Community Engagement

2/2/2021

Where we have been...

- RVAgreen 2050 Overview/Climate Change
- Racial Equity Centered
- Developing a Vision & Equity Framework
- Create a Racial Equity Vision & Framework
- Equitable Community Engagement Overview
- RVAgreen 2050 Engagement Principles
- Develop a community/equity focused engagement strategy for the planning process.

Where we are going next...

- Develop a community/equity focused engagement strategy for the planning process
- Engagement Implementation
- Help craft strategies to meet climate change goals

Spring Schedule

February	March	April	May
Meeting 2/2 (today!) *Solidifying goals and activities for community engagement (including materials and training you might need)* **Meeting 2/16** *Might not need this?*	**Meeting 3/2** *Review draft content from working groups, provide input* **Meeting 3/16** *Finalize content and activities for community engagement*	Community Engagement Phase 2 activities!	**Monthly meetings beginning 5/11 to review and incorporate community input**

⭐ Grant payment #2   ⭐ Grant payment #3

Vision Statement

Vision Statement

Vision: All Richmonders, regardless of their identity or neighborhood, thrive in a climate-resilient and climate-neutral community.

Supporting Principles:
- Community and personal well-being, local ecosystems, and economic vitality are balanced in a truly sustainable Richmond.
- Everyone has equitable access across the entire city to resources that are clean, sustainable, and affordable, including air, water, food, energy, housing, transportation, economic opportunities, and natural resources.
- Everyone has the ability and resources to take ownership of equitable climate action and community resilience planning and implementation.
- "Identity" includes but is not limited to: race, ethnicity, age, ability, gender, sexual orientation, and religion. We lead with race in our work to transform systems impacting all historically disenfranchised communities.

Climate 101:
- Greenhouse Gases - gases in the Earth's atmosphere that trap heat from the Sun (ex. Carbon dioxide CO_2)
- Climate Neutral - all greenhouse gas emissions (ex. Vehicles, building heating/cooling, fossil fuels) are balanced out by greenhouse gas capture infrastructure (ex. Trees, carbon capture, soil)
- Climate Resilience - Coming soon...

Survey Results

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1-Z3ldRwZdVey-xDmaYF5kyy95dTAQiTCt5i_O2Y2Sbs/edit#responses
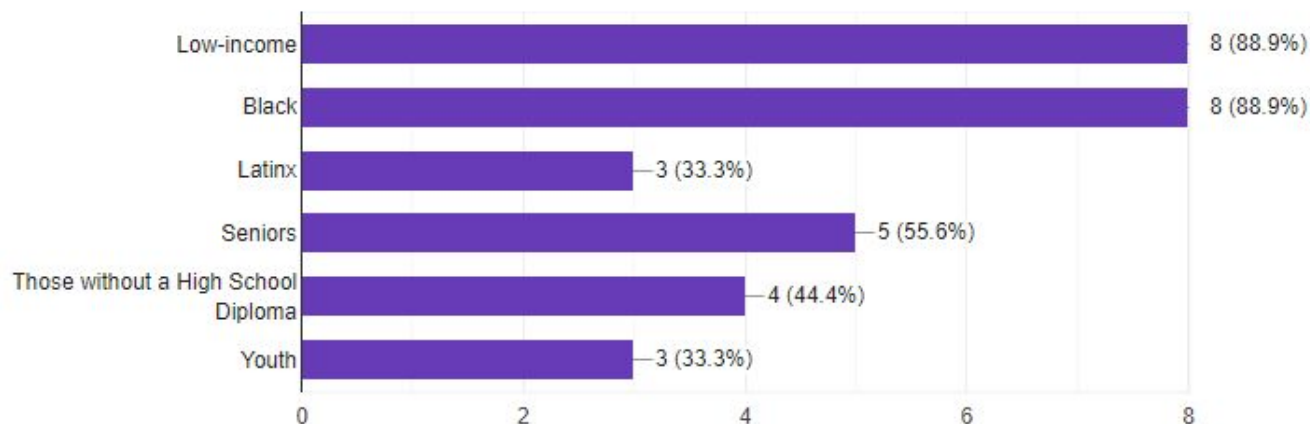
Goals

- 2 engagement activities in April 2021
  - Try to engage 10+ people
- Grow contact list for RVAgreen 2050
  - Send out survey to your network/encourage people to complete

Priority Populations

Which priority populations your you committing to working to reach? Choose at least one
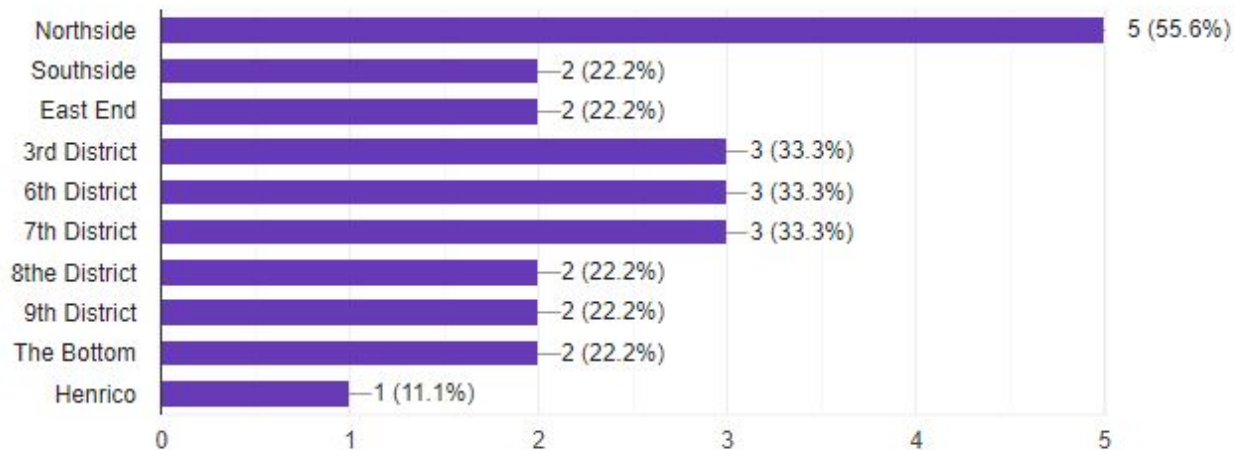
9 responses

Population	Count
Low-income	8 (88.9%)
Black	8 (88.9%)
Latinx	3 (33.3%)
Seniors	5 (55.6%)
Those without a High School Diploma	4 (44.4%)
Youth	3 (33.3%)

Priority Neighborhoods

Which priority geographic locations your you committing to working to reach? Choose at least one (if you do not know the district, please write in the neighborhood or check the area).
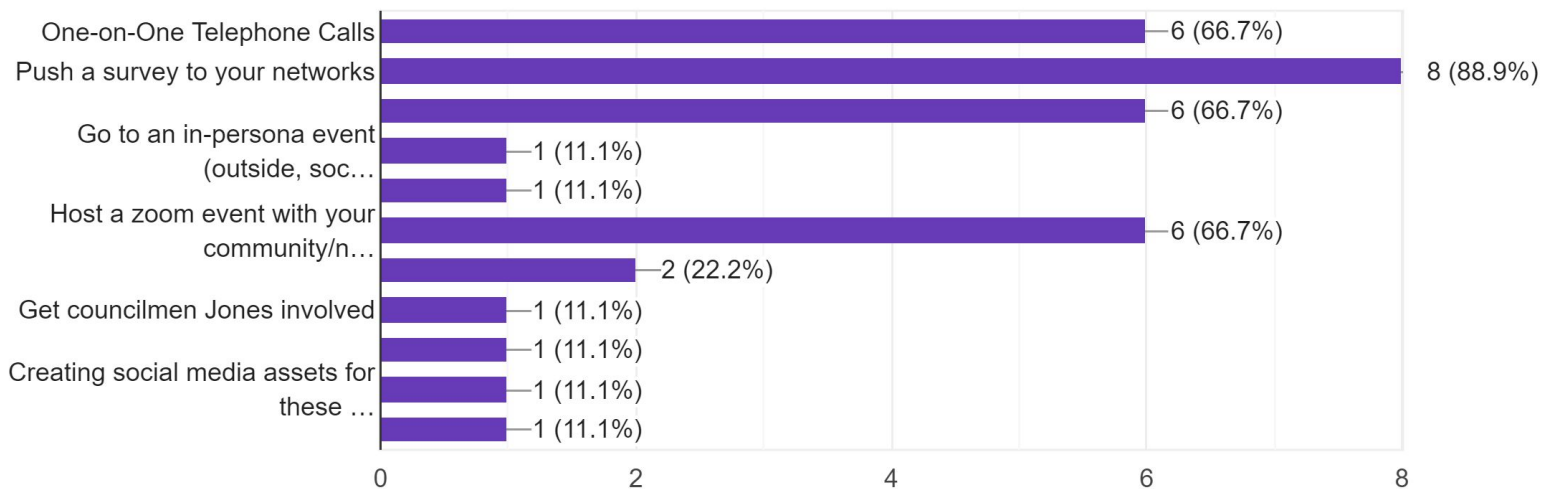
9 responses

Neighborhood	Count
Northside	5 (55.6%)
Southside	2 (22.2%)
East End	2 (22.2%)
3rd District	3 (33.3%)
6th District	3 (33.3%)
7th District	3 (33.3%)
8the District	2 (22.2%)
9th District	2 (22.2%)
The Bottom	2 (22.2%)
Henrico	1 (11.1%)

Gaps

- Southside

Tools & Strategies

What tools or strategies would you use in your engagement?

9 responses

Engagement Materials

- Physical "meeting in a box"
- Virtual "meeting in a box" (Google Hangouts)
- Promotional materials (physical and virtual)
- Frequently Asked Questions sheet
- Stipends/payment/raffles (Roundtable payment)
- Survey

Free Tools

- Zoom (1-on-1)
- Google
  - Hangouts (group presentations/conversations)
  - Slides (presentations)
  - Forms (surveys)
  - Jam Board (feedback)
- Canva (design)
- Social media (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, etc.)

Community Engagement Strategy Examples

Providence Climate Justice Framework

Racial & Environmental Justice Committee members conducted **40 interviews with community members of color** with these questions:

- How do you keep warm in the winter? What do you like about that and what would you change?
- How do you keep cool in the summer? What do you like about that and what would you change?
- How do you get around the city? What is good about that and what would you change?
- What in your community keeps you and/or your family healthy? What do you think makes you or your family sick?

The City also conducted a **citywide survey** with similar questions and demographic information, which received **150 responses**.

Project team identified key priorities and concerns, then…

Drafted policies that were responsive to community priorities

Detroit Sustainability Action Agenda

Strategies included:

- 14 hired and trained Sustainability Ambassadors attended neighborhood meetings, conducted interviews, and built interest in the initiative
- Online and paper surveys responses
- CoUrbanize site for feedback
- Focus groups for underrepresented groups - intimate discussions with communities including Arabic-speaking, Spanish-speaking, and faith-based organizations
- "Text Your Feedback" Initiative featured on yard signs

DETROIT SUSTAINABILITY ACTION AGENDA

2019

Other examples

- A Baltimore planning process asked its main group of citizen advisors to each engage a **"circle of ten"** other residents in the process

- *Have you seen other successful examples of community engagement?*

Keep in mind...

- Maintain health and safety
- Quality over quantity
- We know COVID throws a huge wrench into things, but you are still helping us reach people we normally might not!

Input Needed: Seven Questions

Community Priorities

- Racial Equity & Environmental Justice - 1
- Engagement & Communication- 1
- Government & Accountability - 2
- Community Wealth-2
- Housing & Buildings-3
- Neighborhoods-3
- Health & Well-Being-3

Topics and Questions

- *Looking at this strategy how do you envision this impacting racial equity or environmental justice in the City of Richmond?*
- *After reading through the equity tool, do you see benefit from the tool to reduce racial inequities and environmental injustices in the City of Richmond?*

Racial Equity & Environmental Justice

Richmond's history - whether measured in centuries, decades, years, months, weeks, or days - is fraught with racism. This has created systems that serve our community in inequitable ways, from education and healthcare to government and natural resources. Our Black and African American and Hispanic and Latino communities in particular face more harm due to crises such as climate change and COVID-19.

What does this look like in Richmond? Many of the inequities associated with climate change impacts come down to race and ethnicity. For example, individuals in poverty have fewer resources and receive less support, which reduces their ability to prevent, cope with, and adapt to climate change impacts. Climate change impacts increase the vulnerability of individuals below the poverty level, causing a rise in risks such as physical and mental illnesses, job loss, and decreased food security.

Racial Equity and Environmental Justice

Keep

- This is great info and the "why" as who why were are focusing our strategies.

Change / Add

- I am unsure if this is something that we should lead with, and possibly be more informational if it comes up in conversation.
- How would climate change affect your community?
- Will survey takers need to be given the equitability tool in order to answer the questions?

Topics and Questions

- Increased Black and brown representation
- Equitable time frames
- Improved communication styles
- Show the implementation from previous engagement
- *What has been your experience with government engagement/communications (if any)?*
- *What are your preferred means for government engagement and communication?*

Engagement & Communication

What we heard: The voices of Black and African American, Hispanic and Latino, and lower income residents are underrepresented in public processes for many reasons: time and capacity conflicts with traditional strategies; flawed communication and language; and, lack of trust and burnout from participating in past efforts that have seen limited results.

What does this look like in Richmond? Climate change affects some members of our community more than others. Due to historic and institutional racism, people of color are more likely to live in more marginal and exposed areas that are more susceptible to climate impacts. These community members are further marginalized in traditional public planning processes.

The Office of Sustainability developed the RVAgreen 2050 Climate Equity Index to identify the communities in Richmond that are on the frontlines of crises such as climate change and are purposefully reaching out to these communities to engage them in our process.

Engagement & Communication

Keep

- Improved communication styles
- Increased Black and brown representation

Change / Add

- We need to meet the communitunity where they are to ensure equitable outreach is being conducted.

Topics and Questions

- Include residents in decision making processes
- What are the consequences for lack of compliance.
- Transparency in communication
- Continuous engagement/education of programs and initiatives
- *What would you like to see from the government that will show you and your community that they are accountable to RVAgreen 2050?*

Government Accountability

What we heard: Residents want to be involved and informed during decision making processes. We need open and honest communication between the City of Richmond and the community in order to build trust. The City should keep the community informed of progress on initiatives and follow through with its promises. Tailored and trusted avenues of communication are key to dealing with the climate crisis.

What does this look like in Richmond? Many voices are missing from traditional public planning processes, especially those of Black and African American, Hispanic and Latino, and lower-income residents. These same communities are facing disproportionate impacts due to climate change.

There are many ways for Richmonders to get involved in planning processes like RVAgreen 2050 and city government in general. Find your City Council district or see if there is a civic group in your neighborhood (*right*).

Government Accountability

Keep

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Change / Add

- What are the consequences for lack of compliance.
- Continuous engagement/education of programs and initiatives (What does this look like?
- More centralized process / streamline this website process
- Integration between state and local funding sources.

Topics and Questions

- Access to business development technical assistance, capital and jobs
- Job wrap-around services
- Living wages
- Improved education
- Improved transportation
- Industry accountability
- *How would available green job assistance impact you or your community?*

Community Wealth

What we heard: Richmond residents want improved access to jobs, including transportation access. Residents indicated the need for wrap-around services that provide improved education, job training, job retention, and living wages. The City and community should work together to increase the wealth of Richmond residents. This includes enhancing access to well-paying and sustainable jobs, quality education, and strategies for saving money and building wealth.

What does this look like in Richmond? A 2016 Brookings Institution study found that the average U.S. net worth of a typical white family ($171,000) is nearly ten times greater than that of a Black family ($17,150). This wealth gap reflects historic and current racism in systems that affect access to property, jobs, and other financial resources. Communities on the frontlines of climate change will use a greater proportion of their resources to deal with impacts to their health, safety, and shelter, among other basic necessities.

A 2017 Greater Washington Partnership report showed that only 2% of jobs in the Richmond region are accessible by transit within a 40-minute commute. Nearly 90% of jobs are accessible by car within a 40-minute commute, but many Richmond households do not have access to a vehicle, especially those in neighborhoods with higher proportions of Black and African American and Hispanic and Latino residents.

At the same time, we are seeing an increase in greenhouse gas emissions caused by transportation in Richmond over the last few years. As jobs move further away from where people live, driving and therefore transportation pollution will increase.

Community Wealth

Keep

- All

Change / Add

- Access to business development technical assistance, capital and jobs
- Job wrap-around services
- Living wages
- Improved education
- Improved transportation
- Industry accountability
- *How would available green job assistance impact you or your community?*
- *Every household has internet*
-

Topics and Questions

- Affordable housing
- Displacement
- *How does housing/rental costs impact your ability to pay for other household necessities/bills?*
- *Would you expect to see an impact in your bills if you sustainability infrastructure such as (native plant yards, permeable walkways, solar panels, etc.)? Would this change help your household or community?*

Housing & Buildings

What we heard: Residents are wary of developments that reduce access to affordable housing across the city. Richmond's residents are concerned at being priced out of the city due to increased housing demand and developments. Richmond's buildings should be safe and affordable, which includes energy efficiency and cost-saving strategies. This includes providing access to clean and affordable housing in various communities.

What does this look like in Richmond? Richmond has one of the highest eviction rates in the country. Eviction leads to a devastating cycle of housing and economic instability. Energy burden is a contributor to Richmond's high eviction rate. **Energy burden** represents the percentage of annual income that a household or individual pays towards their energy. A household is considered in "high burden" if they spend more than 6% of their annual income on energy bills - Richmond's average energy burden is 8.47%.

Many households in Richmond lack central air conditioning, which can pose health risks with increasing extreme heat events caused by climate change. In addition, these households may be spending more on electricity bills if they use window or portable air conditioning units. As we continue to experience more dangerous heat, households may be forced to choose between staying safe by using air conditioning and running a high energy bill or being able to pay their monthly rent.

Housing & Buildings

Keep

- all

Change / Add

- What incentives would be helpful to help you transfer to having a centralized air conditioning system?
- Consider - if there are energy cost alleviating programs that the city offers. If there are ask --- are you familiar with the programs the city has to offer to alleviate energy burdens
- Would love to know how people would like to keep cool in the summer.
  - Just indoor AC? Central air?
  - Community centers? Pools?
  - Neighborhood green space like parks with trees?
- What questions do you have about alternative energy?

Topics and Questions

- Litter
- Increased flooding
- Lack of greenspace
- Pedestrian infrastructure
- *Does your neighborhood provide a variety of transportation options (biking, walking, public transportation) in and out of the neighborhood to your destinations?*
- *Do you have access to public green spaces? If so, do they meet your needs and expectations?*

Neighborhoods

What we heard: Richmonders want to live in safe and beautiful neighborhoods. Residents are concerned about issues such as increased littering, increased flooding, lack of accessible green space, and lack of sidewalks and pedestrian connections in many neighborhoods. Our neighborhoods should promote safety, sustainability, and beauty, and provide access to green space.

What does this look like in Richmond? Nearly 80% of Richmond residents live within a ten-minute walk to a park, but those who do not are commonly living in areas of the city with higher minority and lower-income populations. These same areas have less tree canopy coverage and more paved surfaces, creating a higher heat burden and increasing the risk to health and safety of residents, especially the elderly, children, and those with chronic health conditions, during times of extreme heat. Just 6% of the city's land is used for parks and recreation, compared to the national median of 15%.

Neighborhoods

Keep

- all

Change / Add

- What alternatives have you seen to mitigate litter in the community? (love this -LTJ)
  - Have they been successful? Why or why not?
- Another infrastructure (what areas do you notice tend to flood the most?)
- Litter might be another infrastructure issue (lack of public trash cans, etc)
- Pedestrian infrastructure - do you feel safe using what is available? If not, what changes should be made?
- Lack of greenspace would you know how to operate the green space if it was available?
- Providing examples for greenspace.

Topics and Questions

- Food access
- Water and air quality
- Mental health awareness and access
- Physical health awareness and access
- Violence
- *How has your access (or lack of access) to mental and physical healthcare impacted your health?*
- *Is your neighborhood structured in a way to promote improved mental and physical health for you and your family?*

Health & Well-Being

What we heard: Residents are concerned with water and air quality, violence, food access, and the impact these issues have on mental and physical health. They want more facilities and services to support better health including green spaces, bike and pedestrian infrastructure, and grocery stores.

What does this look like in Richmond? Many of Richmond's neighborhoods face multiple inequities related to health, safety, and climate change. For example, some communities with higher rates of chronic illnesses such as asthma are also in areas that get hotter than others during heat waves (urban heat islands). Asthma can increase a person's risk of illness during an extreme heat event, and climate change is making these events happen more frequently. Climate change is also accelerating existing social instability due to factors such as increased crime and reduced food access.

Health & Well-Being

Keep

- All
-

Change / Add

- Need something like "where do you buy groceries/how close is the nearest grocery store?" to address food access directly
- "Violence" should have very specific questions attached just to ensure there isn't any unintended extrapolation (by facilitators or participants) that skews results
- Do people know how a "healthy" neighborhood is structured? Should we be more clear about what we mean when we ask if their neighborhood promotes mental and physical health?
- How would you prefer to access your food i.e. personal garden, community garden, grocery store, stores that sell local food, local stores (bodegas)
- How would you like to know that the air and water quality is safe?

Next Steps

- Next Meeting - February 15th (?)
- March 2nd & March 16th
- April Engagement Phase 2