



# PLANRVA RICHMOND, VA

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PlanRVA was poised to launch development of the regional transportation plan, ConnectRVA2045, when 2020 became a much different year than expected. Not only did COVID-19 require a complete redo of planned community based public engagement, the Richmond area was also the scene of intense social unrest after the killing of George Floyd. PlanRVA's Title VI compliance activities were also reviewed in 2020 and the agency was notified of a requirement to update its [Title VI Plan](#) to comply with regulations. Around this time funding was received from a grant given by the [Community Foundation for a greater Richmond](#) that was used to develop an Equitable Community Engagement Strategy in partnership with [AvidCore](#). The Strategy represents PlanRVA's commitment to placing equity at the center of community outreach efforts and decision making. An on-call bench of consultants was identified to assist PlanRVA in implementing the strategy and to fulfill other communications and public outreach needs, which also included development of a new social media and media outreach guide and establishment of a new a full time Community Engagement Manager position which was filled in November, 2021.

PlanRVA is working to change the status quo within the organization. Hiring decisions are being made with emphasis on selection based on lived experience as well as education and training. PlanRVA is working to change the status quo within the organization. Staff Lunch and Learn sessions and other training opportunities have been organized to increase employee engagement on topics such as Race, Equity, and Mindfulness, and purchasing decisions are being made with priority given to local,

women and minority owned businesses. Employees are being encouraged to be aware of what 'they and their colleagues are bringing to the table' and surveys have been distributed to increase understanding of conscious and unconscious biases.

PlanRVA continues to work with several consultants who have assisted with a number of the organization's priorities. In preparation for relocating office space and its buildout, it hired consultant Matthew Shapiro of [6 Wheels Consulting](#) to help design an inclusive space for employees and guests, including those with disabilities. PlanRVA is working to develop a curriculum with the [Institute for Engagement & Negotiation](#) to discuss regional history and the history of planning, which would inform their understanding of public engagement, including with tribal nations.

Later this summer, PlanRVA will launch a new Title VI Training Program developed by KLT Group in partnership with the [Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions](#) (VAPDC) and the [Virginia Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations](#) (VAMPO) assuring timely and consistent training and education across the network of state planning organizations in Virginia.

Challenges remain, including building relationships and reputation within the community, especially historically marginalized groups. PlanRVA is working to understand how to best reengage with the public post COVID-19, using digital tools, and reassessing previous methods. They have learned that intentionality takes a lot of time, and funding can be difficult to secure, but are determined not to let these challenges stop this necessary work.

Links:

[Public Engagement Plan](#)

