Public Engagement
Successes & Failures

Missouri Statewide Planning Partner Meeting
January 23, 2020
Who we are

- Douglas County
  - ~ 121,436
- Lawrence
  - ~ 97,286
- Staff of 2 + 2 interns
- Do most work in house
We’ve all been there…
What happened…

- More staff than attendees
- Location, time, and notification really matter
Lessons Learned
Go to the people
Develop pitch besides —
“Do you want to take our survey?”
Survey design
Ask questions people can answer

- Most Public Engagement is Worse than Worthless by Ruben Anderson, August 6, 2018.
- https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/most-public-engagement-is-worse-than-worthless

“I think most public engagement is beyond worthless. I think it actually corrodes the relationships we need in order to build a strong town. Most public engagement, as it is currently conducted, makes our cities worse places.”
Paper vs. Online Surveys

- Safe Routes to School Parent Survey
  - 2014 – paper survey home with all kids – 1,670 responses
  - 2019 – online survey only – 216 responses

- When you don’t have the time/availability to table and directly ask people to take the survey – paper versions may be a better way to receive more responses.
Catch people as they wait in line
Activities besides surveys
I RIDE MY BIKE BECAUSE...
"Fun and EXERCISE!"
My favorite place to be is the Rock Choir pats.

I bike because it's fun!
I like bikes because they are healthy and they help our world!

I'm a bicycle commuter and recreational cyclist. I love the Lawrence Loop & the Lawrence River Trail. I wish there were more designated bike paths within the city.
Biking is important to me because it keeps me in shape and it's less expensive than driving/public transportation and faster than walking.

Why I like to bike...
it's a great way to get outside and enjoy nature.
Priorities for the Region

What do you consider to be the most important priority? Place your dots by a written priority or write a new priority.

To move people
1. Maintain existing roads, sidewalks, and bikeway
2. Maintain travel efficiency
3. Reduce crashes
4. Maximize the capacity of existing infrastructure
5. Reduce travel time
6. Provide healthy, active transportation choices (e.g., biking, walking, etc.)

To create jobs
1. Improve access to future employment centers
2. Improve access to current employment centers
3. Improve truck and rail access to businesses in the region
4. Improve freight access to help businesses to serve larger markets (e.g., log, etc.)

To strengthen neighborhoods
1. Improve safety
2. Minimize neighborhood cut through traffic
3. Provide streets/paths that are comfortable for bicyclists and pedestrians
4. Create better connections to schools, parks, and open space

To protect the environment
1. Protect air quality
2. Minimize impact to habitat and open space
3. Reduce reliance on fossil fuels
4. Protect water quality and resources

1/28/2020
More activities (without pictures)

- 4th graders conducted a walking audit to discuss currently established Safe Routes to School with their PE teacher.
- Rode paratransit vehicles when conducting a survey to administer it and talk to the people about their experience.
Direct mailer (if you have the resources/type of plan which accommodates it)
Provide input on a route to close the gap.
BG Consultants, Inc. on behalf of the City of Lawrence is studying potential alignments for the incomplete sections (shown on the map) of pedestrian and bicycle path to complete the Lawrence Loop.

Provide your input for potential Lawrence Loop alignments at our Open House:
June 12th, 2017
5:30 pm to 7:30 pm
Lawrence Public Library Auditorium
707 Vermont Street

There will be no formal presentation so please feel free come at your convenience between these times. If you are unavailable to attend and wish to provide input please contact David Hamby at (785) 749-4474 x2106.

Visit www.lawrenceks.org/loop for more information.
YOU’RE INVITED!

East 23rd Street Corridor Study Engagement Events

Join us to share your vision for the future of East 23rd Street (Haskell Bridge to O’Connell Road)

Visioning Session | Tuesday, June 25 | 8:00 am - 12:00 pm
Open House | Wednesday, June 26 | 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm
Douglas County Fairgrounds (2120 Harper St) | Flory Meeting Hall

For more information or to take the survey, visit: lawrenceks.org/mpo/23rd-st-corridor-study
When holding an open house – have it at a location people go by doing normal activities. Have staff outside room to draw people in.
Trial and error – try something else

- We are going back to our “Go to the people” motto.
  - Attending Site Councils or Parent Teacher Association/Organization meetings at each of the 14 elementary schools and 4 middle schools
Other good things to have at meetings

- Offer childcare
- Offer bus passes
  - (Offered, but no one requested a bus pass for the SRTS open house.)
- Snacks
  - Apples, granola bars, water, popcorn
Summary

- Go to the people.
- Develop pitch besides – “Do you want to take our survey?”
- Survey design – Make sure to ask people questions they can actually answer. Tablet rather than paper for ease of analysis.
- Catch people as they wait in line.
- Direct mailer (if you have the resources/type of plan which accommodates it).
- Have activities besides surveys.
- When holding an open house – Have it at a location people go by doing normal activities. Have staff outside room to draw people in.
- Trial and error – Try something else.
Public engagement by the numbers

- Transportation 2040 (1.5 year process)
  - 36 Stakeholder Interviews
  - 38 Mobile Meetings
  - 9 Open Houses
  - 1,600+ Survey Responses (2 surveys)

- Lawrence Bikes (1.5 year process)
  - 21 Mobile Meetings
  - 3 Open Houses
  - 1 Guided Bicycle Ride
  - 995 Survey Responses (2 surveys)
Key message –
Good engagement takes time, but it pays off when you have the buy-in to implement the plan.
Thank you!

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https://lawrenceks.org/mpo