

## **Executive Summary**

### State College Area Connector Virtual Public Meeting Category A

Johnson, Mirmiran & Thompson, Inc. is conducting a Planning and Environmental Linkage (PEL) study for the State College Area Connector (SCAC). Public engagement and outreach are integral to the success of the study. The study schedule required a public meeting in the fall of 2020 to present the results of the data collection efforts and the draft purpose and need. However, the COVID-19 pandemic prohibited in-person meetings. Finding a way to safely and clearly explain the PEL process and the collected study information to the public, then obtain meaningful input from the public, became a critical step in advancing the study. Using technology, Johnson, Mirmiran & Thompson, Inc. designed a unique and innovative web-based virtual public meeting platform that mimics the experience of in-person meetings to overcome the challenges of engaging the public virtually for the SCAC PEL study. The virtual public meeting was housed on the study website from October 28 at 5:30 p.m. through November 4 at 11:59 p.m. Access to the meeting was available 24 hours/day. This meeting was the first of its kind for the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and will provide future opportunities to hold both virtual meetings as well as in person meetings to potentially engage with a greater and more diverse population.