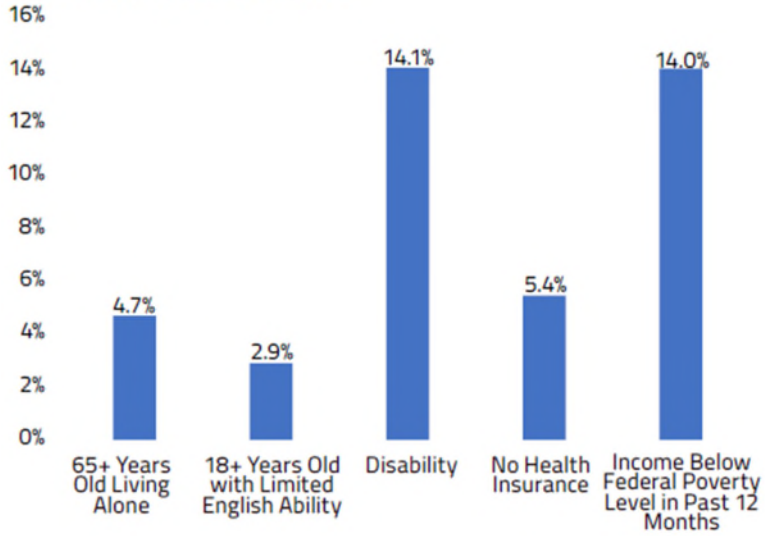
HOUSEHOLDS:

22% HAVE NO SMARTPHONE

15% HAVE NO INTERNET ACCESS

8% HAVE NO VEHICLE AVAILABLE

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS



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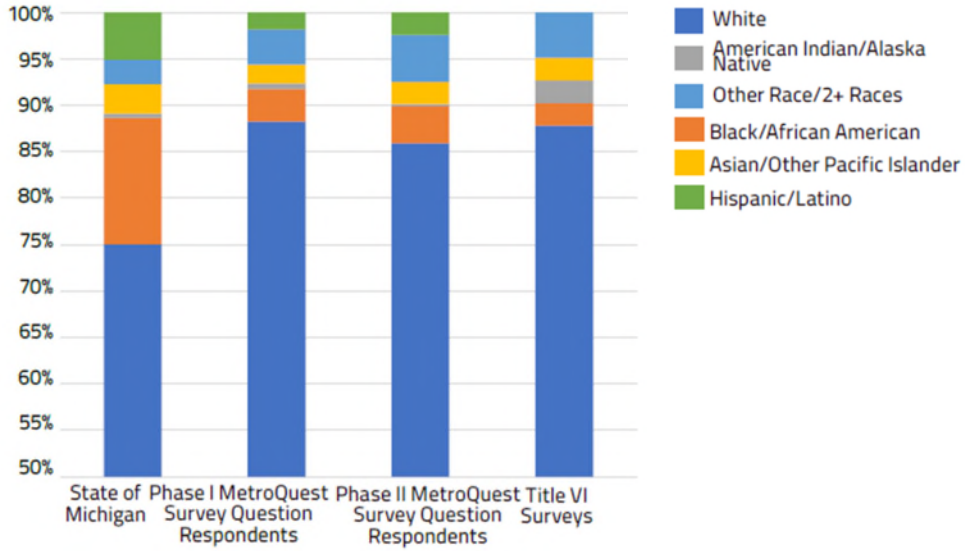
RACE AND ETHNICITY

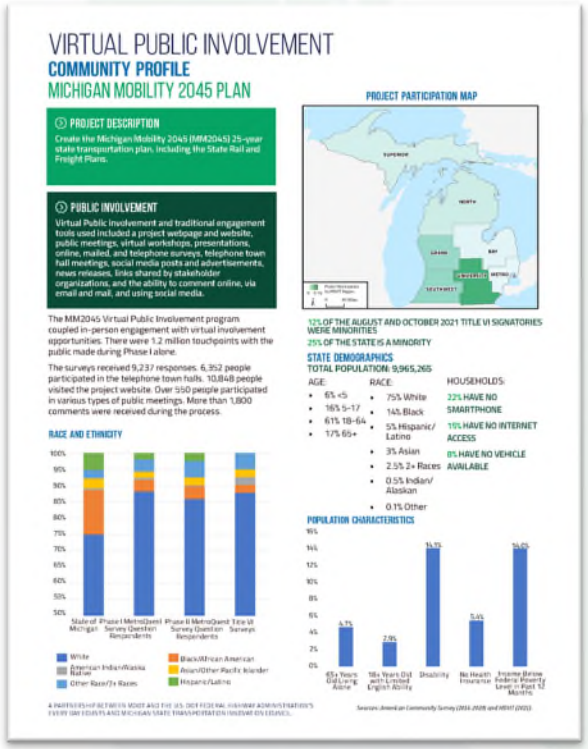


MDOT HNTB

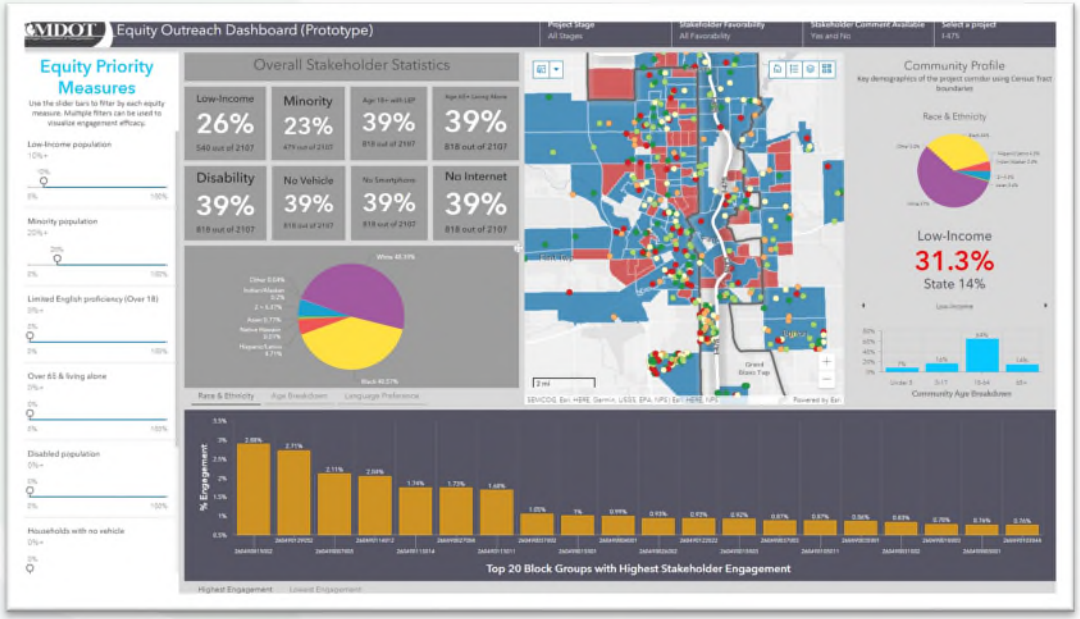
Overview

Community Profiles were created to capture VPI outreach efforts and evaluate if the efforts were successful in capturing participants representative of the project area. The profiles set up a methodology for what type of demographic data should be collected to assess against stakeholder data on a project **(EDC-6)**

VPI Pilot Project Partnerships led to the deployment of VPI tools on projects for analysis. The output of these efforts was captured in the **VPI Guidebook (EDC-5 STIC Grant)**



An **Equity Outreach Dashboard Prototype and Technical Memorandum** were developed to create a tool that pulls the demographic data methodology and stakeholder data together for a clear understanding of outreach efforts in real-time **(EDC-6)**



MDOT HNTB

Equity Outreach Dashboard (EOD)

- Goal: Establish a dynamic, data-driven process that is transparent, accurate, and functional to target and better inform outreach strategies.
- Purpose: Create a dashboard that overlays real-time/current engagement information collected with Census data at a block group level to assess the state of current outreach against project equity measures and adjust future outreach strategies to target specific communities that are lacking.
- Solution should:
  - Be transparent and easily understandable.
  - Use accurate data.
  - Be functional with ease of filtering, sorting, and usability.

Equity Outreach Dashboard

A. Dynamic project-specific filtering

B. Dynamic stakeholder filtering

C. Equity priority measures

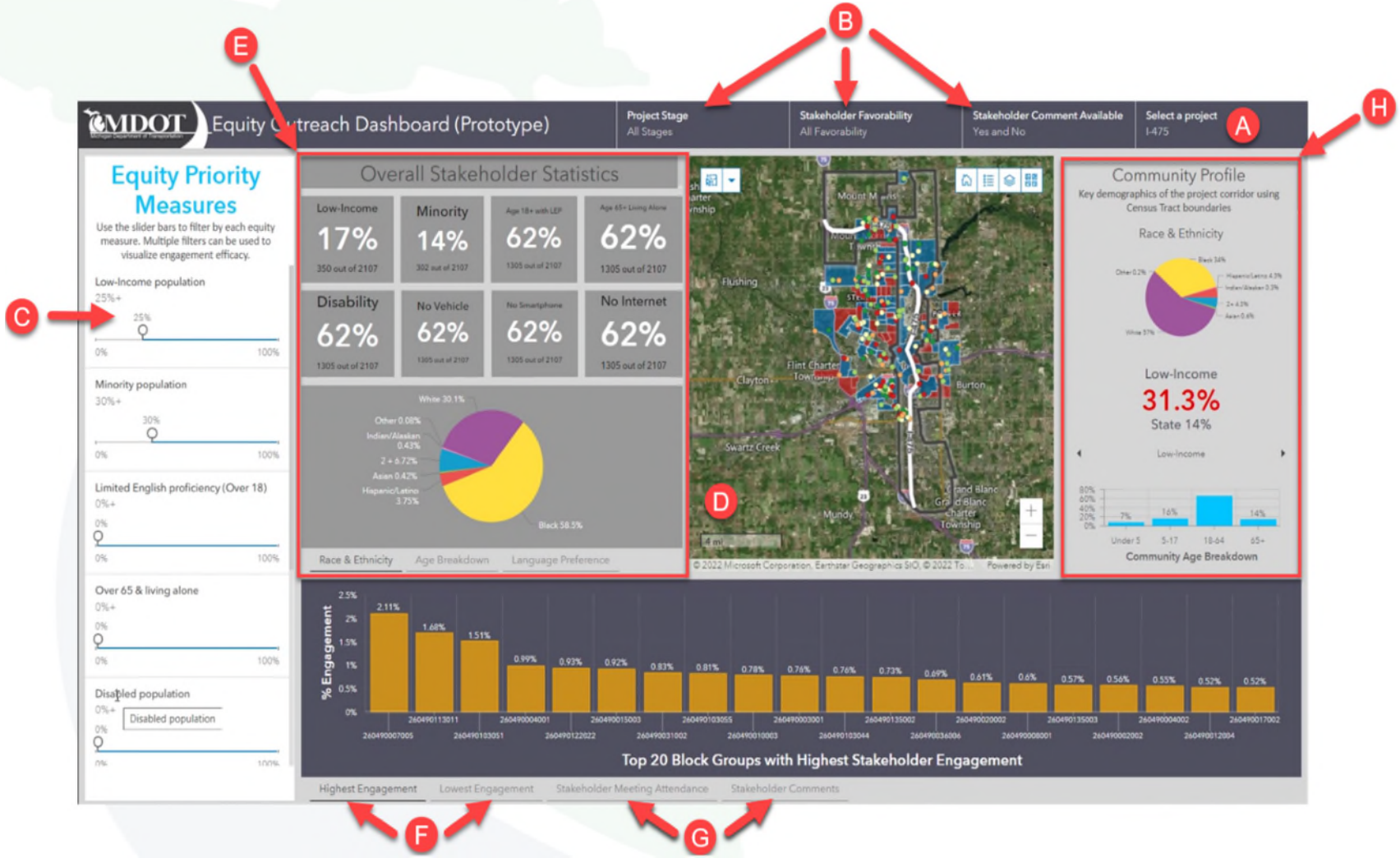
D. Interactive map capabilities (compatible with ArcGIS)

E. Area stakeholder statistics

F. Top 20 highest and lowest engaged stakeholders by block group

G. Stakeholder comments and meeting timeline

H. Community profile



Equity Outreach Dashboard (Prototype)

Project Stage	Stakeholder Favorability	Stakeholder Comment Available	Select a project
All Stages	All Favorability	Yes and No	I-475

Equity Priority Measures

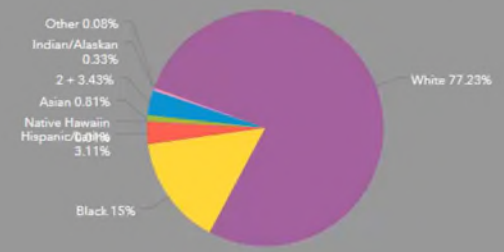
Use the slider bars to filter by each equity measure. Multiple filters can be used to visualize engagement efficacy.

- Low-Income population 0%+ (0% – 100%)
- Minority population 0%+ (0% – 100%)
- Limited English proficiency (Over 18) 0%+ (0% – 100%)
- Over 65 & living alone 0%+ (0% – 100%)
- Disabled population 0%+ (0% – 100%)
- Households with no vehicle 0%+ (0% – 100%)

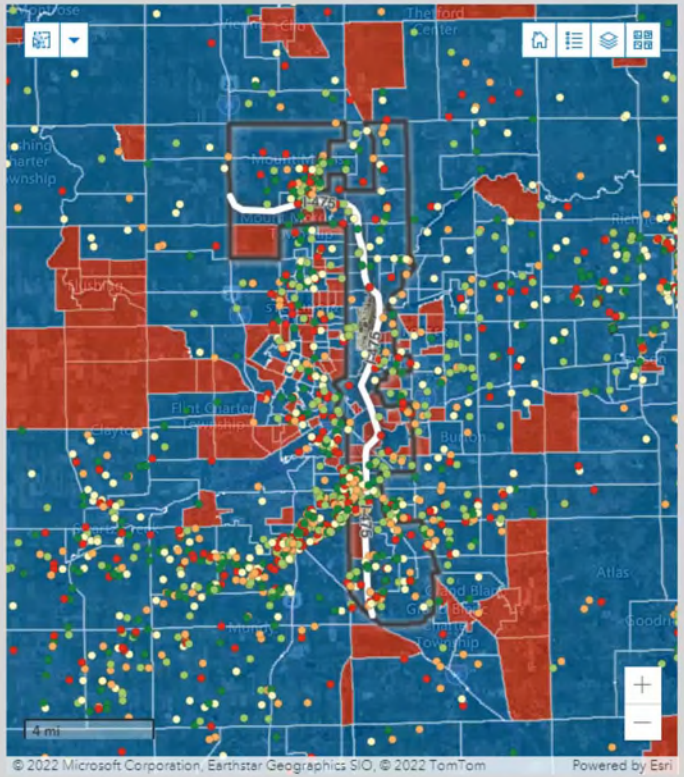
Overall Stakeholder Statistics

Low-Income	Minority	Age 18+ with LEP	Age 65+ Living Alone
72%	72%	72%	72%
1522 out of 2107	1522 out of 2107	1522 out of 2107	1522 out of 2107

Disability	No Vehicle	No Smartphone	No Internet
72%	72%	72%	72%
1522 out of 2107	1522 out of 2107	1522 out of 2107	1522 out of 2107



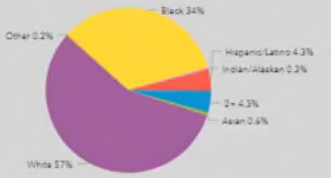
Race & Ethnicity | Age Breakdown | Language Preference



Community Profile

Key demographics of the project corridor using Census Tract boundaries

Race & Ethnicity

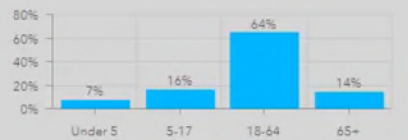


Low-Income

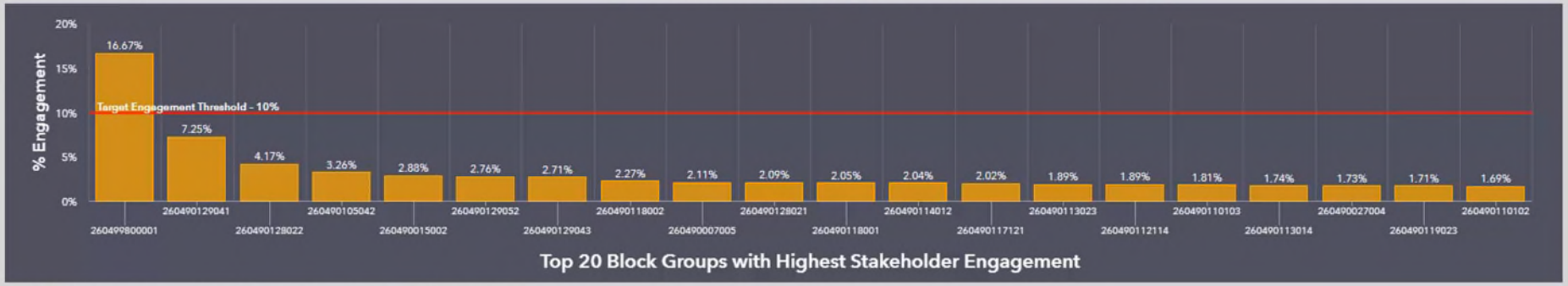
31.3%

State 14%

Low-Income



Community Age Breakdown



Top 20 Block Groups with Highest Stakeholder Engagement

Highest Engagement | Lowest Engagement | Stakeholder Meeting Attendance | Stakeholder Comments

Development of VPI Software

MDOT is participating in a Lean Process Improvement to identify requirements procure virtual public involvement software.

Software aims to:

- Integrate VPI components, including map-based commenting, virtual and hybrid meeting capability, and digital communications into one platform
- Increase meaningful feedback from all groups, including people who don't have internet access, and increase ADA accessibility
- Improve processes for managing public involvement and increasing efficiency

THANK YOU!

Pilot Project Champions

- Nick Hutchinson, City of Ann Arbor
- Kari Martin, MDOT
- Dan Weingarten, MDOT
- Jon Loree, MDOT
- Nick Jasinski, MDOT
- Brad Sharlow, MDOT

Contributors

- Margaret Barondess, MDOT
- Ruth Clark, MDOT
- Orlando Curry, MDOT
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- Andrea Dewey, FHWA
- Ruth Hepfer, FHWA
- Dana Reinke, FHWA
- SEMCOG
- GVMC

Partners

- FHWA
- EDC-5 and EDC-6
- State Transportation Innovation Council (STIC)

QUESTIONS?