

EXPO

EXPERIMENTAL POP-UPS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is Expo?

Expo, or the Experimental Pop-ups program, offers technical assistance to help counties, municipalities, and neighborhood groups test a demonstration, or pop-up, transportation solution in their community. Expo projects are generally less expensive and quicker to build than major capital projects. They are meant to be temporary and gain information on the project's impact and community reception.

The Expo program is run by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, the metropolitan planning organization for the nine counties around Philadelphia in PA and NJ, including Philadelphia, Montgomery, Delaware, Chester, Bucks, Camden, Burlington, Mercer and Gloucester.



The Wheels on Windsor project in Narberth Borough, PA included a two-block bike lane protected using hay bales and traffic cones.

What's an example of a good Expo project?

Generally, a project that is a good fit for the Expo program includes the attributes listed below. There are exceptions to some, but these allow for the project to be executed quickly and with the most success.

- The location has a known problem, including safety issues, lack of pedestrian or bicycle facilities, or lack of character. The problem means that the location doesn't support community goals.
- The problem has been identified by the community through past planning projects or processes or has been otherwise voiced as a concern by the community.
- There is commitment from the county, municipality and/or neighborhood group to dedicate time and financial resources to address the problem with a quicker and lighter approach than a major capital investment.
- The location is not on a state-owned or federal-aid road (DVRPC can assist in this determination).

How much do these projects cost and where does the money come from?

Pop-up projects can vary in cost depending on the size and scope. Consider a protected bicycle lane:

- A two-block protected bicycle lane (similar to an Expo project in Narberth Borough, PA) may only cost a few hundred dollars for paint, stencils, hay bales and informational flyers.
- A mile of bicycle facilities with paint, stencils, street murals, temporary accessible curb ramps and flexible posts at intersections (similar to an Expo project in Collingswood Borough, NJ) may cost about \$8,000 to \$10,000.

A project sponsor, like a municipality or community group, may provide the entire budget. If not, creative approaches like assistance from a public works department or volunteers for installation, donated materials, access to a sign shop, or small grants may cover costs. DVRPC has limited funds to help purchase some project materials, particularly materials that can be reused in other communities once the project is complete.

Planning for pop-up projects takes collaboration and meetings to discuss the design, installation, and project outreach. County and/or municipal staff is typically part of this process; their time coordinating and supporting the effort is an additional cost. Other services, such as sourcing a design from an artist, may be paid for on contract.



I have an idea for a project. How do I start?

There is no formula or set of steps to start organizing a pop-up project. If you have an idea for a pop-up project, talk to as many friends, neighbors and business owners as you can to gain support, learn more about the history of the problem, and understand people's concerns. Ask elected officials and municipal or county staff if they have thoughts about the problem and a possible solution. Understanding the degree to which there is a need, support and resources to address a problem is the first step to understanding what can be done. Temporary projects are typically somewhere in the gray area with a varying level of need, support, resources, and approvals, so testing a project without investing too much time or money allows a community to evaluate the solution before committing. With little need, support or resources, there may be steps to take to build the case for a future project. With high need, support or resources, you may well be on your way to a permanent capital solution.

At any point in this learning phase, contact an Expo team member at DVRPC to discuss possible next steps.

People are reluctant to do something. What should I tell them?

People might be reluctant to do something because they don't agree there's a problem or because they're not sure what the "right" solution is. And even when we think we know what could be a solution, we may not always know the degree to which a design can solve a problem, or how that solution will look, feel, and operate in our community and in our daily routines. Temporary solutions are the perfect way to test solutions to see if they affect the change we want to see. There will be opposition to a project, as there is with any change, but through a temporary project, we can understand the performance of, and response to, a solution. With that understanding, a project can be removed entirely, tweaked to work better, or be made permanent. Emphasize this responsive flexibility to others.

A temporary or quick build project also shows a road owner's commitment to an area or problem and is great to include a grant application for a permanent, full construction project.

How long does it take to plan and implement a project?

That depends. With an idea for a design, community support, access to materials, and a limited scale, a project



Collingswood Borough's improvements during the All Aboard Atlantic Expo pop-up included street murals, refreshed crosswalks, and flexposts.

can be implemented in a couple of months. Usually there is some coordination on the design or communication with neighbors that requires weekly meetings that might take a project a couple of months. For example, the Wheels on Windsor Expo project in Narberth, PA was about 10 weeks start to finish. Other projects that involve multiple design elements, are bigger in scale (a half mile or more), and involve coordination with many community groups and agencies may take six months or more. For example, the All Aboard Atlantic Expo project in Collingswood, NJ took about six months to implement.

Most projects involve improvements to bicycle and pedestrian facilities, so planning a project for implementation sometime between April and November when the weather is favorable is ideal. You can always scale back, or phase, the design if you want to see things faster, but don't scale back on communication with the community; projects need input and support from to realize long-term change.

What happens after an Expo project?

Expo projects are temporary by nature, but depending on the materials, performance and support of the project, improvements may stay up for a longer period of time until capital funding is secured. When the demonstration period of an project is complete, DVRPC works with local sponsors to evaluate and summarize the project's impacts. This may include a memo, a presentation to elected officials, or another form of summary.

The Expo team encourages local sponsors to use these summaries to advocate for permanent installations through grant applications or local funding sources.

For more information, visit
www.dvrpc.org/expo

