



PROJECT DETAILS

DIFFICULTY: Hard

COST: \$300,000 - \$500,000

TIMEFRAME: Five (5) Years

DELIVERABLES: Strategy, report, surveys, focus group summaries, etc.

CORE COMPETENCIES:

- Planning
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Transportation Strategies
- Grants Management

RESULTS: An institute that provides communities nationwide technical support and meaningful public involvement to develop innovative strategies to reconnect communities.

PROJECT TEAM

Vision Planning and Consulting
Cadmus (Prime)

CLIENT CONTACT

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Grant Program was established by the US Department of Transportation (DOT) Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and is dedicated to reconnecting communities that were cut off from opportunity and burdened by past transportation infrastructure decisions. The Program funds removing, retrofitting, or mitigating transportation facilities like highways or rail lines that create barriers to mobility, access, or economic development.

PROJECT SUMMARY

VPC was selected to provide technical assistance to help stand up the Reconnecting Communities Institute (RCI). The mission of the RCI is to serve as DOT's center for learning to restore and reconnect communities that have been harmed, isolated, and/or cut off from services and opportunity by transportation infrastructure. The RCI will provide training and technical assistance to build organizational or community capacity in transportation planning, and identify innovative strategies and solutions for reconnecting communities that are bifurcated by transportation infrastructure that create barriers to community wellbeing. Participants include economically disadvantaged communities, including rural and Tribal communities who are RCP program planning grant and capital construction grant recipients and other eligible entities interested in building organizational or community capacity in transportation planning, to advance the restoration/reconnection of communities.

A variety of solutions to reconnect communities will be funded, including projects that best address transportation barriers - highways, and railroad lines replaced with new acreage for parks, housing, and crossings by foot or bicycle, repurposing railroad tracks, removing elevated highways, and reconfiguring highway ramps will be awarded grants.

VPC provides stakeholder engagement and grant related services to State, local, and tribal

governments, community and nonprofit groups, and metropolitan planning organizations who are eligible to apply for funding through the Reconnecting Communities Program (RCP). Participants include economically disadvantaged communities, including rural and Tribal communities. VPC provides capacity building through group and peer-based virtual learning, and one-on-one assistance to participants.

VPC has performed the following tasks for RCP:

- Audience Research - Identifying individuals (such as potential RCI applicants or community reconnection practitioners) that RCI can interview to inform messaging and outreach activities.
- Supporting research to inform the Annual Outreach Plan development by helping identify individuals the RCI team can interview, including contact information/direct connections, and coordination of the interview process as needed.
- Messenger Identification - Identifying organizations and individuals —RCI's Messengers who can be leveraged for RCI outreach activities and who can help RCI cultivate allies, strengthen relationships with its audience, expand the reach of its messages, and increase buy-in from its audience.

VPC is currently involved in the development of an interactive guide to help communities understand and effectively implement community engagement techniques for