

CLIENT

Delaware Valley Regional
Planning Commission (DVRPC)

DATES

June 2024 - July 2026

REFERENCE

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Participation Planning,
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BUDGET

\$150,000 (\$75,00 per cycle)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Connect the Dots (CtD) supported outreach and engagement for DVRPC's Supporting Communities program during Tier 1 over two cycles of their three-tier initiative. CtD helped DVRPC build relationships with municipalities across DVRPC's nine-county region, introducing them to the program and identifying transportation or infrastructure needs, particularly those impacting disadvantaged populations. DVRPC further developed opportunities with their technical expertise to recommend tailored solutions.

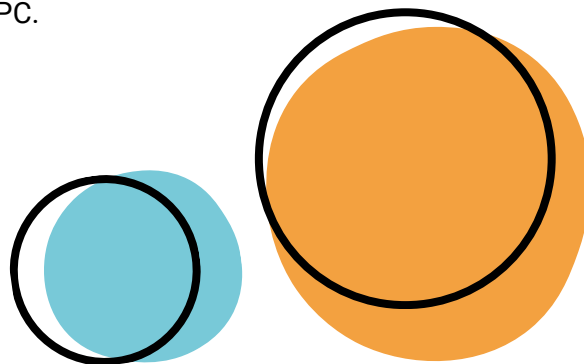
If municipalities expressed interest in specific projects or opportunities where public engagement was needed, CtD created an engagement strategy specific to that municipality's needs or designed and facilitated activities for public input and information-sharing. These efforts helped municipalities gather the data and support necessary to access DVRPC's technical resources.

Contact with 7 municipalities represented 4 of the 9 counties within DVRPC's region in both Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

SERVICES PERFORMED

Key responsibilities for CtD included:

- Establishing relationships and introducing municipalities to the program through email and phone call outreach.
- Conducting Phase 0 research, conversations, workshops, or activities to identify opportunities for engagement and outreach support and inform an Engagement Plan designed for the needs of the municipality.
- Designing and facilitating engagement efforts to collect data for municipal projects where municipalities could conduct activities on their own, or be conducted by CtD.
- Providing research and outreach support for the launch of the Municipal Help Desk, DVRPC's support system for municipalities to request help from DVRPC.



PROJECT OUTCOMES

Outcomes:

- Assistance offered to the municipalities included:
 - Facilitation of virtual sessions to discover needs for access to data, resources, or engagement support;
 - Site visits to learn more about potential projects;
 - Attendance at in-person committee or town hall events to present information and gather input from committee members or the public;
 - Design and delivery of outreach and engagement tools to be used by the municipalities for engagement; and
 - Design of engagement strategies to be further implemented by the municipalities
- For ongoing support through the Supporting Communities program, CtD designed evergreen materials in a Toolbox to be shared by DVRPC with municipalities as needs become evident. The Toolbox Guides cover these topics:

◦ Public Engagement 101	◦ Interviews
◦ Accessibility and Accessible Design	◦ Focus Groups
◦ Social Media	◦ Pop-Ups
◦ Surveys	◦ Mitigating Conflict

Insights and Implications:

Working with multiple municipalities revealed common challenges driven by limited capacity and resources.

- **Outreach:** Repeated outreach and clear examples of benefits helped establish connections and demonstrate value.
- **Municipal Involvement:** Plan for limited capacity with clear roles, streamlined reviews, and integration into existing meetings.
- **Timelines:** Build in extra time for decisions, coordination, and implementation.
- **Point of Contact:** A single decision-maker improves coordination and efficiency.
- **Physical Presence:** In-person engagement builds trust, strengthens relationships, and supports local staff.
- **Capacity Building:** Tailor support to municipal needs, from guidance to hands-on staffing.
- **Communications and Tools:** Use familiar platforms (e.g., Microsoft) to reduce technical barriers.

