Public Involvement Handbook

Florida Department of Transportation

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List of Acronyms

ACS	American Community Survey
ADA	Americans With Disabilities Act
AN	Advance Notification
App	An application, especially as downloaded by a user to a mobile device
CAC	Community Advisory Committee
CAP	Community Awareness Plan
CE	Categorical Exclusion
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CMT	Communications Media Technology
FDEP	Florida Department of Environmental Protection
DOT	Department of Transportation
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EST	Environmental Screening Tool
ETAT	Environmental Technical Advisory Team
ETDM	Efficient Transportation Decision Making
FAC	Florida Administrative Code
FAR	Florida Administrative Register
FDOT	Florida Department of Transportation/ the Department
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
FTP	Florida Transportation Plan
FS	Florida Statutes
GIS	Geographic Information System
ISTEA	Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act
LDCA	Location and Design Concept Acceptance
LEP	Limited English Proficiency
LRTP	Long Range Transportation Plan
MAP-21	Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century
MOT	Maintenance of Traffic
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NOAA	National Oceanic And Atmospheric Administration
OPP	Office of Policy Planning
PD&E	Project Development and Environment
PDF	Portable Document Format; a file format used to present documents in a manner independent of application software, hardware, and operating systems
PIC	Public Involvement Consultant
PIO	Public Information Officer
PIP	Public Involvement Plan
PIPM	Public Involvement Performance Measurement
PM	Project Manager
PPP/P3	Public Private Partnership
PPM	Plans Preparation Manual
PSA	Public Service Announcement
RFP	Request for Proposals
ROW	Right of Way

RRR	Resurfacing, Restoration, and Rehabilitation
SAFETEA-LU	The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy For Users
SCE	Sociocultural Effects
SEIR	State Environmental Impact Report
SIS	Strategic Intermodal System
STIP	State Transportation Improvement Program
TEA-21	Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
USC	United States Code
VMS	Variable Message Sign

How to Use This Handbook

Engaging the public in the transportation decision-making process can pose a significant challenge. Many people either do not understand or are skeptical about their ability to influence the decision-making process. Others may have more immediate concerns that occupy their attention and time, making it difficult to focus on issues that they may perceive as being abstract or too far in the future. People may want to participate, but are unable to make the time in their already busy schedules.

The challenge for transportation agencies and public involvement practitioners is to capture the public's interest in the transportation decision-making process. The key is to convince the public that their active involvement and participation provides them an opportunity to have meaningful input into decisions affecting them and their communities.

This Public Involvement Handbook provides techniques and methods to encourage meaningful public participation throughout the transportation decision-making process. The handbook is intended for use by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT/Department) staff, FDOT consultants, and any others interested in designing effective public involvement plans (PIPs). It provides guidance for developing and implementing effective public involvement activities that meet and may, in some cases, exceed federal and state requirements.

The handbook is in compliance with FDOT public involvement policies and other legal foundations for public involvement.

There are ten chapters in this handbook, which are summarized below.

Chapter Number	Chapter Title	Summary of Chapter Contents
1	Introduction	Guiding principles and values of public involvement
2	Requirements for Public Involvement	Federal and state laws on public involvement
3	Public Involvement during the Decision-Making Process	Guidelines for projects, from planning to maintenance
4	Identifying the Public	Identifying the audience and being inclusive
5	Public Involvement Tools and Techniques	Public involvement strategies for engaging people and working with the media
6	Public Meetings	Minimum standards and recommendations for public meetings
7	Public Hearings	Minimum standards and recommendations for Public Hearings
8	Documentation of Public Involvement Activities	Requirements and recommended practices for recording outreach efforts
9	Evaluating the Effectiveness of Public Involvement Programs	Ways to determine if you are reaching the right audience and achieving your goals
10	Maximizing Equity in Transportation	Equity (nondiscrimination) and methods to achieve equitable outcomes for transportation improvements

There are five appendices, which contain the following.

Appendix	Summary of Contents
A	References and Resources
B	Glossary of Terms
C	Federal and State Requirements for Public Involvement
D	Examples of Best Practices in Public Involvement
E	Public Meeting Layouts and Checklists
F	Public Hearing Scripts

As noted above, Appendix A provides references and resources used in the development of this handbook while Appendix B provides definitions. Appendix C provides an abbreviated summary of the federal and state legal requirements for public involvement. Appendix D provides some recent examples of best practices, organized by handbook chapter. Appendix E provides a public meeting supplies checklist and sample room layouts for different meeting types. Appendix F provides the scripts for PD&E and Design public hearings.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Transportation affects everyone. It is a part of everyday life that most people probably do not think about unless there is a problem. This is part of what makes it challenging to engage the public during transportation decision-making; if it does not affect their commute tomorrow, or even in the next year, it may not be perceived as a worthwhile investment of their time. Other challenges include the public's awareness of or accessibility to opportunities for involvement, having time to be involved, and understanding their ability to affect the process. Professionals involved in the transportation field know that every decision or action made by a transportation agency affects someone to some degree, which is why public involvement throughout the process is so important.

This handbook provides specific techniques, ideas, and examples to help Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) project managers, consultants, and other transportation partners fulfill both the letter and the spirit of FDOT's public involvement policy.

> *"The Department recognizes the importance of involving the public in information exchange when providing transportation facilities and services to best meet the state's transportation needs. Therefore, it is the policy of the Florida Department of Transportation to promote public involvement opportunities and information exchange activities in all functional areas using various techniques adapted to local area conditions and project requirements."*
>
> *(Topic No. 000-525-050)*

Public involvement is needed through all phases of a transportation project, from the early planning stages to operations and maintenance. The public involvement effort should be scaled to match the magnitude or complexity of the project, including the potential issues or challenges of a project, such as right-of-way acquisition, relocations, access modifications, or providing a new type of transportation service.

All public involvement efforts should be flexible and updated as the project progresses in response to changing conditions, as well as the effectiveness of the involvement activities. Oftentimes, what seems like a straightforward project evolves into a more complex one and the involvement effort should be adjusted to reflect this. Further, transportation professionals should remain cautious about prejudging the level of public involvement needed based on their own perceptions of the project's complexity. What seems like a beneficial project to a planner or engineer may be perceived as a burden by the community. Early public involvement provides insight about potential controversy.

It is also important to understand who constitutes the public. It is in the best interest of the project to examine the different types of groups that will be involved and the most appropriate strategies for engaging each of them. The public can be considered anyone outside of the immediate project team, including other agencies, local governments, elected officials, business owners, and residents.

1.1 Guiding Principles for Public Involvement

The following are FDOT's guiding principles for public involvement. Throughout this handbook, these principles are explored, and specific project examples that illustrate best practices in the implementation of these principles are provided.

Guiding Principles for Public Involvement
Public involvement is two-way communication aimed at incorporating the views, concerns, and issues of the public into the decision-making process.
Process
Public involvement is ongoing in all phases of a project. It allows the public to hear and be heard.
Defining Context
Public involvement is inclusive of all decision-makers and stakeholders. It includes as many groups and individuals as possible, especially those who will be most affected.
Tools and Techniques
The most appropriate outreach tools are used for each audience. It is essential to know and understand the community to develop the most appropriate outreach techniques and establish evaluation measures.
Documentation
A Project Record lets members of the public know their comments and concerns have been heard. It ensures that commitments are carried throughout all phases of the project. Documentation shows that a process was used in evaluating alternatives and determining the solutions.

1.2 Why Public Involvement Is Important

Effective public involvement through all phases of the transportation decision-making process is the key to developing an efficient transportation system where projects move forward smoothly. In addition, it leads to transportation improvements that meet community needs and desires, provides for greater acceptance of projects, engenders a sense of community, and enhances agency credibility. Public involvement builds credible and trusting relationships between agencies and with the community. These relationships, in turn, will minimize conflict and help resolve potential problems that may arise when implementing a project. The public is more likely to support and take ownership of a plan or project when given time and opportunity to review information, share ideas and concerns, and observe changes as a result of their input. Participation establishes trust and openness in the decision-making process.

1.3 Involvement Roles and Responsibilities

Public involvement, depending upon the complexity of the project, can require a large team of professionals to achieve. While everybody's contribution to the effort is important, there are four key roles in the process: the District Public Information Officer (PIO), the District Public Involvement

Coordinator, the District Project Manager (PM), and the Consultant PM. Each District will have its own approach to public involvement activities, so this section is not intended to change current effective practices. The goal is to provide an understanding of how these different positions can work together to achieve public involvement objectives.

- District PIO – Each District has a PIO who is responsible for delivering credible, factual information, while interacting with the media, government officials, and the public. The main goal of the PIO is to deliver a consistent message that promotes open communication and builds trust. The PIO is responsible for distributing press releases and public service announcements (PSAs), having project-related interviews and press conferences, posting meeting notices on the Department's Public Meetings webpage, posting information on the Department's social media sites, writing project-related articles and opinion columns, and responding to questions regarding FDOT efforts. When the media contacts any member of a project team, the PIO must be informed. Depending upon the District, the PIO may or may not be directly involved in the review of project-specific public involvement materials.
- District Public Involvement Coordinator/Team – Some Districts have a Public Involvement Coordinator or team who works directly with the FDOT environmental, design, or construction staff to ensure compliance with Department requirements for public involvement materials and activities, and to assist with meeting locations, notifications, and logistics. All public involvement materials, including PIPs, are reviewed by the coordinator prior to publication, especially if the District PIO is not fulfilling that role. If there is no designated District Public Involvement Coordinator, the PM fills that role.
- District PM – The assigned PM from the District is typically the point of contact for project-specific questions and comments from the public, media, and government officials. Further, the District PM works closely with the Consultant PM and the District Public Involvement Coordinator to ensure the public involvement materials and activities comply with all appropriate regulations. To the extent possible, the District PM should take the lead at public meetings and activities in terms of introducing the project and explaining the process and Department policies.
- Consultant PM – The role of the Consultant PM is to lead the public involvement efforts of the consultant team, coordinate closely with the District PM on public involvement activities, and maintain the documentation and records of involvement activities for the District. At the District's discretion, the Consultant PM can also be a point of contact for project-specific questions and comments; however, this should be limited to questions or comments from the public, as interaction with the media and government officials should be handled directly by the District. The Consultant PM, at the District's discretion, may be the primary presenter during public meetings (following an introduction by the District PM) and during other public involvement activities, and may assist the District PM with responding to questions and comments.

The first step of any project should be a meeting with the appropriate District and consultant staff to understand how public involvement is approached in that District, how it will be best handled for the project, and the roles and responsibilities for each team member.

Chapter 2 – Requirements for Public Involvement

This chapter provides requirements of federal and state legislation regarding public involvement. It also provides a summary of the Department's policies, procedures, and manuals that identify requirements and guidelines for public involvement in each phase of the project development process.

2.1 Federal Requirements

Public involvement has long been an integral part of federal transportation legislation. The initial Federal Highway Act (Federal Aid Road Act of 1916) focused on expanding the highway system, but subsequent bills incorporated multimodal and public involvement elements. The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991 represented a transformation, with an intermodal approach to funding and greater emphasis on public involvement and collaborative planning. ISTEA's successor in 1998, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), expanded public involvement to include transit and freight. The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) was enacted in 2005 and broadened public involvement requirements. Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are now required to prepare a public participation plan in collaboration with interested parties (including bicycle and pedestrian groups and the disabled); public meetings are to be held at convenient times and in accessible locations; and visualization techniques and electronic methods are encouraged for conveying project information. Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) was enacted in 2012, and carries forward all of these advancements in public participation.

The current public involvement requirements for state, local, and metropolitan plans and programs established by federal legislation are found in Title 23 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Parts 450.210 and 450.316. For specific details, consult the regulations directly, which can be found online at www.gpo.gov. The objectives identified by these regulations that FDOT promotes for its public involvement programs and activities are summarized as follows:

Public Involvement Objectives

- Early and continuous public involvement
- Inclusionary practices in activities and notification
- Consideration of the needs of the traditionally underserved
- Collaboration with other agencies, local governments, private sector transportation entities, and non-MPO officials
- Convenient meeting times and locations
- Reasonable access to information
- Timely notice of public involvement activities, including appropriate review and comment periods
- Acknowledgement and consideration of public comments

In addition to the transportation bills, there are other federal regulations that affect how public involvement activities are planned and conducted. Appendix C summarizes all of the federal requirements regarding public involvement. The most relevant to FDOT's projects and programs are briefly described, as follows:

United States Code or USC contains the laws of the United States adopted by Congress.

The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) contains the rules developed by the executive departments and agencies of the federal government to implement the laws contained in the USC.

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)

- Title II of this Act, 42 United States Code (USC) Sections 12131-12134, prohibits the exclusion of persons with disabilities from participation in services, programs, or activities of a public entity. This is the basis for the Department's standard language (see Part 1, Chapter 11, Section 11-2.4 of the Project Development and Environment [PD&E] Manual) regarding accommodating persons with disabilities for such issues as hearing or visual impairment.
- Title III of this Act, 42 USC Sections 12181-12189, requires public accommodations to provide equivalent access to individuals with disabilities. This is important for public involvement activities, as the locations of public meetings, workshops, and hearings should be accessible.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Other Nondiscrimination Laws

- Title VI, 42 USC Sections 2000d-2000d-1, prohibits federally assisted programs from discrimination based on race, color, or national origin. Since public funds are comprised of contributions from taxpayers of all races, colors, and national origins, fairness requires that federal activities receiving such funds be conducted in a manner that discourages racial discrimination.
- Age Discrimination Act of 1975, 42 USC Sections 6101-6107, prohibits federally assisted programs from discrimination based on age.

Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations

- Directs federal agencies to identify and address any disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of their actions on minority and low-income populations.
- Requires each agency to develop a strategy for evaluating environmental justice.
- Promotes access by minority and low-income communities to public information and public participation.

Executive Order 13166, Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency

- Requires agencies to develop plans so that people for whom English is not their native language or who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English can have meaningful access to the services provided.
- Requires recipients of federal funding to also provide meaningful access.
- Factors for determining when meaningful access is necessary include:
  - Number or proportion of limited English proficiency (LEP) persons in the affected area,
  - Frequency of contact with LEP persons,
  - Importance of the service provided to LEP persons, and
  - Resources available.
- What methods of communication constitute meaningful access?

- Translation* of vital documents into languages other than English
- Oral interpretation* through translators or other interpretive services

*These services must be provided free of cost to the recipient

Federal Laws Relating to Highways

23 USC, Highways

- Section 109(h) requires the consideration of possible adverse effects on the human and natural environment as part of the project development process.
- Section 128 requires public hearings and consideration of environmental impacts as part of planning projects for Federally-aided highways.
- Section 135 requires participation by interested parties in the development of statewide and nonmetropolitan transportation planning.

23 CFR, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Department of Transportation (DOT)

- Part 450, Section 210 states that interested parties, public involvement, and consultation, requires the state to "develop and use a documented public involvement process that provides opportunities for public review and comment at key decision points." This is the basis for the Department's public involvement program.
- Part 771, Section 111 establishes the importance of early agency coordination and public involvement in the environmental review process. Specifically, Section 111 requires:
  - Coordination throughout the entire National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process;
  - Public involvement in the identification of social, community, economic, and environmental impacts;
  - Public hearing(s) at convenient times and places for any project that has a substantial impact on: right of way; layout or functions of roadways or facilities; adjacent properties; or social, community, economic, or environmental resources;
  - Reasonable notice of public hearings;
  - Explanation during the public hearing of: project purpose and need; consistency with local plans; project alternatives and major features; social, community, economic, and environmental impacts; relocation assistance and right-of-way acquisition programs; and procedures for receiving public comments;
  - Submission of a public hearing transcript to FHWA;
  - Public involvement opportunities in defining the purpose and need and range of alternatives to be considered in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS); and
  - Public notice and opportunity for review of Section 4(f) *de minimis* impact finding.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969

- Codified in 42 USC, Chapter 55, Sections 4321-4370, this law:
  - Established the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the Council on Environmental Quality(CEQ), which oversees the implementation of NEPA;
  - Requires federal agencies to consider environmental impacts as part of their planning and decision-making processes; and
  - Established requirements for environmental impact reviews.

- 40 CFR, Chapter V, Parts 1500-1508 implement the requirements of NEPA, providing procedural provisions and administration of the NEPA process, including preparation of environmental documents, the process for inviting and documenting comments, addressing interagency disputes, and defining roles and responsibilities of agencies.
- Section 1506.6 establishes the requirements for public involvement during the NEPA process, including:
    - Use of public hearings or meetings when appropriate,
    - Solicitation of information from the public,
    - Explanation of where information about NEPA and ongoing environmental documents can be found,
    - Public review of EISs, comments received, and any supporting documents, and
    - Provision of public notice of NEPA-related hearings, public meetings, and the availability of environmental documents through direct notice to those who have requested it, publication in the Federal Register (for actions of national concern), and the following for actions that are primarily of local concern:
        - Notice to state and areawide clearinghouses,
        - Notice to Native American Tribes, where appropriate,
        - Implementation of the state's public notice procedures,
        - Publication in local newspapers of general circulation,
        - Notice through other local media,
        - Notice to potentially interested community organizations,
        - Publication in newsletters that may reach interested persons,
        - Direct mailing to owners and occupants of affected property, and
        - Posting of notice on and off site in the area where the action is to be located.

Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act

- Codified in Title 49 USC, Part 24, this Act establishes the requirements for fair, equitable, and consistent treatment of owners of real property to be acquired and persons displaced by federal or federally-assisted projects.
- Section 24.5 requires that notices provided to property owners or occupants be written in plain language or provided in an alternate manner for persons unable to read or understand a written notice.

2.2 State Requirements

The State of Florida's requirements for public involvement are found in the Florida Statutes (FS), which are available online at www.flsenate.gov/Laws/Statutes. There are several chapters that address public involvement for transportation plans and programs, which are summarized in Appendix C. The following are the most frequently referenced statutes and requirements.

Executive Order 07-01, Section 2 - Plain Language Initiative

- The purpose of this initiative is to ensure that announcements, publications, and other documents provided by state agencies contain "clear and concise" information. Specific requirements include:
    - Use of common language instead of technical jargon,
    - Providing only the pertinent information in an organized manner,
    - Use of short sentences and active voice, and

- Layout and design that are user friendly.

Section 120.525, FS, Administrative Procedures Act

- Requires notice of public meetings, hearings, and workshops by publication in the Florida Administrative Register (FAR) and on the agency's website, no less than seven (7) days prior to the event.
- Includes the general subject matter to be considered.
- Requires an agenda (containing the items to be considered in order of presentation) to be prepared and published on the agency's website.

Section 286.011, FS, Public Business (Government in the Sunshine)

- Declares all meetings of any board or commission of any state, county, municipal, or political subdivision, agency, or authority to be public meetings that are open to the public at all times.
- Requires reasonable notice of all such meetings.
- Requires minutes of any such meeting to be available for public inspection.
- Prohibits public meetings from being held at a facility or location that discriminates on the basis of sex, age, race, creed, color, origin, or economic status or that otherwise restricts public access.
- Establishes penalties for violation of these provisions and exceptions for specific situations.

Section 286.29, FS, Public Business (Green Lodging)

- Requires state agencies to contract for meeting and conference space only with hotels or conference facilities that have been designated as Green Lodging facilities by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP).

Section 335.199, FS, State Highway System (Access Modification)

- Requires notification of all affected property owners, municipalities, and counties at least 180 days prior to design finalization of any project on the State Highway System that modifies or otherwise affects access to the facility.
- Requires at least one public hearing in the jurisdiction where the project is located.

Section 339.155, FS, Transportation Finance and Planning

- Requires the development of a statewide transportation plan, the Florida Transportation Plan (FTP).
- Establishes procedures for public participation in transportation planning, including:
  - Providing an opportunity for comment on the FTP,
  - Requiring one or more public hearings to be held during the development of major transportation improvements, and
  - Notification requirements for design hearings.

Jessica Lunsford Act

- Codified in Title XLVIII K-20 Education Code, Chapter 1012 Personnel, §1012.465-1012.468, this law requires background checks of any person entering school grounds when children are present. As a result of this, FDOT adopted a policy that K-12 educational facilities should not be used for public meetings and hearings. There is a provision for exceptions. For more information, see Chapter 6.

2.3 Department Procedure

FDOT promotes public involvement through all phases of transportation project development. Several manuals and handbooks are available that provide guidance on developing public involvement programs and activities that comply with both state and federal legislation. Some of these are summarized in Appendix C.

The PD&E Manual establishes the Department's procedures for complying with state and federal laws for public involvement. Guidance for the PD&E phase and beyond is provided in Part 1, Chapter 11, Public Involvement. The Districts are responsible for conducting public involvement activities for plans (such as the District Work Program) and projects following the procedures and processes established in the PD&E Manual. Individual projects may have unique circumstances that require special approaches to public involvement, and Districts are encouraged to establish Public Involvement Plans (PIPs) that meet these needs. However, all PIPs and procedures must comply with the Department's minimum requirements and reflect the Department's principles of being consistent, predictable, and repeatable.

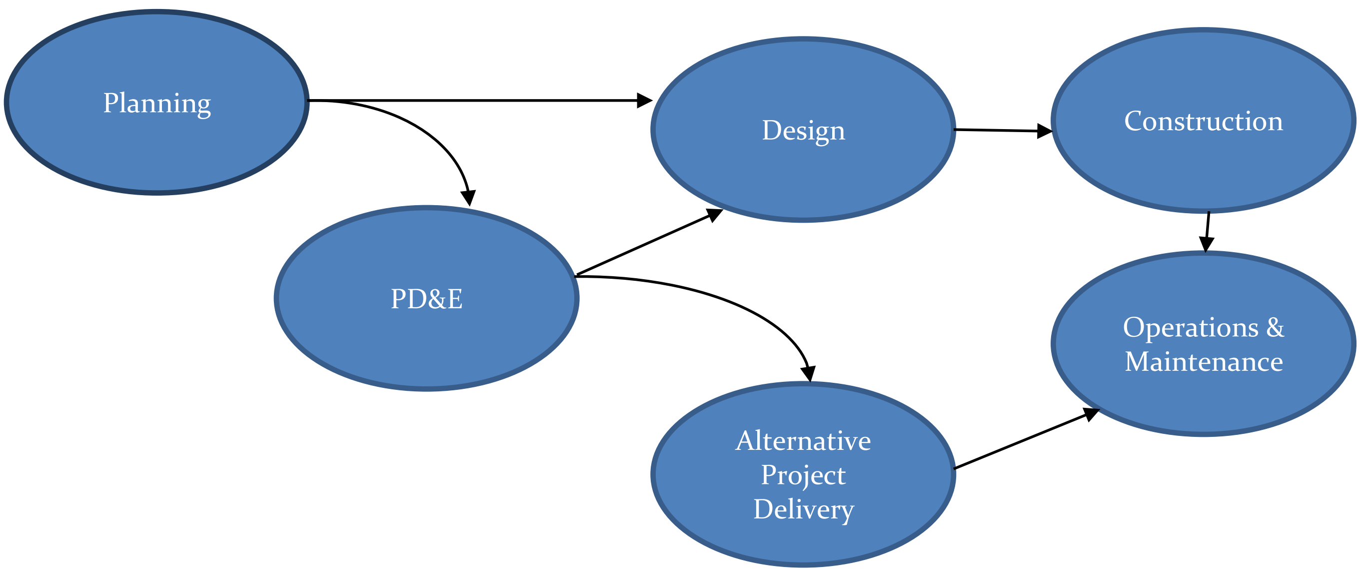
In addition to District plans and projects, each district planning office has staff that serves as liaisons with their local MPOs. The MPO Program Management Handbook provides guidance to MPOs on their role; how MPO areas are designated, formed, and modified; and on federal and state transportation planning requirements. These requirements are specifically for the plans and programs for which MPOs are responsible, namely the Unified Planning Work Program, the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Details about the public involvement requirements for each of these plans and programs are provided in the Handbook, which can be found online at www.dot.state.fl.us/planning/Policy/metrosupport/mpohandbook/.

Chapter 3 – Public Involvement during the Decision-Making Process

The transportation decision-making process includes the following phases, which are also depicted in **Figure 3.1**:

- Planning
- Project Development and Environment
- Design
- Construction
- Alternative Project Delivery
- Operations and Maintenance

Figure 3.1: Transportation Decision-Making Process



The first phase starts with "big picture" discussions regarding policy and moves towards more detailed systemwide planning. Once a project is selected or programmed to receive funding, it moves into the preparatory phases including environmental studies and preliminary and final design. The last step involves the physical implementation of the project, otherwise known as construction, operations, and maintenance. An alternative project delivery phase may be used, which includes Design-Build activities, as well as public private partnerships (PPP/P3), and occurs before construction, operations, and maintenance.

Public involvement is essential throughout each major phase, as well as the individual steps and processes. The entire transportation decision-making process can take many years, and since the implementation step involves many ongoing activities, some form of public involvement should always occur.

Understanding these phases is vital for an accurate understanding of the complex processes that are undertaken by FDOT, MPOs, and other agencies in order to move an idea or plan to reality. The public and project stakeholders can benefit from awareness and knowledge of the process to better understand when and where to become involved, and what constraints are faced by state, regional, and local agencies in making decisions during the various phases. Practitioners can benefit from understanding phases of the project in which they are not directly involved and how they can collaborate and partner with the public and fellow practitioners at each phase of the transportation decision-making process.

The goals of this chapter are to inform practitioners about the public involvement requirements in each phase of the transportation decision-making process, how they are connected, and how they should be carried forward to other phases. No matter the phase, each has a well-defined purpose and the need for continual public engagement, outreach, and information.

3.1 Public Involvement during Planning

Public involvement during planning brings diverse viewpoints and values to the surface early in the decision-making process and consists of activities and actions that both inform and involve the public so they can help influence decisions that affect their lives. There are generally three types of plans that are completed during this phase: policy, systemwide, and corridor plans.

3.1.1 Policy Planning

Policy planning is the first step in the transportation decision-making process and can involve a wide range of planning, policy, and research-related activities. For FDOT, the Office of Policy Planning (OPP) oversees a wide range of these activities to advance Florida's statewide transportation system. These activities include the development of the Florida Transportation Plan (FTP), the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) Strategic Plan, and collecting information and data about trends and conditions that may influence future transportation efforts. More information about these activities is available on the OPP website at www.dot.state.fl.us/planning/policy/.

3.1.2 Systemwide Planning

Transportation issues represent a significant component of planning at all levels, including the state, regional, and county level. Systemwide planning is a way to approach and study a transportation problem or issue in advance of any funding decisions, helping to link visions to financially realistic plans for multimodal transportation systems. It also provides strategic direction for investment decisions when examining transportation improvements and usually involves many different local and regional units of government.

As previously mentioned, systems planning can be applied to a variety of different geographies and a variety of different

Florida Transportation Plan

The state transportation plan, otherwise known as the Florida Transportation Plan (FTP), establishes a policy framework for spending federal and state transportation funds in Florida. It is a policy-driven document and not project-specific. Every five years FDOT updates this plan to meet the future mobility needs of Florida's residents, visitors, and businesses.

FDOT works with partners and stakeholders to develop the plan, including a steering committee, advisory groups, and regional and local groups. The public involvement activities used to develop the FTP typically include:

- Regular meetings of a steering committee
- Web-based meetings of advisory groups
- A statewide summit
- Multiple statewide web meetings
- Regional workshops
- Briefings at regularly scheduled meetings of transportation partners
- An interactive website to gather public comments and suggestions

transportation modes. The most common example of a system plan is the LRTP, which is adopted by an MPO every five years. Other types of systems plans include countywide comprehensive plans or regional transportation master plans. Examples of systemwide plans can be found in Appendix D.

A variety of methods can be used to inform the public that a long-range planning effort is underway. These include, but are not limited to:

- Agency and project-specific websites (such as the MPO and LRTP websites)
- Social media
- Flyers, brochures, and advertisements
- Newsletters
- Community events
- Outreach to the traditionally underserved/underrepresented
- "Before and After" ("Today and Tomorrow") photo simulations and visualizations
- Radio, television, and video

In addition to getting the word out about the development of a long range plan or planning effort, a variety of public participation opportunities should be employed for persons to get involved, have their voices heard. Some examples include:

- Advisory committees
- Public surveys and comment cards
- Community meetings and presentations
- Open houses
- Telephone/electronic/televised "Town Hall" meetings
- Advertised public hearing

Other examples of public involvement activities associated with LRTPs can be found in Appendix D.

Long Range Transportation Plan

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are required to develop Long Range Transportation Plans (LRTP) that address the expenditure of federal, state, and local transportation funds over a 20-year period. MPOs must allow public review and comment on the LRTP during development of the plan. The MPO hosts public workshops to provide comments on the LRTP.

Agencies and groups that are typically involved represent land use, natural resources, environmental protection, historic preservation, neighborhood associations, transit riders, residents, business groups, public agencies, etc. ***Everyone*** within the MPO's jurisdiction should have the opportunity to participate in the transportation planning process.

Most public involvement activities during planning are conducted by the MPO in accordance with their adopted Public Participation Plan. The MPO Program Management Handbook provides guidance on the public involvement requirements for LRTPs.

State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

The STIP is a federally mandated document that includes a listing of projects planned with federal, state, and local funding in the next four fiscal years. The STIP includes priority projects from MPO Transportation Improvement Plans (TIPs) and local government projects from non-MPO areas. The projects in the STIP are a subset of the first four years of the Adopted Work Program.

The public involvement activities for the MPO projects included in the STIP are generally conducted by the MPOs during development of the LRTP. For non-MPO areas, public involvement activities for these projects are conducted by the local government that identified the project.

The STIP is accessible in several ways. It may be viewed online at www.dot.state.fl.us/ProgramDevelopmentOffice/federal/stip.shtm, in portable document format (PDF), downloadable from the same page, or via the STIP Report, a spreadsheet available for download. The STIP

Report, www2.dot.state.fl.us/fmsupportapps/stipamendments/stip.aspx, enables the STIP to be viewed by the specific county, MPO, item segment, or project description. The complete statewide STIP can also be downloaded as a spreadsheet.

3.1.3 Plans and Studies

FDOT Work Program

In the development of the FDOT Five-Year Work Program, the MPO provides its priority list of projects, which feeds the creation of the FDOT Work Program (fifth year). In addition, projects come from non-MPO areas and local boards to create the FDOT Five-Year Work Program.

Each District office is required to hold a public hearing regarding the Five-Year Work Program in at least one urbanized area within its jurisdiction. Non-MPO counties are also invited to these public hearings. These hearings provide an opportunity for the public to be involved in the transportation decision-making process, but are typically attended by local government officials, transportation professionals, and persons with land development interests in the area.

In addition to the public hearing, each District office makes a presentation at a meeting of each MPO in the district to determine if changes (additions, deletions, or revisions) are necessary to projects contained within the District Work Program. This provides an opportunity for the District to update attendees about other District projects and activities.

The Florida Transportation Commission conducts annual public hearings on the Work Program.

Feasibility Studies

A Feasibility Study is an evaluation or analysis of the potential impact of a proposed project. The Feasibility Study helps determine if a PD&E study needs to be conducted and to what level of detail. During the Feasibility Study, public involvement should be included and documented (through public workshops, small group meetings, etc.). This helps determine the type of public involvement activities that may be needed in future phases of the project. Results of the Feasibility Study may feed back into the LRTP Cost Feasible Plan in order to be programmed.

3.1.4 Corridor Planning

While systemwide plans focus on an entire city, county, region, or state, corridor plans are more narrowly focused on either a specific facility, such as a roadway, or the transportation needs for a defined area, such as a corridor, street, or neighborhood. This is typically the step between a systemwide plan and the more detailed evaluation done during the PD&E phase. The focus is to identify the transportation needs and

Transportation Improvement Program

The MPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a five-year plan that identifies, prioritizes, and allocates funding for transportation projects. The TIP is updated annually, with adoption by the MPO Board in June of each year.

The MPOs provide opportunity for comment on the TIP by holding a public meeting before submitting the program to FDOT for inclusion in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The MPO is required to provide all interested parties reasonable opportunity to comment on the TIP (23 CFR 450.316). These "interested parties" include:

- All persons,
- Affected public agencies,
- Representatives of public transportation employees,
- Freight shippers,
- Providers of freight transportation services,
- Private providers of transportation,
- Representatives of users of public transportation,
- Pedestrians,
- Bicyclists, and
- the disabled

potential solutions. The solutions are further developed through an appropriate mechanism, such as a PD&E study, or completed in the design phase.

Corridor planning has two different meanings. In one sense it is the planning of new corridors to provide for the future mobility needs of a region or community. Alternatively, it is the identification of improvements to existing corridors in order for them to continue to serve as vital elements of a community's transportation system. Corridors may be identified for further study from plans created during systemwide planning. Examples of corridor planning include comprehensive/master plans for a street or corridor, congestion management plans, and needs plans.

For corridor-specific studies and plans, small-scale meetings and informal public meetings at the beginning (to identify stakeholders) and end (to share findings) of the study may be the most effective. Similarly, the creation of technical and citizen advisory groups can help ensure that a broader range of individuals is included and a variety of issues are covered. If technical and citizens advisory groups are already in place, the formation of specific stakeholder and citizen forums can help ensure an explicit need or concern is covered. Examples include forums or groups focused on economic development, land use, environment, or other special interests that may have surfaced at the beginning of the study.

Throughout corridor planning, extensive effort should be made to reach out to as many groups as possible to receive comments directly from the people who will benefit from and be impacted by the transportation project or system in the future. These opportunities offer the public and interested stakeholders a chance to learn about the planning process, possible outcomes, and project milestones, as well as provide an opportunity to form relationships and show members of the public the importance of their participation.

It can be challenging to engage the public in planning-level studies that are either not scheduled for implementation within a short time frame (five to 10 years) or that are system-level plans that do not directly impact a specific area and therefore do not directly affect them. It can be more effective to utilize public involvement activities that are easy for people to access, such as information available in locations where people already are (see Chapter 5). Engagement and involvement activities that encourage in-person dialogue and that are held outside formally scheduled public meetings and online activities can offer quality interactions and foster long-lasting relationships between citizens and practitioners. Examples of corridor planning studies can be found in Appendix D.

3.1.5 Efficient Transportation Decision Making Planning and Programming Screen

The Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) process is Florida's method for providing early review of transportation projects to identify potential environmental effects. State and federal regulatory agencies are able to view proposed projects and comment on potential effects. The ETDM process is consistent with the streamlining objectives of recent federal transportation legislation. More information about the ETDM process is available online at www.dot.state.fl.us/emo/ETDM.shtm.

The intent of ETDM is to:

- Integrate ecosystem preservation with land use planning and social considerations,
- Involve agencies earlier in the transportation planning process, and
- Allow resource and regulatory agencies and the public to comment on potential impacts of candidate transportation projects during the development of long range plans (in coordination with the appropriate FDOT District office).

A key component of the ETDM process is the Environmental Screening Tool (EST), an internet-accessible interactive database and mapping application. The EST allows participating agencies (known as the Environmental Technical Advisory Team, or ETAT members) the opportunity to provide input on proposed projects. Project information is made available to the public through the ETDM Public Access Site at https://etdmpub.fla-etat.org/est/.

The public cannot submit project comments directly through the public access site. However, comments can be submitted to the project sponsor in writing or verbally at a workshop, hearing, or other local public involvement activity conducted to receive ideas and comments from the public. These comments are then summarized in the EST and made available to the public. The public can sign up to receive emails concerning projects of interest.

The ETDM process connects the Planning and PD&E phases by carrying forward planning products, previous analyses, and decisions supporting transportation project implementation during subsequent project development phases. During the development of the LRTP, the MPOs should screen the proposed projects using the ETDM Planning Screen. The MPO should input public comments from LRTP outreach activities into the ETDM Planning Screen as documentation for future phases of a project. District offices provide support for non-MPO areas. Comments provided through the Planning Screen portion of the EST evaluate and inform decisions about the alternatives developed during a PD&E study to ensure consistency with community needs and concerns.

The Programming Screen portion of the EST builds upon the Planning Screen evaluation, if conducted, to further understand project issues and inform decisions related to project scoping prior to priority projects being considered for adoption in the FDOT Five-Year Work Program or prior to initiation of the PD&E study. The Advance Notification (AN) occurs during the Programming Screen and results in a Class of Action determination for the project. At this time, if appropriate, the project enters into the PD&E phase.

3.2 Public Involvement during PD&E

Public involvement activities are most extensive during the project development phase, which is also referred to as the environmental, or NEPA, process. FDOT refers to the NEPA phase as the PD&E phase. This phase is critical because it links the planning process with the actual project location, design, and eventual construction and operation.

For federally funded projects, FDOT, on behalf of either the FHWA or Federal Transit Administration (FTA), addresses and assesses compliance with more than 40 laws related to safety and the environment. These laws cover social, economic, and environmental concerns ranging from cohesion with the community to the impact on threatened and endangered species. FDOT works closely with other federal agencies; state, local, and tribal governments; public and private organizations; and the public to understand the potential impacts of the project. This process requires a delicate balance between many important factors, including:

- Mobility needs,
- Economic prosperity,
- Health and environmental protection,
- Community and neighborhood preservation, and
- Quality of life for present and future generations.

The PD&E process is based on FHWA's requirements and FDOT's process for completing NEPA requirements; and therefore, the public involvement process outlined in the PD&E Manual, Part 1, Chapter 11 Public Involvement reflects FHWA's policies and guidance for public involvement, as well as the Department's procedures.

During the PD&E phase, public involvement activities are undertaken by FDOT Districts with the goal of soliciting comments about the proposed project. Depending on the Class of Action for the project, different public involvement actions are undertaken to meet federal and state requirements. Key activities may include the following:

- PIP developed in accordance with state and federal requirements and reflecting the context and complexity of the proposed project
- Public Information Meetings
- Formal Scoping Meeting (Draft EIS)
- Community Advisory Committee (CAC) (optional)
- Alternatives meetings and workshops
- Public meetings and hearings at a convenient and accessible location and time
- Transcript of the public hearing available to the public and the Lead Federal Agency

Not all projects require a PD&E study. For the ones that do, the project team often holds several public meetings, including kickoff meetings, information meetings and workshops, and public hearings. Other public involvement techniques include newsletters, brochures, and websites. Not every Class of Action requires a formal public hearing, but it should be noted that public hearings have specific legal requirements for how they are advertised and conducted (see Chapter 6 for more details).

During the PD&E phase, the public involvement effort uses a variety of information to more clearly identify and delineate a project's stakeholders and affected communities. The scope of public involvement differs with each PD&E study and is adapted to the complexity of the project, as well as local area conditions. Input from the public helps engineering and environmental decisions and ensures an open and transparent decision-making process.

3.2.1 Public Involvement for FTA-Funded Projects

The FTA does not have special policies or guidance governing public involvement for transit projects separate from the general NEPA requirements; however, there are several reasons and suggestions for developing a PIP for transit planning:

1. Transit funding is discretionary, and there are always more projects than there is funding available. Having full public and political support is vital and is generally the focus of public involvement activities for transit projects.
2. Local funding is necessary to construct, operate, and maintain transit. As part of the capital grant process, FTA considers the amount of local funding committed to the project. Usually, new transit service requires a new source of funding. Involving the public early on in the project development process helps to establish a base of public support that will be needed if a new funding source is required, especially if public approval in the form of a referendum is necessary.
3. Certain types of transit, especially fixed guideway rail improvements, are new to many areas of Florida and may create apprehension. Unless people in the community are familiar with forms of premium transit from other regions, they may be reluctant to accept new types of transit service. Even those

who have experience with transit in other parts of the country may not have pleasant memories or experiences and may speak out against proposals they think will degrade their quality of life. Visual references, especially photographs and videos from other areas with similar systems, are very effective to help alleviate concerns about community context.

4. Some populations may not see the proposed project as a benefit. Even communities with high transit use may be concerned about the direct or secondary impacts that may result with premium transit improvements, such as increased foot traffic, property acquisition, or eventual displacement as property values rise. It is helpful to have representatives from the local planning department or other agencies that control land use and zoning attend these meetings so they can hear these concerns first hand.

When FDOT is leading the transit study, it is important to involve the local transit provider(s) in the public involvement efforts. In fact, it is best to include the transit agency in the development of the PIP. This will allow both parties to capitalize on existing and planned involvement activities. Further, it is advantageous to have a representative from the transit agency present at any public involvement activity in high transit-use areas, as these participants will likely have questions that go beyond the project. Establishing a good working relationship with the transit agency is critical for advancement of the project, beyond the public realm, as the FTA will consider the agency's financial capacity to support the project. It is important for the project to be a priority for the transit agency so that they reaffirm the position communicated by FDOT to the FTA.

3.2.2 Public Involvement Plan (PIP) Guidelines

A comprehensive PIP is crucial to the success of any public involvement effort, regardless of whether it is a roadway, environmental or transit project. The requirements and specific details for PIPs for PD&E projects can be found in the PD&E Manual, Part 1 under Chapter 11, Public Involvement, Section 11-2.1. The PD&E Manual is accessible on the FDOT website at www.dot.state.fl.us/emo/pubs/pdeman/pdeman1.shtm.

The purpose of a PIP is to develop, implement, and document methods used to reach the people who may be affected by or are interested in a proposed project. The PIP should include the following, depending on the scope of the project:

1. Project background and the purpose and need for the project;
2. Public involvement goals;
3. Affected public (includes affected communities, users of the facility, and other interested or affected audiences);
4. Public involvement activities that should be implemented;
5. Summary reports from the EST, if available; and
6. Methods for documenting and evaluating the public involvement for the project/project area.

The ultimate goal of the PIP is to allow the public opportunities to be involved in the decision-making process. The PIP outlines ways to identify and contact the community affected by the plan or project (for more information refer to Chapter 4); informs them of the need for the plan or project; and helps them be involved in decision-making. Thorough and well-thought-out PIPs simplify the public involvement process by providing a systematic approach, maximizing the use of available resources, and minimizing delays by ensuring that public involvement activities are coordinated with other project tasks and milestones.

The PIP should outline how the public involvement efforts will be undertaken and what methods will be used, including:

- Number and types of meetings that are expected;
- Formation of a CAC/project advisory group, if any, and who those members may include; and
- How the activities will be advertised or how stakeholders will be notified.

The PIP is a living document and should be flexible enough to be adapted to changing conditions and situations. A sample PIP can be found in the PD&E Manual, Part 1, Chapter 11, Figure 11.5.

3.2.3 Elements of Public Involvement in PD&E Meetings

Public involvement during the PD&E phase may include the following activities, although not all are applicable to every project:

- Elected Officials/Agency Kickoff Meeting
- Public Kickoff Meeting
- Scoping Meeting
- Corridor Public Meeting(s)
- Alternatives Public Workshops/Meeting(s)
- Meetings with local agencies (MPO, City, County)
- Meetings with special interest groups (such as businesses and homeowner associations)
- CAC
- Public Hearing
- Newsletter(s)
- Project Website

Additional information about these activities can be found in the PD&E Manual, Part 1, Chapter 11.

At the conclusion of the PD&E study, any commitments and recommendations made to the public should be documented in the environmental document and carried forward into the design phase for implementation. Those commitments and recommendations should be tracked and monitored for adherence and for building community trust.

3.3 Public Involvement during Design

For federally funded projects, when Location and Design Concept Acceptance (LDCA) is received, the next step in the process is the design phase. When the design phase begins, it is important to keep in mind that not all projects have gone through an ETDM screening or PD&E study. Projects such as resurfacing, sidewalks, and other enhancements generally do not go through the PD&E process or do not require an ETDM screening. If the project had a PD&E phase, the design team should meet with the PD&E team to collect useful information such as mailing lists, issues that arose during public meetings or with local officials, and commitments made.

Public involvement activities during the design phase typically begin with the preparation of a Community Awareness Plan (CAP) and may involve activities such as public information meetings or design public hearings. Right of way (ROW) acquisition may overlap with the design phase. FDOT's staff typically deals with property owners and businesses on a one-on-one basis. This is when previous public involvement activities can really become crucial. During the PD&E phase, affected property owners should have been involved and received information about acquisition and relocation procedures. If the affected property owners feel they have been involved through the previous phases, they are more likely to be understanding and knowledgeable about the process and project as a whole.

When a project moves into the design phase, any information and potential solutions developed and analyzed during prior phases should be carried forward into this phase, including recommendations and commitments. Modifications made during the design phase are fed back to the Planning and Programming phase, to inform the development of plan or TIP updates and/or amendments.

Public involvement during the design phase is discussed in the Plans Preparation Manual (PPM) Volume 1, Chapter 1. The most current PPM can be accessed online at www.dot.state.fl.us/rddesign/PPMManual/PPM.shtm. Public involvement during the design phase is also discussed in the Project Management Handbook, in Part 2, Phase Specific Project Management Items (the Design Project Management chapter and the Design-Build Project Management chapter). The Project Management Handbook is available online at www.dot.state.fl.us/projectmanagementoffice/PMHandbook/pmhandbookindex.shtm.

3.3.1 Community Awareness Plan (CAP)

A CAP is an effective way of identifying appropriate outreach activities based on the type of project and potential community concerns. The CAP is developed by the design team and should be specific to each project. Most importantly, the CAP should provide a strategic plan to maintain support and achieve the following:

- Determine design implications in relation to community impacts
- Ensure commitments are met
- Allow for additional public involvement when necessary to address public concern
- Develop Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) plans for use during construction

FDOT CAP Guidelines for design and construction identify four levels of public involvement based on the type of project:

Level 1: Project is noncontroversial, causes negligible accessibility impacts, and causes minimal traffic disruption.

Level 2: Project has general public acceptance, little impact on accessibility or traffic, and a moderate degree of traffic disruption. Examples include urban resurfacing, bridge repair projects, and other construction activities that may require lane closures.

Level 3: Project may be controversial, will significantly impact traffic flow, or will significantly affect accessibility to properties (temporarily or permanently). Examples are parking removal, median openings/closures, access management issues, traffic signal removal, roadway widening, major reconstruction, and projects including detours.

Level 4: Project involves interstate work, including maintenance work, road widening, temporary ramp closures, constructing a new interchange, and major reconstruction. Also included are projects that require temporary closure (i.e., for the duration of the construction or maintenance work) or permanent total closure of the roadway, bridges, and railroad crossings.

CAP ACTIVITIES

Below is a summary of activities expected to occur during the design phase under each CAP level:

- Level 1
  - Provide opportunity for city and county staff to review and comment on proposed plans
  - No public notices or meetings are required.
- Levels 2, 3, and 4
  - Provide opportunity for city and county staff to review and comment on proposed plans
  - Presentation(s) to local government(s) and/or organized community groups
  - Send notice of access impacts to affected property owners
  - Public information workshop(s)
- For all CAP levels:
  - Handoff meeting between PD&E and design phases to transfer public involvement activities, comments, and commitments
  - Public hearing required for projects involving access management changes (unless already presented in PD&E public hearing)

CAP FORMAT

The CAP is composed as a report and typically includes the following information:

1. A brief, but detailed, description of the project, including:
   a. Typical section;
   b. Description of the community and properties affected by the project;
   c. Major issues/community concerns and what action has been, or will be, taken to address them. Discussion of special issues such as removal of on-street parking (if any) and how it will affect adjacent properties and businesses;
   d. Special features/amenities that will be included in the project, including, but not limited to, landscaping, by whom, and who will maintain it; and
   e. Special commitments that the Department has made to the community (it is important to note that commitments and activities must be coordinated with the District Construction Office to ensure their compliance with the CAP);
2. A brief, but detailed, description of issues/impacts, including:
   a. Construction schedule, possible seasonal impacts;
   b. Contract time;
   c. MOT plan, including restrictions to lane closures (peak/non-peak), detours, and maintenance of access; and
   d. A brief description of access impacts;
3. The public involvement level and reasons for the designation;
4. The activities and timeline chosen, including:
   a. A portion of the project schedule (initial engineering, constructability, bidability, production, and letting); and
   b. A current timeline for the project, showing all CAP activities to date, as well as proposed activities.

3.3.2 Design Concept Changes

When substantial changes to the design concept occur after LDCA by FHWA, a public hearing may be required. Changes are considered to be substantial and a subsequent public hearing is held if (1) the changes cause social, economic, or environmental impacts that are substantively different from those previously determined or (2) there is significant controversy regarding a specific issue that needs to be resolved. Any design change should be coordinated through FHWA to determine the appropriate level of public involvement. In addition, a public information meeting is recommended if enough time has passed for there to be considerable changes in adjacent property ownership.

3.3.3 Access Management Changes

In accordance with Chapter 339.155 FS, if an existing median access within a project is proposed for revision, a public hearing is required. This applies to all types of projects, including reconstruction, resurfacing, standalone safety projects, and design-build. This does not apply to permit applications.

If a public hearing was conducted during the PD&E phase and included the currently proposed median changes, it is not necessary to conduct another public hearing. However, if during the design phase the Access Management Plan or median opening/closures are different from what was proposed in the PD&E phase, a public hearing is required.

3.4 Public Involvement during Construction

During construction, public involvement takes on more of a public information role, informing people about lane closures, median changes, business access impacts, work hours and work zones, detours, and grand openings.

The public's ability to influence the overall construction phase is limited, but the Department is responsible for engaging with the public to provide up-to-date information and solicit concerns in order to minimize the disruption to businesses and residents during the construction phase.

Some districts may hold pre-construction open houses, which can either be formal meetings held in enclosed spaces or informal activities conducted within the project corridor. Regardless of the location, all meetings, open houses, or hearings held during the construction (or pre-construction) phase must be noticed in the FAR and on the Department's website, pursuant to Section 120.525, FS (for more information, see Chapter 2 of this handbook). The CAP levels for construction are the same as for the design phase; however the activities conducted are different.

Below is a summary of activities expected to occur during the construction phase under each CAP level:

- All CAP Levels:
  - Mass mailing of project information flyer/brochure (two to four weeks prior to construction)
  - Construction notices should be included in District Public Information Officer's (PIO) weekly traffic report (one week prior and throughout construction)
  - Presentation(s) to local government(s) and/or community groups, as needed
- Level 2:
  - Handoff meeting from design to construction (after letting)
- Levels 3 and 4:

- Handoff meeting from design to construction (after letting)
- Determine need for consultant PIO (prior to scope for construction engineering and inspection)
- Project information meeting/open house (two to four weeks prior to construction), with appropriate public notice in the FAR

In addition to traditional public information meetings, some projects may benefit from other methods such as one-on-one meetings, an up-to-date project website, and social media. Variable message signs (VMS) are routinely used to communicate lane closures and changes in access.

3.5 Public Involvement during Alternative Project Delivery

The traditional project delivery approach is that a project moves into construction after completion of the design phase. The alternative approach combines design and construction into one phase, known as Design-Build. Design-Build projects with a financial component are typically P3s.

The alternative project delivery process typically begins with the preparation of a Request for Proposal (RFP) package. During the development of the RFP, one or more community meetings and workshops are held, as the RFP may include the preparation of preliminary engineering plans. As part of the RFP package, a preliminary CAP should be developed to provide the competing design-build teams an understanding of the public involvement level of effort before bids are submitted.

Some projects are large enough that the Department may elect to hire a separate Public Involvement Consultant (PIC) to represent the Department as a PIO. Not all projects warrant the need for a PIC.

When preparing the CAP for a design-build project, it should be prepared with sufficient flexibility to adapt to the dynamic nature of the project, and specific roles and responsibilities should be outlined. The CAP guidelines discussed in Sections 3.3 and 3.4 should be followed, as for any design or construction project.

Meetings and methods for reaching the public during the preparation of the RFP package and during the design-build project may include the following:

- Kickoff or introductory meeting
- MPO meetings
- Public information meetings
- Local Government Council or Commission meetings
- Elected and appointed official coordination
- Meetings with special interest groups (private groups, homeowners associations, environmental groups, minority groups, and individuals)
- Newsletters
- Website
- Facebook
- Twitter
- TV/radio
- VMS
- Stakeholder surveys

3.6 Public Involvement during Operations and Maintenance

Like construction, public involvement during the operations and maintenance phase is typically focused on informing people about lane closures, work zones, detours, and temporary access impacts, if any.

Examples of operations activities include improvements to traffic signals, pavement marking, and signage. Example maintenance activities are roadside mowing/landscaping, pavement repairs, and drainage system upkeep. Public involvement during operations and maintenance activities may be limited to the use of VMS and the PIO's weekly traffic report. However, there may be times when public meetings are necessary to address the concerns of adjacent property owners or neighborhoods. For more information, see the Poinciana Gardens example in Appendix D.

Chapter 4 – Identifying the Public

Public involvement activities must be accessible to anyone who has an interest in the project, regardless of race, age, income level, or disability. Since different involvement techniques may be required to ensure inclusion, it is important to have an understanding of the different populations that work, live, and play in the study area, so that communications methods can be tailored to their needs and preferences. Making sure that all interested members of the public are provided the opportunity to have input into our projects also helps FDOT comply with federal nondiscrimination regulations, including Title VI and environmental justice.

In addition to legal requirements, the more that is known about the study area population, the more effective the public involvement will be. For example, Wednesday night is popular for religious activities in some neighborhoods. Therefore, holding public meetings on Wednesday nights will not be effective if most of the people are already committed to another activity. This type of information is not available from the U.S. Census, but can be gleaned through fieldwork and demographic analysis.

Creating a project contact list is crucial for being able to notify affected people of public involvement activities. If the project had public involvement in an earlier phase, there may be a contact list that can be built upon. However, if this is the initial public involvement effort undertaken for the project, collecting names and contact information can be more challenging. This chapter provides guidance on how to create the initial project contact list. Before the contact list is finalized, the demographic analysis or review of study area demographics should be completed. This effort allows the project team to ensure that all populations within the study area are represented. Keep in mind that the contact list is dynamic and should change and grow as you identify new and interested parties.

4.1 Identifying Study Area Demographics

Knowing the following factors/demographics aids in the creation of an effective PIP:

- Gender
- Age
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Income Levels
- Home Ownership and Occupancy
- Disability
- Language
- Vehicles Available
- Employment

> The Sociocultural Effects (SCE) Evaluation is the Department's process for identifying and addressing potential effects of transportation projects on people, communities, and community resources. More information is available on FDOT's SCE Evaluation Process webpage at www.dot.state.fl.us/emo/pubs/sce/sce1.shtm

Information on minority and low income populations helps determine if disproportionate impacts will result from one or more of the alternatives. This is required by regulations concerning environmental justice. The effort required to complete this review of demographics will depend upon several factors, the two most important of which are:

1. The location of the study area in relation to being part of an MPO; and
2. Previous work completed for the SCE Evaluation.

Four potential scenarios that may be encountered are listed, as follows, and the following sections provide guidance on handling each scenario.

1. Scenario 1: Within an MPO area and an SCE Evaluation completed
2. Scenario 2: Within an MPO area and no SCE Evaluation completed
3. Scenario 3: Outside an MPO area and an SCE Evaluation completed
4. Scenario 4: Outside an MPO area and no SCE Evaluation completed

4.1.1 Scenario 1: Within an MPO Area and an SCE Evaluation Completed

This is the best possible scenario, especially if the SCE Evaluation was completed within the previous five years. Reviewing the community data compiled as part of the SCE Evaluation should provide information about all of the community factors listed in Section 4.1. If the SCE Evaluation is more than five years old, the MPO staff should be able to assist in providing updated demographic information. Alternatively, the project team can conduct their own demographic analysis utilizing appropriate data available from the U.S. Census and other sources. For more information on this approach, see Section 4.1.4.

Transportation Outreach Planner Tool

In southeast Florida, the MPOs use the Transportation Outreach Planner Tool that provides updated demographic and socioeconomic data, which is customizable by study area. Information available from this tool includes:

- Demographic reports,
- Community background reports by municipality and for some neighborhoods, and
- Outreach strategies for different populations.

4.1.2 Scenario 2: Within an MPO Area and No SCE Evaluation Completed

In this scenario, the MPO staff should be able to assist the project team in developing the demographic analysis. Resources available to the MPO include the regional travel demand model, which includes information about demographic and socioeconomic conditions. The model is updated along with the LRTP every five years, so the information should be relevant. The MPO may have access to other studies conducted in their area that provide demographic details, or may have contacts with local agencies that are able to provide information the project team requires.

4.1.3 Scenario 3: Outside an MPO Area and an SCE Evaluation Completed

For this scenario, the SCE Evaluation would have been completed as part of a previous FDOT study, such as an ETDM Planning or Programming Screen or a corridor study. If it is relatively recent (not more than five years old), it can be relied upon for the new project. Whenever feasible, the project team should perform field assessments to ensure that the SCE data are still current. More information on conducting demographic field assessment is provided in Section 4.1.4.

4.1.4 Scenario 4: Outside an MPO Area and No Previous SCE Evaluation Completed

In this situation, the project team will be required to conduct its own demographic analysis of the study area. The level of detail and depth of this analysis will depend in part upon the complexity of the project, and the project budget. The SCE page of the Department's website provides a recorded presentation of the demographic analysis training session offered by FDOT at www.dot.state.fl.us/emo/pubs/sce/sce1.shtm.

The following is a summary of the information provided in this presentation combined with other recommendations for completing a demographic analysis.

Step 1: Define the Study Area

If the study area is not predefined by the project scope, the boundaries should be defined to include the entire project limits. The size of this study area will depend upon the type of project and its complexity. For planning studies, the general rule of thumb is one-half mile on either side of the corridor. For a design project, this area can be reduced to 300 feet from the edge of the right of way. The boundary may be defined by the U.S. Census geography, such as Census Blocks or Block Groups, in order to avoid having to clip and interpolate spatial data from the U.S. Census data or use spatial data from the census that does not accurately portray the study area (see inset: *Reconciling Spatial Data*).

> ***Reconciling Spatial Data***
>
> **Intersection** – Uses totals from all census geographies that touch the study area boundary. Hazard is overestimation.
>
> **Interpolation** – Clips the census geographies to the study area. Hazard is potential for both overestimations and underestimations. May be reduced by comparison to aerial photography.
>
> **Containment** – Uses only those census geographies contained entirely within the study area. Hazard is underestimation.

Step 2: Identify Available Resources

There are a number of resources available for demographic and SCE data. The most common is the U.S. Census Bureau, including information from both the decennial censuses and the American Community Survey (ACS), which provides information on a one-year, three-year, and five-year basis, in between 10-year decennial censuses. Selecting the right source and appropriate census geography is critical. **Table 4.1** provides an overview of the types of information and geographies available for both the decennial census and the ACS.

Additional information may be available from:

- County and/or municipal government
- University of Florida
    - Bureau of Economic and Business Research
    - Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences
    - Florida Geographic Data Library
- Local chambers of commerce
- National Urban League
- National Council of La Raza
- Local school district
- United States Department of Housing and Urban Development
- United States Department of Agriculture
- National Center for Education Statistics
- Local or regional transportation agencies
    - County or municipal traffic engineering or transportation planning division
    - MPO
    - FDOT's EST
- Social service agencies
- Transit service providers

Table 4.1: U.S. Census Data Resources

	Decennial Census	American Community Survey
Frequency	Every 10 years	Every year for areas ≥ 65,000 population Every three years for areas ≥ 20,000 population Every five years for all areas
Data Available	Demographic: • Total Population • Race • Ethnicity • Age • Sex Households/Families/Group Quarters: • Total number • Type • Size • Relationship Housing Units: • Total number • Occupancy • Tenure	Includes decennial census data, plus the following that may affect public involvement strategies: • Economic Characteristics: o Income o Employment status o Place of work and journey to work o Work status in previous year o Vehicles available • Social Characteristics: o Marital status o Ancestry o Place of birth, citizenship, and year of entry o Language spoken at home o Educational attainment and school enrollment o Disability • Housing Characteristics: o Units in structure o Telephone service available • Financial Characteristics: o Housing value o Rent
Geography	County County Subdivision Place Census Tract Block Group Block	County County Subdivision Place Census Tract* Block Group*

*Five-year estimates only

Step 3: Determine which Census Geography to Use

If utilizing data from the U.S. Census Bureau, whether it is from the decennial census or the ACS, the most useful geography to use is the Block Group level, as most of the demographic and socioeconomic information is available at this level. Other geographies are useful for either providing comparisons (at the County or "Place" level) or for facilitating a more detailed analysis of race, income, or age (at the "Block" level).

Step 4: Conduct a Field Review

It is beneficial for the project team to visit the study area to conduct a field review to verify the demographic data collected. During this field review, note who is observed in the study area, the types of community services provided, and if there is evidence of languages other than English being used. Where possible, try to speak with people in the study area at local businesses, religious institutions, or government agencies.

Step 5: Develop the Study Area Profile

Using the data collected and observations from the field, generate a profile of the study area that includes:

- Total population
- Age cohorts or collapsed categories that are appropriate for the project, such as ages under 5, under 15, 16 to 21, 21 to 64, and 65 or older

- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Income levels
- Home ownership and occupancy
- Languages and proficiency
- Employment
- Vehicle availability
- Disability

This profile should include maps, where appropriate, to show the relationships of different demographic characteristics and identify any concentrations of certain features, such as languages, disability, and transit dependency (reflected by zero vehicles available). It is helpful to include comparisons of the study area to a larger geography such as municipal or county-level data. Describe social characteristics, special populations, and growth trends. Consider the project and include information about those aspects of the study area that may be significant to the project, such as vehicle ownership and disability for a transit study, or prevalence of languages other than English that may affect public involvement strategies.

4.1.5 Using the Demographic Analysis to Tailor the PIP

Once the demographic profile of the study area is complete, the information should be used to create a Public Involvement Plan (PIP) specific to the area. Several examples of strategies to accommodate different demographic categories are provided in **Table 4.2**. More information is available online at www.mpotransportationoutreachplanner.org or in the Transportation Research Board's National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Report 710, Practical Approaches for Involving Traditionally Underserved Populations in Transportation Decisionmaking, available at (http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/nchrp/nchrp_rpt_710.pdf). For more information, see the PD&E Manual, Part 1, Chapter 11, Public Involvement, Section 11.2.1.

Table 4.2: Public Involvement Strategies by Demographic Category

	Demographic Category									
Strategies	Seniors	Youth	Hearing Impaired	Sight Impaired	Physically Challenged	No High School	Low Income	Non-English Speakers	Transit Dependent	Shift Workers
Provide extended or special meeting hours	✓	✓							✓	✓
Plan a special meeting in a convenient location	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Incorporate games or similar activities		✓				✓				
Provide written materials			✓							
Provide American Sign Language interpreters			✓							
Use Plain Language guidance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Post meeting notices and project information in convenient locations					✓		✓		✓	
Contact via telephone				✓						
Ensure meeting location meets ADA requirements					✓					
Place display materials at an accessible level during meetings					✓					
Provide extra staff to assist with conveying the written information displayed at meetings				✓						
Provide translated materials								✓		
Ensure bilingual staff is available at public meetings								✓		
Hold the meeting at a location that is on or within ¼ mile of a fixed route transit line					✓		✓		✓	

4.2 Creating a Project Contact List

The effort required to identify the public to involve in a project will depend upon the phase of the decision-making process and the complexity of the project. The budget available will also impact the effort. Projects in early planning stages may require more effort to identify the public than those in the final stages. The following subsections provide suggestions for ways to identify the public, depending upon the phase of the decision-making process the project is in.

4.2.1 Projects or Studies in the Early Planning Phase

Typically, these studies do not have specific corridors or project limits defined and may require less effort in identifying the public; however, they may require more effort in public involvement techniques to ensure all members of the community are aware of the project and have equal opportunities to participate. The MPO may be able to assist in identifying the different communities within the study area, or data from the U.S. Census can be utilized.

4.2.2 Project Development and Environment Phase

The starting point for most of these projects is property owner information obtained from the property appraiser's office. In addition to property owners, it is recommended that the project team work with local planners to identify individuals active in their communities, neighborhood or homeowner associations, or civic groups. The public involvement professional on the project team may have knowledge of key stakeholders or groups to include on the contact list. Other resources are provided in **Table 4.3**.

4.2.3 Design Phase

If available, use information from previous phases and ensure that property owner information is updated through the property appraiser's office. Depending upon the length of the corridor, it may be feasible to collect the names of businesses and residential communities to ensure all affected individuals are included on the contact list.

4.2.4 Construction Phase

Information from the design phase may be used but should be verified. During this phase, and depending upon the type of improvements being constructed, it is very important to obtain accurate property owner information. As there is often a delay in updates to property appraiser records, it is advisable to send project team representatives into the field to verify the current uses and owners, when feasible. In addition to notifying property owners, tenants of residential and non-residential properties should be made aware of the upcoming project, the length of time it is anticipated to occur, and any other pertinent information that may affect their travel plans or decisions.

Public Hearings

Regardless of the phase of the project, if a Public Hearing is being conducted, property owners within a minimum of 300 feet of the centerline of each proposed project alternative must be notified in writing about the hearing. More information about the specific information required to be included in these notifications can be found in the PD&E Manual, Part 1, Chapter 11, Section 11.2.5.

4.2.5 Operations and Maintenance Phase

Routine operations and maintenance does not always require public notice in the form of letters or other written notifications. In most instances, providing notification via VMS for a few days up to a few weeks prior, depending upon the nature of the maintenance, may be sufficient.

Table 4.3: Community Resources

Elected Officials

- Board of County Commissioners
- State Representatives and Senators
- MPOs
- City Councils or Commissions
- Florida Congressional Delegation
- Native American Tribes

Agency Representatives

- Florida Department of Economic Opportunity
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- Florida Department of Health
- Florida Department of Children and Families
- Florida Department of Environmental Protection
- Federal Agencies
- Regional Planning Councils
- Regional Transportation Agencies
- Water Management District
- City/County Agencies
- Housing Authorities/Agencies
- MPO Technical Advisory Committees
- Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles

Special Interest Groups

- Florida Farm Bureau Federation
- Florida League of Cities
- Florida Association of Counties
- Florida Retail Federation
- National Federation of Independent Business
- Florida Association of Community Developers
- Florida United Business Association
- Florida Petroleum Council
- Florida Association of Home Builders
- Florida Restaurant Association
- Floridians for Better Transportation
- Florida Petroleum Marketers & Convenience Store Association
- Florida Transportation Builders Association, Inc.

Recreational Groups

- Track and Bicycle Groups
- Sports Associations
- Pedestrian Groups
- Trail Associations
- Campers Associations
- Greenway Organizations

Tourist Industry

- Visitor Council/Bureaus
- Welcome Centers and Rest Areas
- Festival Organizers
- Tourist Development Agencies
- Tourist Attractions
- Car Rental Agencies
- Travel Agents
- Hotel and Restaurant Associations

Appointed Officials

- Planning Boards
- Historic Preservation Boards
- MPO Citizens Advisory Committees
- Florida Transportation Commission

Business Community

- Chambers of Commerce
- Economic Development Councils
- Builders Associations
- Merchants Associations
- Major Employers

Professional Organizations

- Realtors
- Planners
- Developers
- Contractors
- Bankers
- Surveyors
- Engineers
- Attorneys
- Appraisers
- Healthcare Providers

Non-Profit Organizations

- Churches
- Libraries
- Colleges and Universities
- Community and Senior Centers
- American Association of Retired Persons
- The Arc
- Urban League
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
- Elder Associations
- Meals on Wheels
- Homeless Shelters
- Advocacy Groups

Transportation Professionals

- Safety Groups
- Emergency Medical Services
- Trucking Associations
- Transit/Paratransit Service Providers
- Public Transportation Planners
- AAA/Other Auto Associations
- Community Traffic Safety Teams

Environmental Community

- 1000 Friends of Florida
- Audubon Society
- Ducks Unlimited
- Sierra Club

Residential Associations

- Homeowners
- Condominium Owners
- Neighborhood Associations

Chapter 5 – Public Involvement Tools and Techniques

This chapter focuses on methods for sharing information about the project and promoting public involvement activities. This chapter provides guidance on working with the media (print, radio, television, and social) and explores innovative techniques to broaden the involvement effort.

5.1 Working with the Media

Utilizing media sources is the most effective way to "spread the word" and provide updates on transportation projects. There is a theory that "all news is good news," but that is not always the case, especially when it relates to large investments of public funds. Achieving positive media exposure requires a certain degree of knowledge and expertise to tailor messages that are factual and meet the media's test for newsworthiness. It is important to formulate a clear, uniform message for the media from the onset of the project to reduce the chance of spreading misinformation.

Establishing a professional, one-on-one relationship with key reporters and editors who cover the transportation or government sectors is one of the best ways to enhance the chances of getting positive media coverage. This is why involving the District PIO in public involvement efforts can be effective, as the PIO is typically the individual with established relationships and a solid understanding of how and when to engage the media.

Another key to positive coverage is the content of the message. The media is more likely to pick up a story if it is simple to report, easy to understand, contains personal experiences, and is linked to a current or enduring theme, such as creating jobs, preserving the environment, or moving people and goods. Transportation professionals, particularly engineers and planners, can get so involved in the details that it is challenging to take a step back and remember the bigger picture. This is where public involvement professionals and the PIO can help craft a simple, easy-to-understand message. Personal experiences from members of the public or local government officials are effective in highlighting the benefits the project may bring to the community or in explaining, in general terms, the need for the project.

5.1.1 Press Kits/Press Releases

Reporters typically look for ways to get a story out quickly and appreciate press releases and other prepared materials about the project. If appropriate, a press kit that includes facts about the project, a press release with quotations from key agency representatives, information on future public involvement activities, whom to contact for more information, and photographs, graphics, or videos of the project should be prepared. All materials provided to the press should be carefully proofread, double checking that the dates, times, locations, and contact person(s) are all correct. Incorrect information will diminish the credibility of the Department with the media.

Issuing press releases at milestones is common in major long-term transportation projects. Press releases should follow the Plain Language Initiative Guidelines, (which can be found online at www.plainlanguage.gov/howto/guidelines/FederalPLGuidelines/TOC.cfm), and be clear and concise. In general, press releases should address the five "W's":

- Who: Identify the agency sponsoring the project and provide a contact name and phone number.
- What: Describe what is currently happening either with the project or at the public event.
- When: Indicate the timeline of the subject announced. If the press release is announcing a public meeting or workshop, be sure to include start times.
- Where: Identify the location of the public involvement activity, including the full street address with city, state, and zip code.
- Why: Explain why the public involvement activity or project milestone is taking place.

Formatting tips for a press release include using an easy-to-read font, leaving at least a space and a half between each line of text, providing a headline that captures the essence of the release, including the date of the release, and including the required nondiscrimination language. It is important to include a sentence or two describing the project, its background, and its purpose or goal. If the project is being conducted in coordination with other agencies, these agencies should be recognized in the press release. This standard format for a press release can be used for a variety of media sources. All media materials should be cleared with the Public Information Office before dissemination.

5.1.2 Media Sources

While more than three-quarters of Americans have access to the Internet, it is important to understand the community characteristics of the affected area and to diversify media resources to ensure all segments of the population are included. Develop a list of media contacts in coordination with the District PIO and maintain it throughout the life of the project. To better involve traditionally underserved communities, some additional effort may be required to identify community-specific and/or community-based media sources. If a member of the project team does not have knowledge of these sources, working with a community leader to identify them may be necessary. As minority media outlets are identified, it is important to share those contacts with the PIO.

In developing a media strategy, the following questions should be asked:

- What is the appropriate level of involvement effort that should be used for the particular project?
- How will people react to the particular media source?
- How many people can be reached by that source?
- How implementable is the media strategy, from a resource and complexity perspective?
- What is the benefit-cost value of the strategy?

All media sources have different deadlines. Knowing these deadlines may influence the decision to include a particular source in the overall strategy. It is important to respect those deadlines to maintain a positive relationship. There are preferences regarding how the information is received (e.g., via email or a website) and print/digital quality standards that need to be followed. All of this information should be compiled and included as part of the media list.

The following are examples of different media sources that can be utilized for transportation projects.

Print Media

Print media should be considered for more than just placing a legally required advertisement about an upcoming meeting. There are several types of print media outlets for promoting public involvement activities. These include general circulation newspapers, community-specific newspapers, organizational newsletters or bulletins, community-based magazines, and school-based publications. While advertising in general circulation newspapers is both a requirement (see Chapters 6 and 7 for minimum requirements) and a reliable resource for delivering project news and updates, additional options can broaden the potential audience and promote participation by traditionally underserved communities. It is important to consider using other print media, such as language- or community-specific newspapers (e.g., *El Sentinel*, the Spanish version of the *Sun Sentinel*, or the *Caribbean Voice, a* newspaper in Broward County whose large readership includes the South American and Caribbean populations); homeowner association, special interests, or business community newsletters or bulletins; and school-based publications such as student newspapers at local universities.

Some communities have local magazines that are distributed on a monthly or quarterly basis to inform residents about recent activities and upcoming events. These can be used for projects that have longer time frames or involve large geographic areas. Including meetings in the community calendar of events in newspapers and newsletters is also effective. Volunteer-coordinated publications usually welcome articles prepared by the project team.

Print media also includes any project-generated materials, such as fact sheets, newsletters, business cards or palm cards, brochures, and flyers. After obtaining necessary permission, these materials can be:

- Delivered to a project-based mailing list
- Posted at local gathering spots such as grocery stores, government offices, libraries, parks, community centers, or places of worship
- Distributed to transit riders by Public Involvement teams at transit stops or on transit vehicles
- Delivered to residences using door hangers
- Sent to property managers of rental communities and major employers for distribution
- Sent home with school children

Radio and TV

Radio and television remain powerful media sources that capture a wide audience, so it is important not to overlook utilizing these news distribution channels. Interviews on news programs are an effective way to deliver project information. Additionally, PSAs are often used as a formal method of announcing meetings, workshops, and milestones. Cable television can be particularly useful, as it costs significantly less than paid network advertising and has a more local feel. Local cable channels offer news clips and interviews that can specifically cater to a particular project. Local TV and radio stations often have community calendars that can announce your event.

Web-Based Media

Social media has become a cornerstone of effective communication in the past decade. Facebook pages and Twitter feeds are examples of online project communication. Cellphone applications (apps) are also increasingly being used to communicate project news updates. FDOT has its own Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube accounts, and the District PIO can place notifications about project events and activities on these outlets. Stakeholders and team members can spread project information through their personal and professional online links. Special interest groups may be willing to share updates and notifications about the project on their social media sites.

Opportunities	Challenges
• Allows for public voices to be heard instead of only institutional/agency • Low cost method to reach large audience • Keeps conversation about project and issues current	• Moderating the conversation requires frequent review of posts • Only reaches those with access to internet or mobile device • Requires frequent posts to keep topics up to date

Websites are an effective method of communication that provide a central, consistent source of updates on the project, depending on the complexity of the project. Websites are also useful for keeping track of public interest in the project through website traffic tracking analysis tools. Web surveys and polls can be conducted through the project website at critical milestones to efficiently gauge public opinion of the decision-making process. Websites can provide ways to sign up for an email list, submit a comment, or request a presentation. Even if a project website is not required or developed, utilizing existing websites of partner agencies or affected municipalities to post information about the project and public meetings can be an effective means of notification. FDOT requires the use of the Department's template for websites about their projects. More information about these requirements can be found here http://www.dot.state.fl.us/OIS/consultantsites.shtm.

Opportunities	Challenges
• Useful for posting project resources and documents • Updating content is quicker than for printed materials • Ability to provide content in multiple languages and even spoken translation for visually impaired	• Only reaches those with access to internet or mobile device • Only reaches those who know about/were directed to the website

Making use of social and electronic media is an integral part of the modern public engagement process, and will continue to gain popularity as more people become connected with each other through the internet, whether from a computer or a smartphone device. The challenge will be to engage and inform users about the appropriate way to interact with social and electronic media, how it can spread information faster and more efficiently, and how it saves time and money over more traditional means of disseminating information and involving the public. Social media and its related tools present considerable savings where they make sense; they are simple and largely free to develop, resources are kept to a minimum, and a range of information can be created and posted to the public realm with a few clicks of the mouse or taps on the smartphone. Its importance should not be underestimated.

Many of our residents may appreciate a diversified public engagement strategy, one that includes digital material, print material, and ability to speak with someone in person; however, it is important to keep in mind there will always be people who feel most comfortable with in-person interaction or tangible media that does not require a power source or internet connectivity.

Other Media Sources

There are other opportunities for sharing information about projects and public involvement activities, such as videos, billboards, VMS, email blasts, text alerts, and digital advertising on websites. Depending upon the scale of the project, some of these broader involvement methods may be beneficial. The rapidly changing world of technology provides new opportunities on a regular basis for different approaches to spreading the word.

For more information on media resources, consult with FDOT Central Office or your District PIO. Additional information for working with the media is available online at www.gdrc.org/ngo/media/index.html.

5.2 Innovative Involvement Methods

The media sources discussed in Sections 5.1.2 can be considered the traditional approach to public involvement, even if some of the sources are newer than others. In most instances, except for social media and websites designed with comment forms, outreach through the media is one-way communication. Opportunities for two-way communication are traditionally provided through formal public meetings. This section focuses on several other ideas to engage the public in discussion about a project or a public involvement activity. Typical public meetings are discussed in Chapter 6.

5.2.1 Speakers Bureau

Putting together a Speakers Bureau has proven to be effective in garnering project support and sharing project information at major milestones. Project experts, including the District PM, District PIO, and consultant team can be part of the Speakers Bureau. The Speakers Bureau should consist of a group of experts that have diverse backgrounds to ensure the different facets of the project details are covered. Speakers Bureau members can present at a variety of public meetings and events, including community gatherings, professional organizations, and transportation committees. Training opportunities and refresher sessions are typically provided for Speakers Bureau candidates to address project details and ensure that a consistent message is delivered. More information about the use of Speakers Bureaus is located in Appendix D.

5.2.2 Public Involvement Teams

To maximize public engagement, some agencies put together Public Involvement Teams (or traveling information centers) to attend public events or find public places to disseminate information pertinent to the project, either by simply distributing flyers or by setting up kiosks to discuss details of the project. These teams can diversify involvement efforts to maximize public attendance. The following are examples of non-traditional places where Public Involvement Teams can be used:

- *Shopping malls and other retail centers* are places where the team can reach out to a large number of people from diverse backgrounds.
- *Community fairs and sports events* offer opportunities for organizing public information events as another way of increasing exposure for a project or plan. Booths can be set up at these events, or flyers can be handed out.
- *Central community centers*, such as public libraries, public parks, and community centers are locations where teams can market project information.
- *Transportation hubs,* especially for transit projects, provide a particularly appropriate locale where the team can be stationed at major transfer centers or heavily used stops to distribute information about the project or upcoming public involvement activities.

5.2.3 Drive-Thru Project Display

Another innovative method of public involvement is a drive-thru open house, in which a tent is set up in the project area to hand out project information to a passersby or driver pulling directly up to the tent. This approach is a good way to distribute information about upcoming construction lane closures or detours.

Chapter 6 – Public Meetings

The term "public meeting" encompasses a wide variety of meeting formats and is used to distinguish less prescriptive forms of outreach from public hearings. Public meetings can take the form of advisory committees/groups, workshops, focus groups, forums, open houses, or charrettes. They can include individual meetings, small groups, or the larger community. The overall goal of any public meeting is to share information between parties, initiate or continue a dialogue about the project, and start building consensus regarding the most appropriate solution(s). This chapter explores different meeting formats, tools, and techniques for effective meetings, as well as strategies for dealing with conflict during meetings.

Steps for Planning and Implementing a Public Meeting

1. Determine the meeting purpose, audience, appropriate format, time, and location.
2. Select an appropriate meeting facility.
3. Provide notification of the meeting.
4. Select an appropriate number of qualified staff and assign roles.
5. Brief staff thoroughly and rehearse for meeting.
6. Conduct meeting utilizing innovative techniques when appropriate.
7. Communicate effectively during the meeting.
8. Record and evaluate the meeting.

6.1 Meeting Purpose and Format

Perhaps the most conventional or familiar format for public meetings is a setup in which the audience is allowed to review project information that is on display prior to a presentation by the project team, and informal discussion occurs both before and after the presentation. Depending upon the purpose of the meeting, this format can be very effective. There may be instances when more direct participation is necessary to address a specific issue or deal with controversy. In those cases, a different meeting format can be more productive, such as a small group meeting or one-on-one meetings. Sometimes public information meetings do not have a formal presentation, but will have information about the proposed project on boards or on a looping video or electronic slide presentation, with staff available to answer questions.

To determine the best format, ask the following questions:

***Why* is this meeting being held?** To fully answer this question, think about:

1) The information that the project team needs to share with the audience:
    a. Is this meeting to introduce a project, to review alternatives, or to explain an action?
    b. Are there specific concerns or issues that need to be discussed?
    c. Is there potential for controversy or opposition? Remember to consider alternative points of view. Often what transportation professionals perceive to be beneficial can be perceived by the community as useless, or worse, detrimental.
2) The type of information, response, or action desired from the audience:
    a. Can they provide insight or information that will help with project development or evaluation?
    b. Do you want to know their overall opinion?
    c. Does the discussion need to get into details about specific issues or concerns?
    d. Does the audience need to take the information provided and share it with others?
    e. Does approval or funding of the project require community support?
3) The current phase of the project development process:

a. Do you need the participants to stay engaged for several weeks, months, or years?
b. How soon will the benefits or impacts of the project affect the community?
c. Does the opportunity still exist for modifications to be made based on public comment?

***Who* needs to attend this meeting to accomplish the purpose?** This can include local and state agency representatives, elected/appointed officials, special interest groups, neighborhoods that are directly affected, business owners, or those who have an interest in the proposed action. If the audience includes the general public, consider the following demographic characteristics of the project area population, as they may impact the meeting format, location, and time:

1) Age
2) Transportation availability or dependency
3) English language proficiency
4) Disabilities

***What* format will be most appropriate to the purpose and participants? Table 6.1** includes descriptions of different meeting formats. It is not meant to be an exhaustive list, and practitioners should not be discouraged from trying alternative or new approaches.

Table 6.1: Meeting Formats

Meeting Type	Description
Advisory or working committee/group	A representative gathering of individuals brought together to focus on either specific issues or geographic areas, or to provide overall guidance or comment on a project. Common examples are technical advisory groups that include professionals from agencies (other than FDOT) and committees/groups that include one representative from each neighborhood or community group.
Charrette	Typically associated with design projects, these are intensive daylong or multiple day meetings, where design professionals interact with the public in facilitated tasks to address specific concerns or issues and develop alternative solutions.
Focus groups	These are a series of meetings with five to ten individuals grouped by distinguishing traits (e.g., transit dependent, business leaders, retirees, or young professionals) led by a professional facilitator to concentrate on the project or specific issues. It is important to hold a series, meaning several different groups, to ensure the broader community is represented. These do not replace larger community meetings, but provide the opportunity for small group interaction. It may be beneficial to employ a market research firm or professional facilitators to assist in identifying participants, as this can broaden the audience beyond those who typically attend public meetings.
Interviews/one-on-one meetings	As the names suggest, these are much smaller meetings with as few as two individuals, getting together to talk about the project or related issues. This type of meeting typically works well with elected/appointed officials, community leaders, or individuals with significant concerns about the project, or specific knowledge or expertise.

Meeting Type	Description
Small group meetings	While this can include focus groups, in this context it is meant more for self-identified groups, such as homeowner associations, special interest groups, civic associations, or existing committees of local agencies, such as the citizens advisory committee of the local MPO.
Workshop/ community forum/ open house	This refers to an informal gathering, held at a designated location, where individuals review project-related materials, talk with project team members, and provide comments.
Public Hearing	These are formal meetings designed to comply with specific state and federal requirements. Specific notifications, as well as transcripts of the hearing provided by a court reporter, must be provided. A designated comment period may extend beyond the actual meeting date. See Chapter 7 for more information about public hearings.

***Where* is the appropriate location for the meeting based on the purpose, participants, and format?** Meetings are most often held at designated locations and times within the project area. Consider taking the meeting to where people are, such as shopping areas, employment centers, community festivals, or fairs. Also consider attending established meetings, such as homeowner association meetings, business group breakfasts, or church group meetings.

***When* is the most appropriate time to conduct the meeting based on purpose, participants, and format?** Knowledge about the community is critical to answering this question. For example, if the project study area includes a large population of retirees, it may be beneficial to hold meetings during the morning or afternoon. Similarly, if the community or audience includes individuals with regular working hours (such as 8 AM to 5 PM), holding meetings at night or on weekends may better fit their schedules, especially if they have school-aged children. In contrast, if the project affects a facility that relies on shift workers, such as a hospital or industrial factory, it may be more appropriate to hold the meetings at times that accommodate these schedules. In this case, meetings should be longer and extend across the break of two shifts. Most FDOT-sponsored public meetings are held in the late afternoon/early evening to provide convenience to the most people. Some districts have discovered that Wednesday nights are often reserved for religious services, thus scheduling meetings on that night is avoided.

Table 6.2 is designed for use by the public involvement practitioner to determine the most appropriate type of meeting or public involvement activity. This table is not meant to be prescriptive or imply that these different meeting formats can only be utilized if all the checked criteria exist; rather it offers guidance in determining when an alternative format may be appropriate.

Table 6.2: Meeting Format Matrix

Meeting Format	**Advisory or Working Group**	**Charrette**	**Focus Group**	**Interviews/ One-on-One Meeting**	**Small Group Meeting**	**Workshop/ Community Forum/ Open House**	**Public Hearing**
Meeting Purpose							
Introduce a project	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Project update	✓			✓	✓	✓	
Resolve conflict		✓		✓	✓	✓	
Build consensus	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Improve community relations				✓	✓	✓	
Identify project issues	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Evaluate project alternatives	✓		✓	✓	✓		
Develop alternative solutions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Present preferred program/plan/project alternative(s)							✓
Focus on specific issues	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Share project information	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Satisfy legal mandates for public involvement							✓
Meeting Participants							
Individuals	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Elected/appointed officials	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Special interest groups	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Agency representatives	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
General public		✓			✓	✓	✓
Meeting Location							
Community center	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Place of worship				✓	✓	✓	
Project office			✓	✓			
Library	✓				✓		
College/University *(Kindergarten through High School requires special approvals)*		✓			✓	✓	✓
Shopping mall						✓	
Community fair/event						✓	
Government center	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Council/Commission chamber	✓				✓		✓
Internet/TV/telephone	✓			✓			
Meeting Elements							
Agenda	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Exhibits	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Moderator/Facilitator	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Scribe/Court Reporter	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Large open space		✓				✓	
Comment table						✓	✓
Breakout areas		✓				✓	
Formal seating							✓
Microphone		✓					✓
Webcasting capabilities							
Audio/video recording/transcript			✓				✓

6.2 Meeting Facility

It is important, but not always easy, to find a location for a public meeting that is in the project area, familiar to the public, easy to reach (on a public transit route, if possible), complies with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Jessica Lunsford Act, complies with the Department's policy on Green Lodging (for hotels only), has sufficient parking, and is appropriate to the meeting purpose and format.

6.2.1 Facility Considerations

Before reserving the location, schedule an appointment with the facility manager to visit the facility. Take pictures of the room, check the audio/visual equipment, electrical outlets, and furniture options. Ask to meet the person who will be on duty at the facility during the meeting. Consider the details of the meeting when selecting a meeting location.

- If a sound system is needed, does the facility provide such equipment?
- Will the facility allow entry into the space early enough for time to set up? Likewise, is there a closing time that restricts breakdown time?
- Are there enough tables and chairs available?
- Is there plenty of parking and is handicapped parking available?
- Are the restrooms handicap accessible?
- Is the parking lot well lit for a night meeting?
- Is there a place for signage directing people to the correct room and will you be allowed to place signs on the roadway leading to the meeting location?
- Can people walk easily from transit?
- Is there a custodian or property manager on duty at the time of the meeting for emergency purposes?
- Are there local code enforcement/sign regulations that require permits for way-finding signs?

Make sure all of the following are considered before final approval of a location.

In compliance with ADA regulations, all public meetings must be held at a site that provides reasonable accommodation and access to disabled persons wishing to attend and participate. When notified at least seven days in advance of a person's disability, the Department must make an effort to reasonably accommodate the person's disability to provide an equal opportunity for participation. While the Department cannot provide transportation for disabled persons, every effort should be made to accommodate special needs, such as wheelchair access and seating, materials for visual impairment (through the use of large print materials, for example), or referral to a transportation service that may suit their needs.

To comply with the 2005 Jessica Lunsford Act, public school facilities for grades K-12, should not be used for public meetings. School facilities may be used, however, if there are no other feasible options in the area, and with approval from the Department's Assistant Secretary of Engineering and Operations. Alternate educational facilities to consider include colleges, universities, and private schools.

In March 2009, the Department adopted a Green Lodging policy (Topic No. 001-350-001-b) that encourages meetings and conferences hosted by the Department to be held at hotels designated by the FDEP as Green Lodging hotels. More information about Green Lodging hotels is available on the FDEP website at www.dep.state.fl.us/mainpage/programs/green_lodging.htm. Utilize common sense and logic:

- If the purpose of the meeting is simply to impart information to the public, an auditorium setting is adequate.
- If a variety of information is to be communicated with the purpose of receiving feedback, look for a room large enough to accommodate multiple workstations and some seating.
- If a large crowd is expected, find a location with a room large enough to set up two identical sets of display boards, allowing people to move about freely.

6.2.2 Facility Layout

The meeting room layout should be arranged to accommodate the number of people expected and the elements according to the purpose of the meeting. Ideally, a layout of the room, particularly for the more formal meetings, will be drafted before the meeting is set up. Several examples of different room layouts are provided in Appendix E.

6.3 Meeting Notification

Information regarding the meeting purpose, date, time, and place should be clearly conveyed to the intended participants. The minimum requirements for notification are:

- Publishing an advertisement in a newspaper with local circulation in the project area; at least one advertisement is suggested prior to the meeting,
- Publishing a notification in the FAR at least seven days prior to the meeting,
- Posting the meeting on FDOT's Public Meeting Notices webpage at least seven days prior to the meeting,
- Issuing a press release at least seven days prior to the meeting, and
- Sending or delivering notification letters to elected officials, property owners, and renters/tenants within the affected area.

All of these notifications should contain FDOT Standard Nondiscrimination Language:

> *Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, or family status. People who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or who require translation services (free of charge) should contact _____ at _____ at least seven days prior to the meeting.*

With the audience in mind, there are many creative ways to approach meeting notification. Details about public meeting notifications are provided in Chapter 7. Remember that outreach to traditionally underserved and LEP populations (see Chapter 4) is critical. For the traditionally underserved, bringing information to their communities helps increase their awareness of public meetings. Further, engaging several of the community leaders (not necessarily elected leaders) and seeking their help to spread the word or provide ideas about how best to reach their community can be beneficial.

For communities where English is not the primary language, translating meeting notifications may improve awareness. If the community is large enough, there may be a non-English language newspaper or radio station where a meeting notification could be placed. Other suggestions are posting the translated notice on the project website and establishing telephone numbers with voicemail for individuals to leave messages in their native languages for the project team. To be effective, information about these options should be provided in the most prevalent languages in the required meeting notifications, such as the letters and newspaper advertisement. **Figure 6.1** shows an example from District Four for the Port St. Lucie Boulevard PD&E Study.

Notification Samples

A variety of notification materials can be tailored for use with the array of public outreach opportunities. Examples that can be modified to match any need are provided in Appendix D.

Figure 6.1: Sample Notification Letter with Bilingual Call-In Information

Florida Department of Transportation

RICK SCOTT
GOVERNOR

3400 West Commercial Boulevard
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309

ANANTH PRASAD, P.E.
SECRETARY

October 11, 2013

SUBJECT: Public Kick-off Meeting
Port St. Lucie Boulevard Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study
Limits: Becker Road to Darwin Boulevard
Financial Project ID No.: 431752-1-22-01
Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Number: 13802
County: St. Lucie

Dear Property Owner or Current Resident:

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), District Four, has scheduled a Public Kick-off Meeting for the above-reference project. This project is in the Project Development and Environment (PD&E) phase, which includes the evaluation of roadway, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, and transit needs proposed along Port St. Lucie Boulevard between Becker Road and Darwin Boulevard in St. Lucie County, Florida.

The **Public Kick-off Meeting** will be held on **Tuesday, October 29, 2013, from 5:30 to 7:30 PM with a presentation starting at 6:00 PM** at the St. Lucie Transportation Planning Organization located at 466 SW Port St. Lucie Boulevard, Port St. Lucie, FL 34953.

This Kick-off Meeting will provide an opportunity to learn about the project, become familiar with the study process, and provide initial feedback. Your attendance is encouraged and your participation and comments are appreciated.

Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability or family status. Persons who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or persons who require translation services (free of charge) should contact the Project Manager at least seven days prior to the meeting. Hearing impaired citizens can call the toll free TDD number and relay service at 1-800-955-8771.

If you require further information concerning this project, I can be reached at (954) 777-4425 or via e-mail at ray.holzweiss@dot.state.fl.us. You may also visit the project website at www.PSLBlvd.com.

Para recibir información sobre el proyecto o hacer una pregunta en español, por favor llame a nuestra línea de información 1-888-658-4033. Pou resevwa Pwojè Enfòmasyon ou byen pou-ou poze kesyon an Kreyòl, souple sonnen li'n Pwojè Enfòmasyon nan limeo 1-888-658-4033.

Sincerely,

Ray Holzweiss
FDOT Project Manager

Emphasis added for this publication. Highlighting was not used in original letters

Enclosure: Meeting Location Map

www.dot.state.fl.us

6.4 Staffing

When selecting staff for public activities, it is important to consider the following:

- Qualifications: Use staff that have been working on the project or are at least familiar with the types of issues to be addressed at the event.
- Personality: Not everybody enjoys or is adept at dealing with the general public, which is why it is important to assign roles to those most suited to them.
- Roles: For outreach activities that require more than three staff members, the event will run more smoothly and everybody involved will feel more useful if specific roles are assigned. It is important to consider personality in making these assignments. An individual who is shy or unfamiliar with the project may be better suited for a low interaction task, such as running the projection equipment. Examples of roles for a typical community forum/open house format are:
    - Greeter/sign-in table: Assign people-friendly staff to this task since they provide the first impression, are often asked questions about the plan for the event, and are often the first to encounter individuals with concerns.
    - Circulators: These people have the most knowledge about the project, can answer questions competently or know where to get the answers. They can either circulate around the event or be assigned to specific areas, depending upon the meeting format and room layout.
    - Media relations: If the District PIO is not in attendance, one individual should be assigned to coordinate with the media, preferably somebody from the Department. See Chapter 5 for additional information regarding the media.
    - Moderator/Facilitator: Depending on the meeting format, a moderator can be very useful in keeping the flow of comments moving in an equitable fashion and maintaining the meeting schedule. When not utilizing a professionally trained facilitator, it is best to identify a staff person who is known for being tactful in speaking in front of a group.
    - Referee: If the event is anticipated to attract controversy, it can be helpful to assign a calm, knowledgeable person to cope with individuals that only want to argue or complain. These individuals should be given an opportunity to express their opinions, but often try to take over the meeting; therefore, having someone give them one-on-one attention may resolve the matter.
    - Technician: If there is any equipment being used for the meeting, it is useful to have somebody familiar with the operation of the equipment to assist with setup and address problems.
    - Troubleshooter: Similar to the technician, assign somebody to deal with non-technical problems that may arise with the meeting facility, materials, or other general issues.
    - Assignments may also be needed for scribes, photographers, setup, cleanup, and placement of directional signage.
- Appropriate number: The number of staff working the event should be based on the number of anticipated attendees, as well as the meeting room layout. This can be one of the more difficult parts of planning a meeting, as it is not always known how many attendees will appear. However, if the attendee turnout is lower than anticipated, extraneous staff can be excused.
- Communication of assignments: Be sure to check the availability and comfort level of each staff member with their assignment and provide them the rehearsal and meeting schedule. Provide project fact sheets to all team members. This will ensure that all key project elements are conveyed consistently.

6.5 Staff Briefings

During every stage of planning a public outreach activity, keep the meeting or workshop staff completely briefed and up to date on the project. A thorough briefing will help eliminate the possibility of someone providing incorrect information. During the briefing meeting, review questions anticipated from the public and allow the staff assisting with the event to ask their own questions. Make sure everyone understands the answers to these questions to ensure everyone answers the public's questions consistently during the meeting. Fact sheets are useful for both staff and attendees. An example fact sheet is included in Appendix D.

Though the public looks to the staff on site to be knowledgeable, it is better to let them know that you do not know an answer and will find someone to help, rather than provide misinformation. For example:

- "I don't know that information, but if you will leave your name and a phone number or email, I'll be happy to find out and get back to you."
- "That is an excellent question. Let me find someone who can answer that for you."
- "I don't know, but will you please record your question on the comment form and we will have someone contact you."

If possible, include staff rehearsal time at the meeting facility to ensure a smoothly running meeting. Particularly if the facility has never been used, getting a feel for the room is important. If a formal presentation is to be given, determine the efficiency of the sound system, decide if the power supply is adequate (are extension cords needed?), and run through the presentation to make any necessary changes.

6.6 Communication during the Meeting

Especially with controversial projects, how staff handles conflict and objections from participants influences people's perception of both the project and the Department. While a facilitator may be assigned to handle this type of contentious interaction, make sure all staff members are trained. The National Highway Institute's Course #142059, Effective Communications in Public Involvement (available at http://www.nhi.fhwa.dot.gov) notes that people will often set aside their positions and interests if they are properly informed, kept in the loop, and treated fairly. This process begins at the start of the project when the public is being identified. At that time the project team should:

- Identify any potential objectors;
- Understand their reasons for objecting;
- Seek ways to accommodate their needs;
- Be transparent in working with them to show that their needs are being considered and solutions are being identified; and
- Attempt to fulfill their needs without compromising the project goals.

Prior to large public events, consider conducting smaller group meetings with the parties that either object to the project or have competing interests. Working with these groups prior to a larger meeting can establish trust and a sense of fairness, as well as prevent their issues from taking over the larger meeting. For small group meetings consider the following:

- Meet in small targeted groups that are open to everyone;
- Utilize a professional facilitator if available staff does not have sufficient experience or training to be effective;

- Provide notice of these meetings, record the meetings (in writing or using audio recorders), and provide meeting summaries; and
- During the meetings ask:
    - What is important to you in this project?
    - What will upset you about this project?
    - What should we avoid doing in this project?

Whether during a one-on-one, small group meeting, or a larger event, the following suggestions can defuse tense or heated situations.

1. Reframe the conversation by:
    a. Actively listening,
    b. Staying focused on the speaker,
    c. Showing that you understand their concerns through body language and facial expressions,
    d. Filtering out any unproductive comments, such as threats, demands, and hostility; and
    e. Searching for the underlying interest or need being expressed.
2. Rephrase the concern using neutral language, such as:
    a. "Is it your concern that…?"
    b. "Do I understand correctly that you…?"
    c. "I think you said… Is that correct?"
3. Respond to the question or concern to the entire audience.
4. Transition to the next question and avoid going back to the first question.
5. Focus on the transportation problem that is trying to be solved.
6. Emphasize the need for the participants to help find the right solutions. If the interaction is one-on-one, redirect the conversation by asking the participant to complete the survey, view the displays, or write their concerns on a flip chart set up at the meeting.

6.7 Conduct the Meeting Utilizing Innovative Techniques

This section provides ideas for making public meetings more interactive through techniques that promote participation. While several of the smaller meeting formats reviewed in Section 6.1 are designed to promote discussion, the techniques included here can be used for larger meetings. Section 6.7.5 provides some guidance on using technology to broaden public outreach efforts, and in some cases, to allow people to participate in public meetings from a location that is more convenient.

6.7.1 Game, Puzzle, or Activity

Research has shown that productivity increases when situations are transformed or infused with game-like applications. With technological improvements, social media and cultural shifts, gaming can be a technique to increase participation, especially from younger populations. Games can be used in public meetings by tying the meeting's goals to the game's approach in order to motivate people to interact and contribute to the meeting and to encourage friendly collaboration.

The following are examples of games, puzzles, or activities used in public meetings, particularly during the planning phase:

- *Strings and Ribbons*, where strings, ribbons, and travel mode cutouts are used to illustrate transportation funding allocations and restrictions.
- *Project Selection Survey*, where survey participants get to allocate transportation funding, given a certain budget and project horizon, or select preferred images of alternatives.
- *Color Dots Survey*, where a flip chart, markers, and various colored dots are used to identify and prioritize community issues. Similar prioritization games include the Idea Bowl and the Wheel of Needs.

A related item to this concept is offering rewards. Whether as part of a game or to encourage people to participate, offering nominal rewards or giveaways can be a motivator. Rewards can relate to the project, such as free bus passes at a public meeting for a transit project or providing children with free bicycle helmets during an open house. At a resurfacing and sidewalk open house, giveaway items can include flashlights, pedometers, and blinking lights for pedestrians/bicycles. These giveaway items may be available from the FDOT Safety Office.

6.7.2 Surveys and Questionnaires

Conducting periodic surveys and polls throughout the life of the project can help keep the public engaged and establish a baseline of the public's perception of a particular project. Surveys involve collecting both qualitative and quantitative information about public opinion concerning the project, and can be conducted via phone, online, messaging, or smartphone applications (apps). User-friendly online interfaces using SurveyMonkey®, MetroQuest®, or MindMixer® can be customized to fit the goals and objectives of the project. Non-monetary incentives, such as transit passes or event tickets, can encourage completing public opinion surveys and questionnaires.

Surveys can be made available online (using services such as those listed above), or they can be handed out in person and collected for analysis. Print surveys require significant staff time for dissemination, input, and analysis, whereas online or automated survey services can quickly tally results and provide instantaneous summaries. Meetings provide an ideal opportunity to survey attendees on a variety of topics.

6.7.3 Real-time Polling

Real-time polling is an audience response system that allows a meeting facilitator to ask a series of questions and provide real-time results of the responses on presentation slides that everyone can see. At the beginning of the meeting, each participant is provided a handheld remote control or "clicker" that enables them to select their preferred response to the question posed. Once all participants have responded, the facilitator displays a chart or graph that shows the results in real time.

Renting or purchasing this equipment can be costly, depending on the number of remote controls needed. Online audience response interfaces, like Poll Everywhere®, allow participants to use their own smartphones, tablets, or laptops via text messages, Twitter, or a website. Subscriptions for these interfaces offer a variety of features and lengths of service with affordable options.

Simple yes or no questions work best with this approach as one of the challenges is properly phrasing the questions and answers to limit the range of interpretation. However, the use of multiple choice or more complex questions can encourage participants to ask questions and may lead to fuller discussion of a project's issues or potential solutions.

6.7.4 Printed Materials and Maps

Materials distributed during the meeting, as well as display maps, can be used as props at public meetings to further enhance active participation and stimulate dialogue. Printed materials can be used to identify preferences for specific solutions by asking participants to mark which suggestions they prefer or, sometimes as important, the ones that are not preferred. Display maps are useful for engaging participants in the identification of existing community features and potential issues. Consider setting up a "welcome" map at the meeting entrance, where people can place dots or pins signifying where they live or work.

6.7.5 Technology in Public Meetings

Some technologies are particularly useful for MPOs and local governments. Online or virtual public meetings can serve as a means to increase access to project information for the affected communities. These types of meetings may appeal to people with busy schedules, small children, or limited transportation options. They provide an opportunity for people to either attend the meeting at a host location or view an electronic slide presentation on project details from a convenient location through internet access. The Florida's Turnpike Enterprise typically incorporates electronic meeting access for its toll rate hearings while also providing physical locations for people to attend. Virtual meetings can also be cost-effective, as they may allow an opportunity for more people to participate than the traditional meeting approach. Interactive online technologies, such as WebEx® or GoToMeeting® can be used to conduct public meetings. While online meetings offer convenience for participants, a physical meeting location must always be made available for the public. Electronic meetings have not been approved for use as PD&E meetings.

Chapter 28-109, Florida Administrative Code (FAC), addresses meetings conducted using communications media technology (CMT). It requires that:

- The agency must make it possible for any member of the public to attend.
- The meeting cannot be conducted if the technology will not permit all interested persons to attend.
- If there is a technical problem, the meeting must be stopped until all problems are corrected.
- Meeting notification must be the same as for a non-CMT meeting and must comply with statutes.
- The physical location must be staffed and comply with all Title VI and ADA requirements.
- The meeting must allow for comments.

Town Hall Technologies

Town hall technologies allow thousands of people to participate in a town hall-style public meeting without leaving the familiarity and comfort of their own home or office. It gives people direct access to the decision-makers and provides a unique personal experience to everyone participating.

Town hall technologies are a relatively new concept of public engagement, with several variations: televised, telephone (e.g., conference call), and online (moderated blog with or without live streaming video). Similar to open houses in terms of content, town halls provide the same information but use one or a combination of technologies to reach out to populations at a lower "per attendee cost" than traditional public meetings.

Town hall techniques are typically used by planning staff in local governments or MPOs. In some cases, agencies can combine different types of town hall technologies to cover a broad cross section of the public. In the development of the Regional Transportation Master Plan, the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority used the telephone and online technology to host "eTownHall" meetings. For the Pinellas County Alternatives Analysis, the Pinellas County MPO added a televised component to provide an "eTownHall" experience. Both combination formats have worked seamlessly, reached far more members of the public than a traditional town hall or open house, and realized a much lower cost-per-attendee than any type of traditional, in-person community meeting.

6.7.7 Visualizations

Visual images that help to convey complex plans can strengthen public participation and help to engage the public in a project. Examples of visualizations include photo simulations, sketches, artist renderings, videos, 3D models, and computer simulations. In addition to their use during meetings, visualization tools can be utilized for many web-based communications, such as websites, social media sites (e.g., YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter), and online survey instruments. FHWA encourages the use of visualizations during the Planning phase, and more information is available online at www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/scenario_and_visualization/visualization_in_planning/.

6.8 Meeting Record and Evaluation

Make arrangements for scribes well in advance of the meeting. Public hearings require a court reporter, as explained in Chapter 7. If a number of workstations are to be used, consider having a scribe at each station to record public comment. Not everyone likes to speak at a microphone, but might be more comfortable speaking directly to a scribe who will record their comments for the record. Also consider providing comment cards so that people can write their comments.

Meeting evaluation forms are very helpful to continually improve outreach efforts. Ask if the workshop/meeting was useful or beneficial, and for suggestions to improve the meeting. You might ask how the person heard about the meeting and whether they found the time and location convenient. Generally, the public will provide their thoughts. If designed appropriately, an evaluation form can give the project team vital and interesting information. See Chapter 9, Evaluating the Effectiveness of Public Involvement Programs, for additional information regarding evaluation methods. An example of an evaluation form is provided in Appendix D.

Staff Debriefing

A staff debriefing after the public meeting is equally important as the briefing prior to the meeting. All project team members should participate because each individual will bring a different perspective and provide valuable insights on how to improve future public outreach efforts.

The debriefing is an opportunity to review evaluation and comment forms and discuss comments heard by the project team. This discussion provides additional insight into community values and concerns. Assign somebody to prepare a written summary of the debriefing meeting.

6.9 Meeting Planning Timeline

Consider using the following timeline to plan for effective meetings:

1. Preliminary planning, up to one year prior to meeting, depending on location and space or room availability
    a. Determine meeting date, purpose, participants, and format
    b. Identify general meeting facility requirements and begin site selection process

   c. Establish a Meeting Team and assign roles/responsibilities
   d. Review relevant legal requirements for public notice if the meeting is an official public hearing

Once the location is selected and reserved, the general planning activities can begin. It takes 10 to 12 weeks to effectively plan a public meeting.

2. General planning, approximately 10 to 12 weeks prior to meeting
   a. Identify appropriate meeting materials and begin development
   b. Begin preparation of presentation script and displays
   c. Identify facility security/insurance requirements and initiate arrangements as necessary
   d. Develop advertising strategy and begin preparation of meeting notices and advertisements
   e. Begin preparation of mailing list for notification of meeting participants
   f. Select outside vendors (e.g., court reporters/interpreters) and initiate agreements
3. Preliminary details, approximately eight weeks prior to meeting
   a. Confirm security and insurance arrangements
   b. Confirm outside vendors
   c. Finalize legal notices
   d. Determine newspaper advertising deadlines
   e. Notify the mailroom of upcoming postage requirements, if necessary
   f. Review presentation materials
4. General details, approximately six weeks prior to meeting
   a. Finalize meeting notices and meeting advertisements (invitational letters, newsletters, flyers, newspaper ads, press releases, websites) and begin production, as necessary
   b. Schedule preliminary rehearsal
   c. Confirm facility reservation
   d. Complete preparation of mailing list and labels
   e. Finalize draft meeting materials and presentation
5. Final details, approximately four weeks prior to meeting
   a. Mail meeting notices
   b. Hold preliminary review of meeting materials and presentation, then begin final revision of these materials
   c. Begin developing meeting room layout
   d. Create map of yard sign locations to direct traffic to the meeting room door
   e. Begin arrangements for payment of security, room fees, and/or outside vendors
   f. Submit advertisements and press releases for publication
   g. Mobilize street teams for distributing and posting meeting notices (see Chapter 5)
6. Two weeks prior to meeting
   a. Resubmit newspaper advertisement for second publication, if required
   b. Confirm security and/or outside vendors as appropriate
   c. Schedule rehearsal and staff briefing
   d. Compile list of supplies and begin assembly
   e. Identify and arrange transportation if necessary
   f. Finalize meeting materials and begin production

   g. Finalize meeting room layout
7. One week prior to meeting
   a. Hold final rehearsal and staff briefing
   b. Coordinate transportation of materials and staff members
   c. Finalize meeting displays and presentation
   d. Complete production of meeting materials
   e. Complete assembly of supplies
   f. Send media advisory

Call the meeting facility a month prior, a week before, and a day before to confirm that the room is reserved as well as who will provide access to the room. It is a good practice to make arrangements for an employee of the meeting facility to be on hand for the meeting (the custodian or building manager, for instance) to handle any last minute emergencies, such as electrical or plumbing issues.

6.10 Meeting Checklists

Prepare one or more checklists to ensure all meeting details are considered. **Figure 6.2** shows the Public Hearing Planning Checklist used by District Four to organize the activities related to planning for a public hearing meeting and ensuring notifications are completed within the required time frames. A Meeting Location Checklist can be found in Appendix E.

Create a "Meeting Tool Box" that is filled with extra pens, note pads, extension cords, tape, highlighters, markers, batteries, an umbrella, tools, a small first-aid kit, and push pins. The Meeting Supplies Checklist, which provides a detailed list of items to include, can be found in Appendix E. Ultimately it is important to be prepared and have a backup plan. Creativity, common sense, and "thinking outside the box" are key to successful public meetings.

Figure 6.2: Example Public Hearing Planning Checklist

PUBLIC HEARING CHECKLIST **Meeting Date:**

Task	Person Resp.	Target Start	Target Complete	Status	Comments
Meeting Facility					
Identify Public Meeting Facility					
Reserve/Confirm Public Meeting Facility					
Send Letter of Reservation/Confirmation to Facility					
Newspaper Ads - Two (2) 1/4 Page Size and Press Release					
Draft Newspaper Ad and Press Release					
Submit Draft Ad and Press Release to Consultant PM for Review					
Consultant PM Review of Draft Ad and Press Release					
Submit Draft Ad and Press Release to FDOT for Review					
FDOT Review of Draft Ad and Press Release					Newspaper Ads
Final Revisions to Ad and Press Release					
Submit first Ad to (newspaper name), PSA to radio stations and community publications to run on (date)					**To Run: (First date) and (Second date) (English), (Date) (Spanish)**
Submit second ad to (newspaper name), PSA to radio stations and community publications to run on (date)					
Submit Ad to (newspaper name – Spanish) (date)					
First English ad to run at least 15 days prior to hearing, second to run 7-12 days prior. Spanish ad will run 10 days prior.					
Fax Press Release to Media at least 5 Days Prior to Public Meeting					
Obtain Affidavit of Publication from Newspaper - Forward to FDOT					
FAR AD (Send no less than 7 days before public meeting)					FAW Ad
Draft Florida Administrative Register Ad					
Submit Draft FAR Ad to FDOT PM for Review					FAW notice to be printed no less than 7 calendar days prior to publicmeeting
PM Review of Draft FAR Ad					
Make PM Revisions to FAR Ad					
FAR Ad – to be published at least 7 days before meeting DATE FOR AD TO RUN: (date) (more than 7 days prior)					
Mailing Lists					
Create Mailing List for Elected/Appointed Officials and Agencies					**Public** Mailing Lists
Submit Mailing Lists to PM for Review					
PM Review of Mailing Lists					Update to include any new elections/appointments and new property owners
Make Consultant PM Revisions to Mailing Lists					
Submit Mailing Lists to FDOT for Review					
FDOT Review of Mailing Lists					
Make Final Revisions to Mailing Lists					
Draft Letter to Officials and Agencies					Letters to Elected/Appointed Officials and Agencies
Submit Draft Letter to Consultant PM for Review					
PM Review of Draft Letter					Officials/Agencies to receive notification no less than 25 calendar days prior to public meeting
Make PM Revisions to Draft Letter					
Submit Draft Letter to FDOT for Review					
FDOT Review of Draft Letter					
Make Final Revisions to Letter and Merge with Officials Mailing List					
Send Letters to FDOT EMO for Signature					
Letters to be Mailed No Later Than:					
Letter/Postcard to be Sent to Property Owners (within 300 feet)					
Draft Letter					Letter or Postcard sent to Property Owners or Key Stakeholders
Submit Draft Letter to PM for Review					
PM Review of Draft Letter					
Make PM Revisions to Draft Letter					
Submit Draft Letter to FDOT for Review					Property Owners to receive notification at least 21 calendar days prior to meeting.
FDOT Review of Draft Letter					
Make Final FDOT Revisions to Letter					
Prepare Letter for Distribution - Print, Fold, Address, Stamp					
Mail Letter to Property Owners					

Task	Person Resp.	Target Start	Target Complete	Date Complete	Comments
Locations for Documents to be Available for Public Review					Documents are to be available for public review 21 days prior to the public meeting
FDOT will ensure materials are posted on the website; Property owners and or stakeholders will be notified of the meetings.					
Location within study area for documents – TPO Office					
Presentation/Hearing Materials					Meeting materials should be prepared well in advance of the Public Meeting to allow for reviews and revisions
Presentation logistics					
Prepare PowerPoint or Video Presentation					
Sign-in Sheets					
Comment Forms					
Project Facts Sheet (for Team Members)					
Handouts and/or Brochures					
Speaker Cards					
List of Project Team Attendees and Name Tags					
Table Signs					
Directional Signs (outdoor/indoor)					
Welcome Sign					
Title VI Display Board and Complaint Forms					
Roadway Profiles and or Typical Sections					
Aerial Display Boards					
Submit Draft Materials to PM for Review					Preparations for Briefing with FDOT
PM Review of Meeting Materials					
PM Revisions to Meeting Materials					
Post Public Meeting Activities and Tasks					
Comments and Summary Report					FDOT will submit the Comments and Coordination Report to FHWA
Prepare Comments &Summary Report containing feedback and input from the discussions from members of the public and project staff					
Submit Comments &Summary Report to PM for Review					
Consultant PM Review of Comments and Coordination Report					
Consultant PM Revisions to Comments and Coordination Report					
Submit Comments & Coordination Report to FDOT for Review					
Location and Design Concept Acceptance (LDCA) Newspaper Ad and Press Release					
Draft LDCA and Press Release and have PM Review					
Make LDCA and Press Release Revisions and Submit to FDOT					
Finalize LDCA Ad and Submit to Local Newspaper					
Finalize Press Release and Submit to FDOT for Media Notification					
Obtain Affidavit of Publication from Local Newspaper – Forward to FDOT					

Chapter 7 – Public Hearings

This chapter discusses public hearing requirements for both federally funded and non-federally funded projects. For specific detailed public hearing requirements for PD&E projects, see the PD&E Manual, Part 1, Chapter 11, Public Involvement, Section 11.2.5.

Public hearings are required for all federal and state funded major transportation improvements, generally prior to a decision point, such as work program development and administration, FHWA LDCA, and during the preparation of environmental documents. A major transportation improvement is defined in state law as a project that increases capacity, builds new facilities, or provides new access to limited-access facilities (Chapter 339.155, FS). Public hearings are also required during the design phase for certain changes to median openings, if these median changes were not addressed in an earlier PD&E public hearing.

All Environmental Assessments (EAs) and Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) require public hearings. For other environmental documents, such as Type 2 Categorical Exclusions (CE) and State Environmental Impact Reports (SEIR), a public hearing is only required if the project meets the definition of a major transportation improvement. If a public hearing is not required, FDOT may elect to offer the public an opportunity to request a public hearing.

The primary differences between a public meeting and a public hearing are that a public hearing has specific time frames associated with advertising, notice, and when written comments must be received, and hearings require an official hearing officer and transcription of comments, which become a formal part of the public record. ***Public hearings*** are generally held to satisfy regulatory requirements. They might also be scheduled when there is a high level of controversy with a project, to address changes in access management, or when there is a substantial change in design since the PD&E phase. ***Public meetings*** are often scheduled at intervals throughout the decision-making process allowing for early input. In short, a public hearing should not be the only opportunity to involve the public, but is part of an overall PIP, when required or desired.

Difference between a Public Hearing and a Public Meeting	
Public Hearing	**Public Meeting**
A public hearing records comments from the public into an official Public Record.	A public meeting has discussion. While comments are documented, they are not entered into an official Public Record.
Public hearings are required by regulations.	A public meeting is not required.
A public hearing is a comment format	A public meeting is a question-and-answer format.
A hearing officer and court reporter are present to officially open, close, and document the public comment period.	Public meetings do not require a hearing officer or court reporter, but may utilize a facilitator.

7.1 Notification of Public Hearings

7.1.1 Newspaper Display Advertisement

FDOT must advertise the public hearing twice in a local, general circulation newspaper, with the first notice appearing at least 15 days, but no more than 30 days, before the hearing. The second advertisement should run 7 to 12 days prior to the hearing (Chapter 339.155, FS). The advertisement should be a display ad and contain the following, at a minimum:

1. The purpose of the public hearing
2. Explanation of the format for the public hearing
3. Project description (use of location map is suggested, if applicable)
4. Date, time, and location of the public hearing
5. List of places, dates, and times where environmental documents and other materials are available for public inspection, if applicable
6. The following nondiscrimination statements:
   a. *Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, or family status.*
   b. *Persons who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or persons who require translation services (free of charge) should contact __ (person's name) ________ at __ (the organization) ___ at __ (phone number) _or by email at __ (email address) _____ at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting.*
7. Explanation of how written comments about the project can be entered into the public record.

7.1.2 Officials, Agencies, and Property Owner Notification

FDOT requires a letter of invitation to be sent to the Lead Federal Agency and to the local governments and agencies within the project study area at the time of publication of the newspaper advertisement. These letters must be sent 25 to 30 calendar days prior to the public hearing date.

Chapter 339.155 (6), FS requires that all property owners, in whole or part, within at least 300 feet of the centerline of each transportation alternative, must receive notification of the public hearing no less than 21 calendar days prior to the hearing. Property owners should be notified through invitational letters by regular mail. Since the affected community can extend beyond 300 feet, using the Sociocultural Data Report and contact networks will help determine others to be contacted. The addresses for this notification can be obtained from the property tax rolls. Because property owners may live elsewhere, be sure to include tenants at the site addresses as well, in all notifications.

The invitational letters for officials, agencies and property owners must contain at a minimum the following:

1. Purpose of the notification
2. Description of the project
3. Statement of the places, dates, and times where environmental documents are available for inspection
4. Date, time, and location of the public hearing, including a map
5. Nondiscrimination statements

7.1.3 Florida Administrative Register (FAR) and FDOT Website Notifications

A public notice must be placed in the FAR and on the Department website whenever a public meeting, workshop, or hearing is to be held (Chapter 120.525, FS). All notices in the FAR and on the Department website must be published no less than seven calendar days before the date of the public hearing. A copy of the notice should also be sent to the District Public Information Office for their information. It is the responsibility of the District to pay for any required FAR advertisements. At the District's discretion, they may set up their own FAR account or have a consultant working on the project set up an account to be used for meeting notices.

Sometimes a public hearing is not required, but FDOT offers the public an opportunity to request one. A notice of an opportunity to request a public hearing must be published in a local newspaper that has general daily circulation in the project area, as well as in the FAR and on the Department website.

7.2 Scheduling a Public Hearing

All public hearings are held on a weekday, Monday through Thursday, generally in the early evening. When selecting a hearing location, the same considerations as stated in Chapter 6 for public meetings should be taken into account. All hearings must be held at a site that provides access to all persons who wish to attend and participate, preferably in the project area. As stated in the hearing advertisement, when notified of a citizen's disability at least seven days in advance or the need for translation services, the Department must make an effort to reasonably accommodate the person's request to participate in a meaningful manner. The same considerations detailed for preparing for and conducting public meetings in Chapter 6 should be applied to public hearings.

7.3 Public Hearing Requirements

The primary objective of a public hearing is to provide the maximum opportunity for the public to participate in the decision-making process by expressing their views and concerns on the record at the hearing. Innovation in expanding the basic public hearing format and proceedings is encouraged, as long as it enhances the required communication between the Department and the public. However, for federally-funded projects, make sure that all Department procedures as outlined in the PD&E Manual, Part 1, Chapter 11, are carefully followed.

7.3.1 Schedule and Room Setup

Public hearings are traditionally held in the early evenings, in auditorium-style rooms. If a large audience is expected, consider using a room that offers an elevated stage and podium to ensure that the audience has a clear view of the speakers and presentation. The public hearing schedule should allow at least one hour for interested persons to review and discuss project information with the project team prior to the official start of the public hearing.

The room selected should be large enough and offer sufficient open space to accommodate several display areas for project information. A registration or sign-in table should also be provided. Ideally, this table is set up right outside the entrance to the meeting room. The registration table should include speaker cards, project handouts and/or brochures. Stations with meeting materials can be set up around the room to provide information about particular aspects of the project (such as right-of-way acquisition/relocation, noise, access management). Meeting materials include wall displays depicting base/aerial maps, project alternatives, data used to evaluate the project, schedules, charts, project renderings, and other project-related information.

7.3.2 Required Elements for Public Hearings

The following are the elements that are required to be included in a public hearing.

1. A presentation (the contents of which are covered in Section 7.3.2.1) that is given either verbally or through an electronic slide presentation or video at a time specified in the public hearing notifications
2. Project handouts (more details are provided in Section 7.3.2.2)
3. Speaker registration cards

4. One or more microphones for attendees to address the hearing officer directly with comments and questions following the presentation
5. Court reporter(s) to prepare a verbatim transcript
6. Written comment forms for those not wishing to make a verbal statement

7.3.2.1 Project Presentation

Presentations are often provided through an electronic slide presentation or video, after which a representative from the Department opens the formal hearing, often with additional information. Department staff should be available for questions before, during, and after the presentation. The presentation script should be in plain language with a minimum of legal and engineering terms. The presentation script should be prepared in advance to allow sufficient time for review by Department staff. For PD&E public hearings, specific script language is provided in Appendix F of this document and in the PD&E Manual, Part 1, Chapter 11, Section 11-2.5. A script for Access Management Hearings is provided in Appendix F. Images, graphs, and depictions of typical sections should be easy for a layperson to understand. The presentation, whether recorded or spoken, should include the following elements, at a minimum. Those with an * are specifically required by 23 CFR 771.111.

1. Introduction and purpose of hearing
2. Purpose and need for the project, and consistency with local planning goals *
3. Project scope and location
4. Project history
5. A description of the project's alternatives, including the No Build Alternative, with their advantages and disadvantages, features, and costs *
6. A statement indicating that the hearing is in compliance with all applicable laws, such as, "This hearing is being conducted in accordance with all applicable federal and state laws." Specific legal citations, such as 23 USC 128, do not need to be included in the presentation, but may be provided on a display board or handout.
7. Description of the formal hearing process and how attendees can comment on the project (orally to the court reporter, written statement at the hearing, or written statement for a minimum of 10 days after the hearing date) *
8. Reference to the published hearing notice
9. Reminder of the due date for written statements
10. Statement that a verbatim transcript is being made
11. Reference to handouts available, including information related to the project and Department Relocation Program materials
12. Any social, environmental, air quality, noise, floodplain, wetlands, archaeological/historic, or endangered/threatened species impacts; right-of-way acquisitions or needs; access management issues; or residential or business displacements*
13. A discussion of any potential right-of-way acquisitions or relocations, information about the Department's Right of Way Acquisition and Relocation Assistance programs, any right-of-way handouts, and reference to right-of-way staff in attendance
14. The following statement: "This project has been conducted without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, or family status."

7.3.2.2 Project Handouts

Project handouts or brochures are required for public hearings. The same information found in the presentation is conveyed in the handouts. Information contained in the handouts may generally include:

1. Project location map showing the project's start and end points
2. Federal and Financial project numbers
3. Explanation of the public hearing's purpose, the public hearing process, how comments are received, and the due date for receiving the comments
4. Date, time, and location of hearing
5. Project summary, including justification/need, alternatives considered, typical roadway sections and potential right-of-way relocation, environmental impacts, Title VI programs, and the project status and schedule.

7.3.2.3 Public Hearing Officer and Moderator

All public hearings require a public hearing officer, which is typically a Department employee. If a consultant is leading the Hearing, that person should be introduced by the Department PM. A public hearing should never be held without the attendance of the FDOT PM and other staff, as necessary. The role of the hearing officer is to ensure that the public knows how and when their comments can be recorded and to certify the official record of the hearing. The same individual can serve as both the public hearing officer and the moderator, or different people can fulfill each role. If a separate moderator is used, the role of that individual is to ensure that the hearing runs smoothly by directing attendees to appropriate staff or displays for information, facilitating the use of the microphone by collecting speaker cards and calling individuals to speak, and providing general information to participants.

7.3.2.4 Public Comment Period

The primary purpose of a public hearing is to provide an opportunity for the public to provide comments on the project prior to a final decision; therefore, all public hearings have a minimum 10-day public comment period that starts with the public hearing date and ends 10 calendar days following the public hearing. Meeting attendees are given the opportunity to speak into a central microphone and address the Department directly with comments and questions or to speak with a court reporter. The public's oral comments and questions may be time restricted at the discretion of the moderator. Time restrictions are typically employed only to allow each person an opportunity to speak when attendance is large. This time limit should be announced at the beginning of the hearing. Those wishing to speak are registered by completing speaker cards provided either at the registration table or by staff circulating throughout the hearing. This gives the moderator an idea of the number of people wishing to speak at the microphone and ensures accurate records of speakers' names and any organizations being represented. Based upon the size of the audience and the time available, the moderator may decide to take and respond to questions during the hearing.

For members of the public who do not wish to speak either through the microphone provided or to a court reporter, written comments may be submitted. These comments may be submitted either on the comment form supplied during the public hearing or in the form of a letter, email, or other prepared document submitted by an interested person or organization. Written comments may be provided on the day of the public hearing and for a minimum of 10 calendar days following the public hearing date. The District may decide to extend the comment period beyond 10 days, but cannot reduce the comment to less than 10 days.

7.3.2.5 Official Record

The Public Hearing proceedings, including the presentation, are recorded and transcribed into a written verbatim transcript. At a minimum, the public hearing presentation script should be provided to the court reporter for insertion into the transcript; however, it will be best for the court reporter to transcribe the presentation in real time. The public record remains open throughout the public comment period described in Section 7.3.2.4 so that all written comments received during that period become a part of the public record and are included in the hearing transcript. After the 10-calendar-day comment period, the public hearing is officially closed and the hearing officer certifies the transcript.

For state and federally funded projects for which a public hearing is held, a transcript of all proceedings is made, which includes the script of the Department's oral and recorded presentation, all testimony received, and all handouts and informational brochures used. Display material should be retained in the project file as part of the hearing record and provided to the Lead Federal Agency if required or requested. For federally funded projects, the transcript of both the oral and the recorded presentation must be transmitted with the environmental document to the Lead Federal Agency.

7. 4 Design Phase Public Hearings

Public hearings held during the design phase of a project must meet the same requirements noted in previous sections regarding notice, locations and facilities, and available formats. Appendix F provides guidance for design phase public hearings, including a script for the presentation. In the design phase, there are several reasons for holding a public hearing.

7.4.1 Access Modifications

If the existing median access within a project is changed, a public hearing is required. This applies to all types of projects: reconstruction; resurfacing, restoration, and rehabilitation (RRR); stand-alone safety projects; and Design-Build. If a public hearing was conducted during the PD&E phase and included the currently proposed median changes, it is not necessary to conduct another public hearing. However, if during the design phase the access management plan or median opening/closures are different from what was proposed in the PD&E phase, a public hearing is required.

7.4.2 Subsequent Public Hearings

A subsequent public hearing is held if:

1. The design for a project substantially changed from what was shown at a previous public hearing or from what was approved by the Department or the FHWA.
2. The design changes will cause substantial social, economic, or environmental impacts different from those previously determined.

If there is any doubt as to whether a subsequent public hearing is warranted, a hearing should be scheduled. A subsequent public hearing should be notified and conducted in the same manner as the previous public hearing. The notification by letter may focus on the area affected by the design change, depending on the project length and the extent of impact. The decision to hold a subsequent public hearing should be made in consultation with the Lead Federal Agency for federal projects.

Chapter 8 – Documentation of Public Involvement Activities

Public involvement activities are part of every phase of the transportation decision-making process. A typical FDOT project can take many years to move through the project development process, which is why documenting public involvement in each of these phases is important to provide a thorough record for subsequent phases. While Chapter 3 discusses the public involvement activities associated with each phase of project development, the goal of this chapter is to provide guidance on how to keep a record of these activities and how to respond to comments received[1].

Appropriate and complete documentation of public involvement activities creates a history and record of commitments made as a result of the activities. Access to the documentation allows the public to see that their input was heard and considered. Proper documentation includes compiling all materials related to the public involvement activity, summarizing and analyzing the public comments that result, and describing how the comments are being addressed. This can be done in a public involvement activities report.

8.1 Public Involvement Activities Report

A report is an excellent way to document public involvement activities as proposed transportation projects are identified and carried through the project development process. In an environmental document, this report can serve as a standalone appendix or can be summarized in the Comments and Coordination section of the report.

The report should contain each of the project components presented to agencies, elected officials, and the public. It should contain the project purpose and need, the PIP contact lists, schedule of activities, materials, maps, invitations, flyers, and photos of any community interaction relating to the proposed project from Planning through Construction. This report compiles data gathered at public involvement activities and provides a repository for meaningful information that accurately assesses the issues and concerns of a community. Prepare the report by:

- Compiling public involvement activity results such as charts, graphs, and summary documents, including photographs, newspaper articles, video clips, and other materials
- Summarizing and presenting the findings clearly and in non-technical language

[1] This chapter does not address documentation of project commitments, which is also important since throughout the life of a project there will be a number of both FDOT and Consultant PMs. Commitments should be documented according to the Department's Commitment Tracking Procedure, Procedure No. 700-011-035. Similarly, this chapter is not meant to address the federal documentation requirements of the NEPA or PD&E phase or other project development phases. More information about these specific requirements can be found in the PD&E Manual, on the FHWA website at http://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/projdev/pd4document.asp, or in the various FDOT publications referenced in Appendix A.

The report should be accessible to the public upon request or can be posted on a project website. The information should be simple and easy to understand. The components of a report include:

- Project History
- The PIP
- The Notification Process
- Description of all Public Involvement Activities
- Results
- Compilation of Data

The Project History

This section should include the project background, including the purpose and need, previously completed phases, and any other relevant information that describes the project. It should also define the affected community using maps, as well as any demographic information. If a windshield survey or other technique was conducted to provide a clearer understanding of the study area, include any observations made.

The PIP

This section includes the Public Involvement Plan, which does not necessarily mean the PIP document prepared for a PD&E study, but can include the CAP or other plan for involvement, and information to define community characteristics and sociocultural data.

The Notification Process

This section should include the master contact list detailing all methods and dates of notification to invite the public to activities. Include any flyers, posters, letters of invitation, press releases, or legal advertisements.

Description of all Public Involvement Activities

This section should include the date, time, and location of public involvement activities, as well as photographs and samples of all the mailing lists, sign-in sheets, maps, graphs, boards, comment forms, logs and summaries, meeting notifications, evaluation forms, requests for presentations, meeting minutes (if applicable), etc. It should describe the progression of the activities. If workstations were utilized, describe each one and what data was gathered. The description should show any exhibits used. If the activity entailed participating in a local community event by setting up a booth and conducting a survey, include a copy of the survey questions. If the involvement activities included internet or other technology-based activities, include a description of these as well.

Results

The following information can be gleaned from comments made about the project.

- The community's level of understanding of a transportation project
- The community's attitude toward a transportation project
- Feedback from the community on an alternative that has been selected
- Ongoing status of decisions as the plan/project becomes more defined

The results section should document each event by using percentages and numbers to reflect the number of people invited to the event and the number of people who attended. The results section should compile the issues or concerns. It is not unusual for the data collected at an activity to be completely different from what was expected. If that is the case, it is important to document that information carefully.

Compilation of Data

Compile all the information collected for each activity into the report.

This documentation may be posted on a website for public review.

8.2 Processing Public Comments

The primary objective of any public involvement activity is to inform the public and solicit their comments as they relate to transportation improvements. Public comment will help build an understanding of community issues and needs that should be considered in designing transportation solutions that fit community needs. The most common way for the public to relay their ideas and input is through submitting verbal or written comments.

Effective public involvement activities produce public comments. The comments provide documentation for the public involvement activities; and the information gleaned from them, if correctly synthesized and catalogued, will serve as an excellent record for future project phases. The amount and types of comments received will help in evaluating the success of the individual public involvement activities, as well as the overall PIP.

The ETDM process requires a summary of public comments as part of the Summary Report for each phase. The ETDM Manual, which can be found online at www.dot.state.fl.us/emo/pubs/etdm/etdmmanual.shtm, can provide additional information. These comments can be helpful in later phases to gauge public awareness and interest in the project.

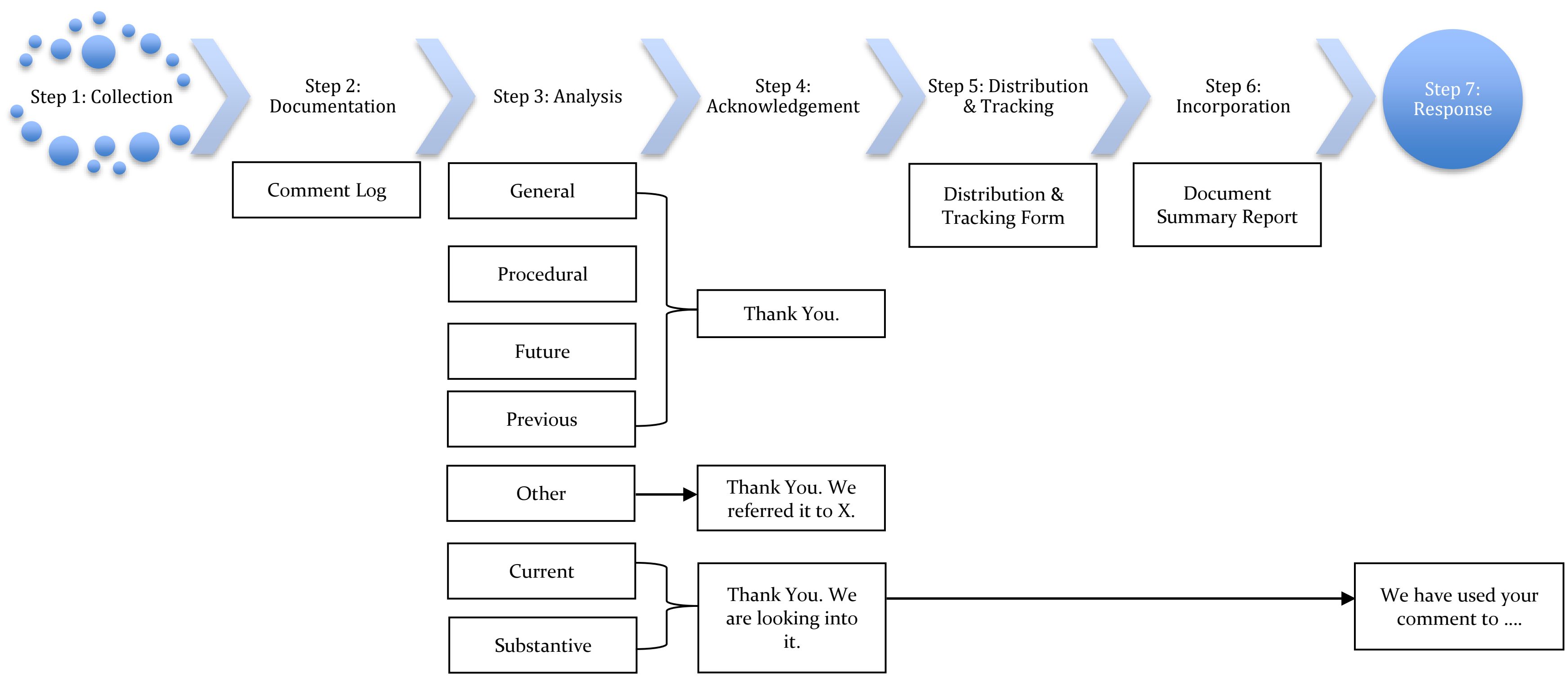
Depending on the scope of the PIP, as well as the level of controversy or interest surrounding the project, a tremendous volume of comments can be generated. A protocol is needed to handle these comments.

The public comment process contains the following seven steps:

1. Collection
2. Documentation
3. Analysis
4. Acknowledgement
5. Distribution and tracking
6. Incorporation
7. Response

Figure 8.1 demonstrates the overall flow of public comment processing.

Figure 8.1: Public Comment Processing Flow



Step 1: Collection

Comments can be collected at any time during the decision-making process using a multitude of tools that include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Surveys or questionnaires (print and electronic)
- Comment forms (print and electronic)
- Real-time polling
- Other activities that involve games or puzzles

The method of delivery and receipt of these comments can vary, and include:

- Mail
- Telephone(voice and text message)
- Fax
- Email
- Project website
- FDOT social media sites or smartphone applications
- Public meetings or hearings

Comments are collected throughout the public involvement process and analyzed at project milestones. A typical strategy includes collecting comments at the beginning of the project, at the midpoint, and during the final steps of the project. It is important to specify a closing date by which all comments must be received, where appropriate. Include an address for mailing or emailing completed print surveys and comment forms.

Step 2: Documentation

The second step in the comment process is to catalog all the responses.

It is suggested that public comments be logged with the following information, at a minimum, recorded for each comment:

- **Date**: This is important for documenting the evolution of the project. It also establishes a benchmark for a timely response.
- **Comment**: The essence of the comment is critical for responding in an appropriate manner.
- **Name, address, telephone number, and email**: This is optional information, but is necessary for a proper response.
- **Tracking number**: This is optional, but will ensure that comments are not lost. This is especially useful for projects with large volumes of comments. A recommended syntax for tracking numbers includes a year (XX), month (XX), and then number for the comments (in chronological order). For example, the 25th comment received at the October, 2003 public workshop will have a "031025" tracking number.

Step 3: Analysis

Once all the comments have been received and logged, they should be analyzed. This may seem like a daunting task when potentially faced with hundreds of responses. To help manage this task, the comments should be sorted into categories.

1. **General**: Comments that relate directly to the project, but do not require a detailed response.
2. **Procedural**: Comments that are related to the public involvement process.
3. **Substantive**: Comments that relate directly to project development and require further analysis.
4. **Other**: Comments beyond the scope of the project that may relate to another Department project or be completely out of the Department's influence.

Analyzing Public Comments

When analyzing public comments, consider the following:

- Are most respondents concerned with a particular issue (i.e., aesthetics or safety)? This indicates an area to focus on in the next meeting or newsletter.
- Are comments lengthy? This indicates much interest in the project.
- Are comments brief? Are comment forms left incomplete? This suggests/indicates that the public does not have enough information to provide significant, meaningful input.

Once sorted, the comments can be analyzed, including identification of trends; and a summary report of the comments can be prepared. Comments can usually be sorted by a few key issues. The report should identify the issues raised and include the number of comments received and details about each issue.

Step 4: Acknowledgement

Each comment received should be acknowledged. Acknowledging all of the comments encourages continued involvement and confirms that each individual's comment has been considered. Those who comment should be thanked and acknowledged regardless of the type of comment. Acknowledging and thanking people for their comments also helps facilitate future communication and builds trust and credibility within the community. **Figure 8.2** offers suggestions for acknowledging comments based on the type of comment received and the comment's timeliness. Public comments should be acknowledged within 10 working days after receiving the comment. As noted in **Figure 8.2**, some comments require only an acknowledgement, while others require detailed information or feedback and may take some time to analyze and research. It is important to acknowledge the comment even if research is ongoing for an appropriate response. The public is usually willing to wait for an answer as long as they know their comment was received and is being considered.

Figure 8.2: Acknowledgement Suggestions

- Respond to “**general**” comments by acknowledging interest in the project.
- Respond to “**procedural**” comments by acknowledging interest in the project, and provide information regarding the action that has been/will be taken.
- Respond to “**substantive**” comments upon determining whether the comment pertains to the current, previous, or future project phase as follows:
    - Current project phase: respond by acknowledging interest in the project. Include a brief description of the action being taken to address the comment and when to expect resolution. Determine if the comment can be included in the project concept.
    - Previous project phase: respond by acknowledging interest in the project. Include an overview of the project history and decisions that have been made earlier in the process and information on how to become involved in current or future project decisions.
    - Future project phase: respond by acknowledging interest in the project. Include a brief overview of the future project schedule, indicating when the decision will be made and that the comment will be passed on to the appropriate personnel. Document the comment. See *Step 2: Documentation*.
- Respond to “**other**” comments by acknowledging interest in the project and how the comment has been handled. These comments should be routed to appropriate FDOT personnel or non-FDOT personnel. See *Step 5 Distribution*.

Step 5: Distribution

Occasionally people submit comments that are not relevant to the project. Comments that pertain to other projects and issues should be distributed to the appropriate personnel for processing. It should be noted in each comment’s acknowledgement to whom the comment was distributed and why.

Step 6: Incorporation

Any comment directly related to the current project should be considered for incorporation into the decision-making process. Careful analysis of public comments can lead to innovative solutions that address the community’s needs without compromising the Department’s goals.

Step 7: Response

All comments that require detailed information or feedback should be answered as soon as possible. A complete answer addressing issues submitted in the comment should be provided. A clear and easy-to-understand explanation of any research or analysis that forms the basis for the answer should also be included. Additional information explaining how the individual can continue to be involved in the decision-making process is always appropriate.

By compiling all this information into the report, project history is maintained. By keeping the report current, issues, concerns, and commitments made in addressing these issues can be more relevant to the decision-making process.

Chapter 9 – Evaluating the Effectiveness of Public Involvement Plans

Public involvement and its related activities may be evaluated systematically, or in the context of specific projects or activities. Public involvement is effective if the objectives of the public involvement plan or activity are achieved. These objectives may be broad, ranging from informing the public about long-term plans to ensuring that public input is carefully considered for a specific project. They may also be narrower, such as soliciting input from a certain group of stakeholders. A variety of methods and measures can be used to gauge an agency's progress in meeting its public involvement objectives.

This chapter outlines how to evaluate whether a plan or activity is achieving agency public involvement objectives. Included is guidance on basic concepts, key steps in the evaluation process, a sample performance measurement framework, and potential data sources and evaluation techniques. The chapter concludes with strategies for applying a performance measurement framework to improve the public involvement process.

9.1 Background and Resources

The examples in this chapter draw upon a performance measurement framework developed by a working group of FDOT and Florida MPO staff with experience in public involvement. The Public Involvement Performance Measures (PIPM) Working Group developed the framework based upon a series of research projects conducted for FDOT on evaluating the effectiveness of public involvement in transportation. Details on these examples or copies of the final research reports can be found on online at www.dot.state.fl.us/emo/pubinvolvement.shtm.

9.2 Important Terms and Concepts

The following terms and concepts are important to understand when undertaking a performance measurement effort:

- Goal: The overarching purpose of the program or activity
- Objective: Specific statement of how the agency plans to achieve its goal
- Indicator: A variable selected and defined to measure progress toward an objective
- Target: A realistic, measurable criterion for evaluating an indicator
- Performance measurement: A process of defining and monitoring indicators of organizational performance in relation to specified targets.

Indicators of performance are defined based on organizational goals (what the agency wants to achieve) and objectives (how the agency proposes to achieve the goal). A good indicator is one that lends itself to establishing measurable performance targets. For public involvement, qualitative data obtained through surveys will be a primary data source for measuring targets, as discussed further in Section 9.4.

Indicators should not only be relevant to a stated objective, but generally understandable to staff and the community at large. Although results may not always be communicated to the public, doing so is one way to demonstrate the agency's commitment to effective and meaningful public involvement. A set of indicators, rather than any single indicator, is often needed to obtain an accurate picture of performance in relation to an objective.

Targets establish a desired level of performance at a given point in time. Agency or individual progress in meeting the target provides insight into how well the public involvement activity is performing. Together, the goals, objectives, indicators, and targets serve as a framework for public involvement performance measurement, as illustrated in **Figure 9.1**.

Figure 9.1: Example Public Involvement Performance Measures Framework

Goal:	All interested parties have an opportunity to participate fully in the decision-making process and public input is carefully considered
Objective:	Provide **equitable** access to transportation decision-making/Use a variety of **methods** to involve and engage the public
Indicator:	Convenience of meetings and events to public transportation/Access to information by persons with disabilities
Target:	80% of meetings are within one-eighth of a-mile of a transit stop/100% of electronic material is Section 508 compliant/100% of meetings and events are located at ADA compliant facilities

9.3 Establishing an Evaluation Framework for Public Involvement

The PIP or CAP typically consists of public involvement goals, policies, objectives, and descriptions of public involvement techniques. Therefore, the goals and objectives of a PIP or CAP should be written before attempting to define appropriate performance indicators.

Figure 9.2 is an example of a public involvement goal and objectives developed by the FDOT PIPM Working Group. They are typical of PIPs and programs and could form an initial basis for an effective performance measurement framework.

Figure 9.2: Example Public Involvement Goal and Objectives

Goal: Ensure that all interested parties have an opportunity to participate fully in the transportation decision-making process and that public input is carefully considered.

Objectives:

1. Provide equitable access to transportation decision-making.
2. Inform the public early, clearly, and continuously.
3. Use a variety of methods to involve and engage the public.
4. Carefully consider public input in transportation decisions.

9.3.1 Identifying Appropriate Indicators–Outputs versus Outcomes

Indicators are those items used to measure or "indicate" progress toward an objective. When identifying indicators, consider whether the indicator addresses what really counts in regard to public involvement and not just what can be easily counted. Too often, evaluating the public involvement process becomes an exercise in counting heads at a public meeting or hits on a website. This is because it is easier to monitor products and services delivered (outputs) rather than results of the PIP or activity (outcomes). It is no surprise, therefore, that national studies of agency PIPM often find an overabundance of output-oriented indicators and evaluation efforts, as opposed to outcomes or results

In order to know if what is getting counted really counts, begin by preparing a set of performance indicators that help to explain whether or not a public involvement objective has actually been met. These indicators should attempt to monitor outcomes and not just outputs. Sets of indicators addressing both outcomes and outputs may be needed to obtain an accurate picture of performance.

For example, Objective 1 (**Figure 9.1**) suggests providing equitable access to transportation decision-making. Performance on this objective can be understood in relation to a variety of potential indicators. One indicator may be whether project information is available in languages other than English. However, this indicator provides only limited information and is not applicable in areas with a mostly English-speaking population. Additional indicators, such as those in Table 9.1, would provide a more complete picture of performance on this objective.

9.3.2 Example Indicators

As mentioned, **Table 9.1** provides example indicators for the objectives in **Figure 9.1**. These indicators are designed to address desired outcomes, with some addressing outputs important to achieving those outcomes. Although some indicators relate to more than one objective, they are organized under the most closely related objective. Consider which indicators focus on outcomes and which address outputs.

9.3.3 Potential for Bias

One issue that complicates any evaluation of PIPMs is that results may be biased by influences outside an agency's control. For example, a group that opposes a transportation project may report dissatisfaction with the agency's public involvement process, regardless of the quality of that process or the efforts made to address their concerns. Compounding this issue is the fact that controversial projects may draw more opponents than supporters to a public involvement event.

The potential for bias in evaluating public involvement activities can be reduced, or at least better understood, by evaluating performance systematically and by using sets of indicators, rather than relying on a single indicator or evaluation effort. Evaluation results can also be categorized by level of controversy, level of environmental review, or other characteristics that indicate whether a potential for bias may exist. Categorizing evaluation results also provides insight into the possible need for refinements to the public involvement approach by size of project or level of controversy expected.

Table 9.1: Example Public Involvement Indicators for Sample Objectives

Equity: Provide equitable access to transportation decision-making.
Indicator E-1: Access to information and participation opportunities by persons with disabilities
Indicator E-2: Convenience of meetings and events to public transportation, where available
Indicator E-3: Geographic dispersion of public involvement opportunities
Indicator E-4: Convenience of meeting or event time
Indicator E-5: Convenience of meeting or event location
Indicator E-6: Availability of information in languages other than English
Information: Inform the public early, clearly and continuously.
Indicator I-1: Clarity and adequacy of project information
Indicator I-2: Response time to inquiries from the public
Indicator I-3: Awareness of affected parties of the proposed transportation action
Indicator I-4: Affected parties impression that ample notice was provided of public meetings
Methods: Use a variety of methods to involve and engage the public.
Indicator M-1: Participants are involved using multiple techniques
Indicator M-2: Affected parties feel they had an adequate opportunity to participate
Indicator M-3: Perception of the value of methods used
Responsiveness: Carefully consider public input in transportation decisions.
Indicator R-1: Agency partners feel that their input was considered

9.3.4 Setting Targets

A target establishes a desired level of performance for an indicator. As such, it should be both realistic and measurable. One way to determine a reasonable target is to conduct a baseline study of current performance. Another way is to consider the performance of peer agencies. Given that few agencies routinely evaluate their public involvement efforts, one way to get started is to simply choose a target based on past experience or best practices. The target can then be refined when sufficient data becomes available through the performance monitoring process.

A complete set of example targets for the indicators noted in Section 9.3.4 is provided in the report Performance Measures to Evaluate the Effectiveness of Public Involvement Activities in Florida. For the purpose of illustration, consider the following examples. Indicator R-1 (Agency partners feel that their input was considered) is an indicator of agency responsiveness. A reasonable target might be for a majority of agency partners (i.e. 75%) to feel their input was considered. Setting the target at 75% rather than 100% recognizes that it may be unrealistic to attempt to satisfy all participants, given limited resources and the potential for bias noted previously.

Targets might be further broken down by type of respondent, as follows. A short follow-up survey of those who participated or commented would be needed to determine the result, as shown in Section 9.4.1.

Indicator R-1: Agency partners feel that their input was considered.

Target: [75%] of government units feel that their input was considered.

Target: [75%] of organizations feel that their input was considered.

Target: [75%] of user groups feel that their input was considered.

Target: [75%] of individuals feel that their input was considered.

Where an indicator is monitoring something that is required by law, then an appropriate target would be to achieve 100% compliance. For example, the ADA requires government meeting locations and information to be accessible to persons with disabilities. In this situation, it would be reasonable to set targets at 100%, as shown in the example below.

Indicator E-1: Access to information and participation opportunities by persons with disabilities

Target: [100%] of meetings, events and project-related information sources are accessible to persons with disabilities.

Note that this target would involve documenting whether agency meeting and event locations are ADA accessible. It would also involve evaluating whether project information is provided in a manner that is accessible to those with disabilities, when requested.

9.4 Data Collection and Evaluation Methods

PIPM relies in large part on qualitative information, as opposed to quantitative data. How participants feel about the quality of the efforts made to involve them tells us more about an agency's performance than the number of people who participated. The degree of public satisfaction with a public involvement process or activity can only be understood by asking participants and, in some cases those who chose not to participate, for their opinion.

Data needed to measure indicators should also be cost-effective to collect. Ideally, such data would be routinely collected by the agency. Although data on meeting attendance and other outputs may be routinely collected or readily available, data on the outcome of public involvement activities will involve other methods of gathering information.

Comment forms, questionnaires, and short surveys are all cost-effective methods that can be employed for this purpose. Geographic information system (GIS) analysis, internet tools, and staff debriefings or logs are other useful and relatively low-cost methods for collecting data needed to evaluate public involvement performance.

9.4.1 Surveys and Questionnaires

Surveys and questionnaires are essential data collection tools for evaluating public involvement. They are often the only way to obtain the qualitative data needed from the public for the evaluation. Surveys can be conducted in person, by phone, via internet, mailed, or emailed, and can either target specific groups or be a random sample.

Surveys can be distributed at meetings to be turned in, mailed back, inserted into publications, or mailed directly to potential respondents. Return postage for mail surveys is typically prepaid, as this leads to higher response rates. An advantage of email surveys is little or no reproduction or distribution costs. To use email surveys, it is necessary to have email addresses for the targeted respondents, and random distribution is generally not an option. Alternatively, questions may be asked by telephone or in person, allowing for follow-up questions and more in-depth discussion.

Figure 9.3 is an example survey relating to Indicator R-1: "Agency partners feel that their input was considered." See Appendix D for examples of initial and follow-up surveys used by FDOT District Five in assessing public involvement for the SR 600/John Young Parkway Project.

Figure 9.3: Example Survey of Agency Responsiveness to Public Input

We are committed to providing interested parties with the opportunity to participate in our transportation decision-making processes. We want to ensure that those who have taken the time to participate are aware of what we did with their input.

Our records indicate that you have participated in some way in the following project. We appreciate your time in answering a few brief questions.

Project: 1234567

Project Description:

Which of the following best describes your role?

- **Interested individual**
- **Government representative** (examples include public officials or staff of local governments, transit agencies, water management districts, metropolitan planning organizations, regional planning councils, etc.)
- **Representative of a state, regional, or local organization** (examples include neighborhood associations, environmental organizations, or the Chamber of Commerce)
- **Representative of a user group** (examples include bicycle/pedestrian groups, freight movers, and commuters)

I was given the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process:

○ Strongly Agree ○ Agree ○ Disagree ○ Strongly Disagree

My ideas were considered in the decision-making process:

○ Strongly Agree ○ Agree ○ Disagree ○ Strongly Disagree

Comments:

9.4.2 Statistics

Basic statistics, such as percentages, can be useful in evaluating and monitoring the effectiveness of a public involvement program or activity. Survey responses can be calculated and compared to preset targets to determine performance in relation to a given indicator. **Figure 9.4** illustrates an example report for a fictional project. It compares "actual" findings on public involvement performance to agency targets for a range of indicators. Some of the items are simply fulfilled or not, whereas others involve a percentage of responses that support the target for that indicator.

Figure 9.4: Example Results of a Project Public Involvement Evaluation

Indicator	Actual	Target (Set by administrator, 2000)
E-1 A *Participant satisfaction with efforts to accommodate persons with disabilities*	60%	100%
E-1 B *Accessibility of meetings, events, and information to persons with disabilities*	60%	100%
E-2 A *Public involvement events within walking distance of fixed-route transit service*	0%	30%
E-2 B *Public involvement events are accessible via paratransit service*	100%	20%
E-3 *Geographic dispersion of involvement opportunities*	Unfulfilled	Fulfilled
E-4 *Participants and invitees felt meetings were held at a convenient time*	100%	50%
E-5 *Participants and invitees felt meetings were held at a convenient location*	100%	100%
E-6 A *Information provided in languages other than English*	Fulfilled	Fulfilled
E-6 B *Translators made available at public meetings*	Fulfilled	Fulfilled

Once documented, evaluation results may be tracked over time to assess whether performance has improved, remained steady, or declined. They may also be aggregated across a number of projects for a sense of agency-wide performance over a specified period of time.

Figure 9.5 is one example of how results can be communicated in chart form. In this fictional example, it is clear that meeting participants have become more satisfied with the timing of public meetings in recent years than they had been in the past. Possible explanations for this improvement might include a change by the agency in when meetings are held in response to early survey results indicating that a meeting time was not convenient.

Figure 9.5: Example Multi-Year Indicator Tracking Chart

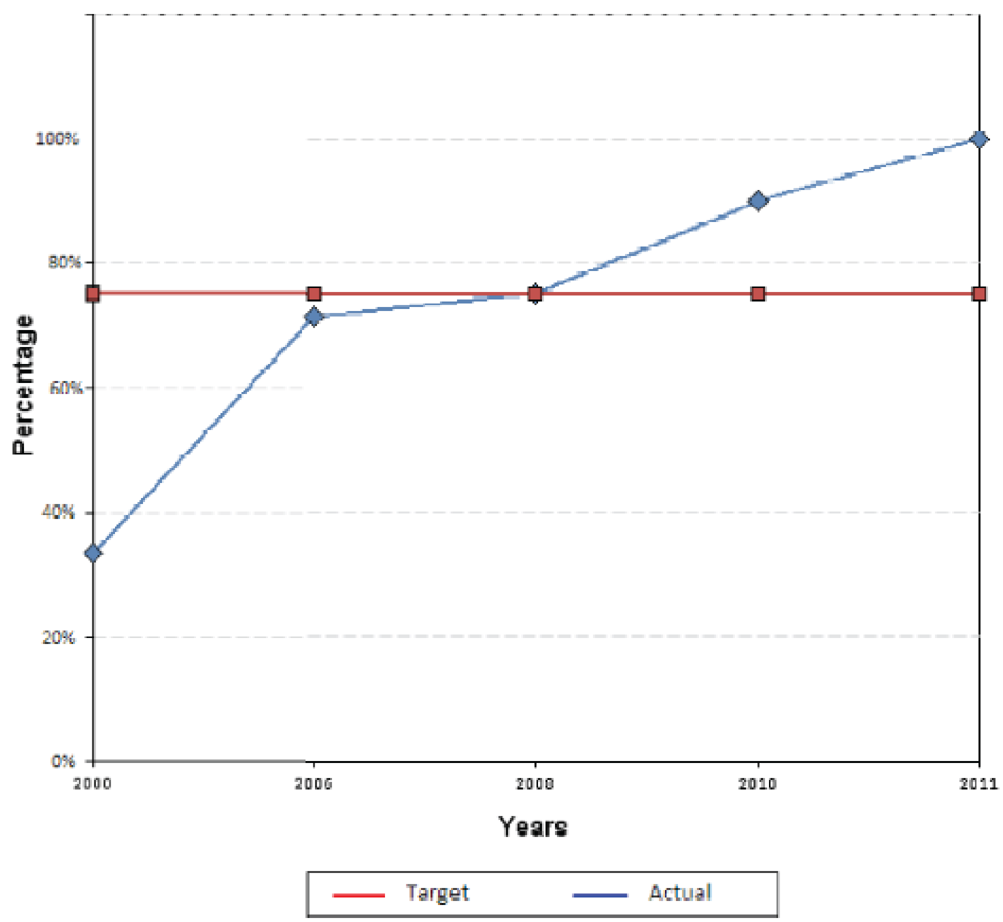
Multi-year Measures & Targets Indicator Chart

Help

Indicator E4

Friday, May 11, 2012
11:49 AM

Select Data Close



The purpose of this indicator is to achieve a better understanding of participant needs regarding timing of public meetings. This indicator tracks whether those participating or invited but not participating feel that the public involvement opportunities of the agency were offered at a convenient time.

For this target, the tool calculated the percent of respondents that felt the meeting or event was held at a convenient time, finding the share of total responses per project that were marked "Strongly Agree" or "Somewhat Agree." The above graph compares performance levels with predefined targets.

9.4.3 GIS and Internet Tools

GIS and internet tools are useful in evaluating indicators and targets with geographic elements. For example, Indicator E-2 provides the following example targets:

Indicator E-2: Convenience of meetings and events to public transportation, where available

Target: [60%] of public involvement events are within one-eighth of a-mile of a transit stop.

Target: [60%] of public involvement events are within paratransit service areas.

To evaluate this indicator and its targets, begin by obtaining the transit schedules and hours of operation for the affected areas. This information can typically be downloaded directly from the area transit agency's website. In most cases, the distance from an event location to a transit stop can be determined by using one of various available web applications.

A useful tool for this purpose is Google Transit®, a web-based application that maps public transit and other transportation systems, as part of Google Maps®. Some transit agencies also provide detailed information on their websites detailing transit stop locations in the service area.

9.4.4 Staff Debriefings

Staff debriefings are an opportunity to reflect on the effectiveness of a public involvement process or activity in relation to agency objectives. A debriefing session following a specific involvement activity can help staff identify effective practices and potential areas to improve prior to the next event. Below are a few questions to contemplate during in-house debriefings.

1. In general, what seemed to work well? What didn't?

Staff perceptions and general comments received from the public can be valuable in beginning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of a process or technique.

2. Are enough people in the affected community participating in the public involvement activities? Were those who participated representative of the affected community? Did the audience include those who were expected to have an interest in the project?

A common problem for transportation agencies is lack of attendance at public meetings. If key segments of the community are not attending a public event, this may indicate a variety of issues. The timing and/or locations may be inappropriate for some audiences. The notifications may not be reaching the intended audience. Area residents may not believe their comments are important or will be considered. They may simply prefer other ways to be informed and involved in the decision-making process. A follow-up survey with those invited and interviews with key stakeholders can provide insight into the reasons for low attendance and how to address the issue in the future.

3. What type of feedback did you receive from the public about the event?

Consider the results of any surveys, comment forms, questionnaires, or personal comments received by staff in relation to the meeting or event. If many people indicated that the meeting was not at a convenient location, consider whether there is another potential meeting site closer to the affected area. Another alternative might be to attend scheduled meetings of interest groups in the area, or to provide updates via newsletters with information on how interested parties can provide comments or get involved. Alternatively, positive comments about meeting format provide reinforcement that the format is appropriate for reaching the intended audience.

4. Did the public seem to understand the information they were provided? Are the right communication techniques being employed?

When providing information to the public it is important to keep the message clear, simple and informal. If the comments received are irrelevant to the project, this indicates people do not understand the information they were provided or what information/input is being sought. The public may have unrealistic expectations about how they can influence the project, their role in the decision-making process, or the type of decisions being made during the current phase of project development.

5. Are there significant unresolved issues on the project?

The level of involvement needed will vary according to the nature of a project and the level of public interest or concern. If significant opposition to a project remains following the public involvement effort, then it is likely that all relevant issues have not been identified and resolved to the satisfaction of the community. Continued dialogue and additional involvement opportunities are needed to develop acceptable solutions. Additional efforts may also be needed to demonstrate to the public how their input is being used.

9.5 Improvement Strategies

Performance measurement is a valuable management tool, as it provides essential information on how to improve upon past results. A common saying is “what gets measured gets done.” Certainly, there is some truth to this saying. However, it is only true if the results of the performance measurement effort are translated directly into improvements to the public involvement process or techniques evaluated.

Each time a public involvement evaluation is performed a list of improvement strategies should be identified and then implemented in subsequent activities. When the targets for performance are not met, this is an indication that improvements are needed. Positive results help to inform what activities or approaches work best and should be used again. Appendix D provides two cases of how performance measurement has been used by FDOT to improve public involvement.

Insight into potential ways to improve public involvement may also be obtained by considering the findings of a detailed assessment of public involvement in Florida’s transportation decision-making process. This Statewide Assessment of Public Involvement Findings was conducted across FDOT functional areas and among MPOs in Florida and provided the following suggestions for potential improvement:

Involvement and Outreach

- Maximize opportunities for one-on-one or small group dialogue.
- Create opportunities for staff to build relationships with the public and to provide education on transportation issues, both within and outside of project development.
- Provide opportunities other than public meetings for people to have input in project decision-making.
- Look for ways to coordinate and communicate with other agencies on public involvement or outreach activities.

Continuity and Commitments

- Establish a process for passing project information on public concerns and comments from phase to phase.
- Increase communication between functional units within FDOT Districts on project development issues of importance to the public. Consider instituting regular cross-functional debriefing meetings and cross-functional area attendance at key project meetings.
- Consider a project management approach or a single point of contact for the public who has the necessary technical knowledge and would follow a project from planning or project development through to construction.

Training and Information Exchange

- Provide regular public involvement training and target the training, where appropriate, to specific topics of interest or concern and to specific functional units or responsibilities.
- Provide organized opportunities for FDOT Districts, as well as MPO staff, to share experiences, ideas, and best practices in working with the public.

Performance Measures and Evaluation

- Develop a systematic method, based on defined performance measures, which can be used by FDOT functional units and MPOs for evaluating the effectiveness of their public involvement process.
- Develop performance measures that focus on desired outcomes and that correspond with and advance the business plan of that functional unit.

The last two items above were addressed through the public involvement performance measurement research discussed in Section 9.1. The full report is available on the FDOT Environmental Management Office website.

9.6 Conclusion

Seeking public input is vital to the success of transportation planning and project development. Evaluation of public involvement efforts identifies what is being done well and where improvements need to be made. Alternative strategies for improvement may then be identified, implemented, and evaluated to determine what strategies provide the best results. Communicating evaluation results to the public and any changes made in response to the evaluation is one way to demonstrate the Department's commitment to public involvement.

This chapter provides guidance on how to establish an effective PIPM framework for public involvement. It emphasizes the importance of an outcome-oriented approach to evaluation which draws upon qualitative data from surveys, questionnaires, and comment forms. The framework is intended for use as a management tool and to diagnose and improve upon existing practices, rather than for quality assurance purposes. The tools and resources identified in Section 9.1 may be adapted for this purpose.

Chapter 10 – Maximizing Equity in Transportation

Equity, in a broad sense, can be thought of as fairness, or nondiscrimination. In the transportation world, equity implies giving as much consideration, latitude, advantage, or fairness to one group or community (potentially affected by a proposed transportation project), as given to another. FDOT's goal is to maximize equity, and consider and involve all population groups, through all phases of transportation decision making. This means prioritizing equity in planning and corridor studies, throughout the entire life of the project, and even through operations and maintenance. Equity is also a legal requirement, enforced through various acts, orders, policies, and legislation to ensure nondiscrimination.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of equity, or nondiscrimination, and discuss public involvement methods aimed at achieving equitable outcomes for transportation improvements.

This chapter contains the following sections:

- 10.1 Relevant Legislation
- 10.2 Public Involvement and Equity
- 10.3 Equity Analysis
- 10.4 Resources

10.1 Relevant Legislation

This section briefly summarizes some of the acts, orders, policies, and legislation aimed at achieving equity in transportation decisions.

10.1.1 National Environmental Policy Act

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) was signed into law January 1, 1970, and was a "pioneer act" for public involvement, considering the natural, physical, and human environments. NEPA requires the use of all practicable means to assure for "all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and esthetically pleasing surroundings." NEPA also uses a "systematic, interdisciplinary approach" to decision making that may have an impact on the human environment. In summary, NEPA requires the consideration of environmental effects and reasonable alternatives.

10.1.2 Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

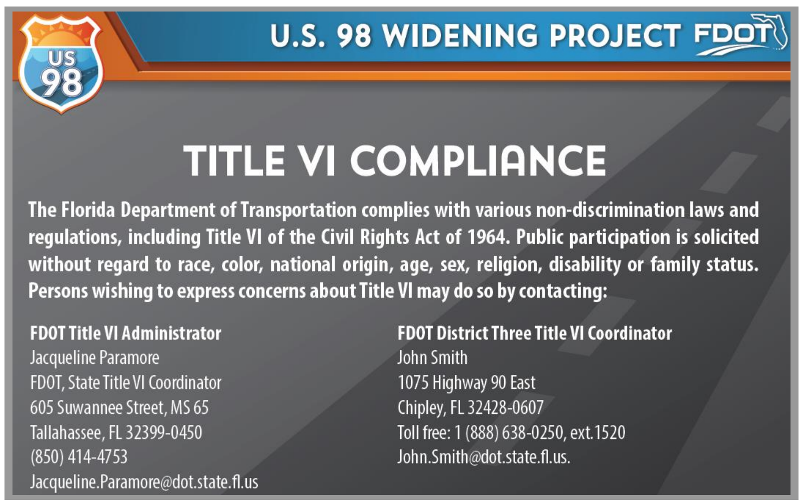
Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI) is a federal law that prohibits discrimination. Title VI applies to every person, and requires each federal agency to ensure that "*no person on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.*" Under this law, all Federal aid recipients must prevent discrimination and ensure nondiscrimination in all their programs and activities. Title VI is considered throughout transportation decision making, from planning, through project development and to operations and maintenance. The Department's Title VI Nondiscrimination Policy Statement is provided for reference.

Title VI/Nondiscrimination Program – Policy Statement

"It is the policy of the Florida Department of Transportation, under ***Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Age Discrimination Act of 1975; Section 324 of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1973; Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987****; and related statutes and regulations, that no person in the United States shall, on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability/handicap, or income status, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination or retaliation under any federally or non-federally funded program or activity administered by the Department or its sub-recipients."*

To comply with this policy, the Department civil rights and program area specialists are tasked with implementing their mutual nondiscrimination program responsibilities. Other parties responsible for making a good faith effort at ensuring this policy is carried out in their respective program areas include each Assistant Secretary, District Secretary, Florida's Turnpike Enterprise Executive Director, Director, Manager, and Section Head of the Department's major program areas (Planning, Project Development / Environmental, Design, Right-of-Way, Construction, Maintenance, Public Transportation, and Research), as well as the Department's sub-recipients.

Display Equity Commitment in Public Hearings – *FDOT conveys our commitment to Title VI, and equity by providing non-discrimination statements referencing Title VI on posters, handouts, or presentations at public meetings.*



A list of Title VI contacts for the Central Office, FDOT District offices, and Florida's Turnpike Enterprise is located on the FDOT website: http://www.fdot.gov/equalopportunity/titlevicontacts.shtm.

Intentional and unintentional conduct can form the basis of a Title VI violation. Intentional discrimination (or disparate treatment) involves less favorable treatment or inconsistent application of rules or policies to a person or group based on race, color, or national origin. Unintentional discrimination (or disparate impact) occurs when a neutral policy or practice has the unintended consequence of disproportionately excluding or adversely affecting members of a protected group under Title VI, without substantial justification. Examples of intentional and unintentional discrimination are provided below.

Example of Intentional Discrimination

An example of intentional discrimination is construction of an overpass to improve access to and from a highly populated white community. Meanwhile, the project fails to consider the opportunity to improve access to an African American community, which could have been accomplished with the same project. Involving the population groups of the more highly populated, white community, and not including the African American community in public outreach, shows disparate treatment.

Example of Unintentional Discrimination

In the same project example above, assume access to the African American community was not an issue and could not be improved by the project. Then assume the project was constructed and the residents of the African American community were exposed to an increase in noise levels, due to the new expressway overpass elevating traffic above a barrier of buildings and trees that were previously reducing the noise. This would be unintentional discrimination (or a disparate impact), since the consequence of increased noise levels were an unintentional consequence and not properly assessed in the project's early phases.

10.1.3 Executive Order 12898 – Environmental Justice

Executive Order 12898 was signed in 1994 by President Bill Clinton, identifying Environmental Justice (EJ) as a national policy. The order requires each federal agency to identify and avoid disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and low-income populations in the administration of and through the implementation of programs, policies, and activities that could affect human health or the environment.

Definition and Examples of Adverse Effects

Relative to EJ analysis, an adverse effect refers to "the totality of significant individual or cumulative human health or environmental effects." Examples of adverse effects include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Bodily impairment, infirmity, illness, or death
- Air, noise, and water pollution, soil contamination, and vibration
- Destruction/disruption of man-made or natural resources
- Destruction/diminution of aesthetic values
- Destruction/disruption of community cohesion or economic vitality
- Increased traffic cohesion
- Destruction or disruption of availability of public and private facilities and services
- Adverse employment effects
- Displacement
- Isolation, exclusion, or separation of people within a given community or from the broader community
- Denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in receipt of benefits of DOT programs, policies, or activities

In EJ analysis, the goal is to determine if any effects, either individually or collectively, might rise to the level of disproportionately high and adverse.

Definition of Disproportionately High and Adverse

Executive Order 12898 defines a disproportionately high and adverse effect as "an adverse effect that is predominately borne by a minority population and/or low-income population or will be suffered by these populations and is appreciably more severe or greater in magnitude than the adverse effect that will be suffered by the non-minority population and/or non-low-income population." For more information and explanation on adverse effects, and equity-related definitions, please refer to the video titled: *Facilitating Equitable Outcomes (EJ Analysis) – Part 2: Scope & Definitions*, found on the FDOT website: http://www.fdot.gov/environment/pubs/sce/sceVideos.shtm.

Difference between Executive Order 12898 and Title VI

Executive Order 12898 seeks to protect minority and low-income populations from disproportionately high and adverse effects of federally supported actions. Title VI seeks to prevent discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin in the delivery of programs, policies, and activities of Federal-aid recipients. Low-income and minority populations are specifically identified in Executive Order 12898, and within any EJ analysis, it is important to address low-income and minority populations separately. It is also worth noting the standard for Title VI is higher than that of the executive order (Title VI considers any adverse impact, not just disproportionately high and adverse effects). In addition, Executive Order 12898 carries no private rights of action in court.

10.1.4 Other Nondiscrimination Legislation

Other nondiscrimination legislation includes:

- *Age Discrimination Act* – addresses discrimination based on a person's age
- *Americans with Disabilities Act and Rehabilitation Act* – addresses discrimination to persons with disabilities
- *23 United States Code (USC) 324* – addresses discrimination based on gender
- *23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 771* – addresses discrimination based on handicap, age, race, color, sex, and national origin
- *Executive Order 13166* – addresses discrimination based on limited English proficiency
- *USDOT Order 5610.2(*a) – updates the Department's original Environmental Justice Order, which was published April 15, 1997; is a key component of the Department's strategy to promote the principles of environmental justice in all Departmental programs, policies, and activities

For more information and details associated with the various legislation discussed in this section, please refer to the video titled: *Facilitating Equitable Outcomes (EJ Analysis) – Part 1: Foundation of Environmental Justice*, found on the FDOT website: http://www.fdot.gov/environment/pubs/sce/sceVideos.shtm.

10.2 Public Involvement and Equity

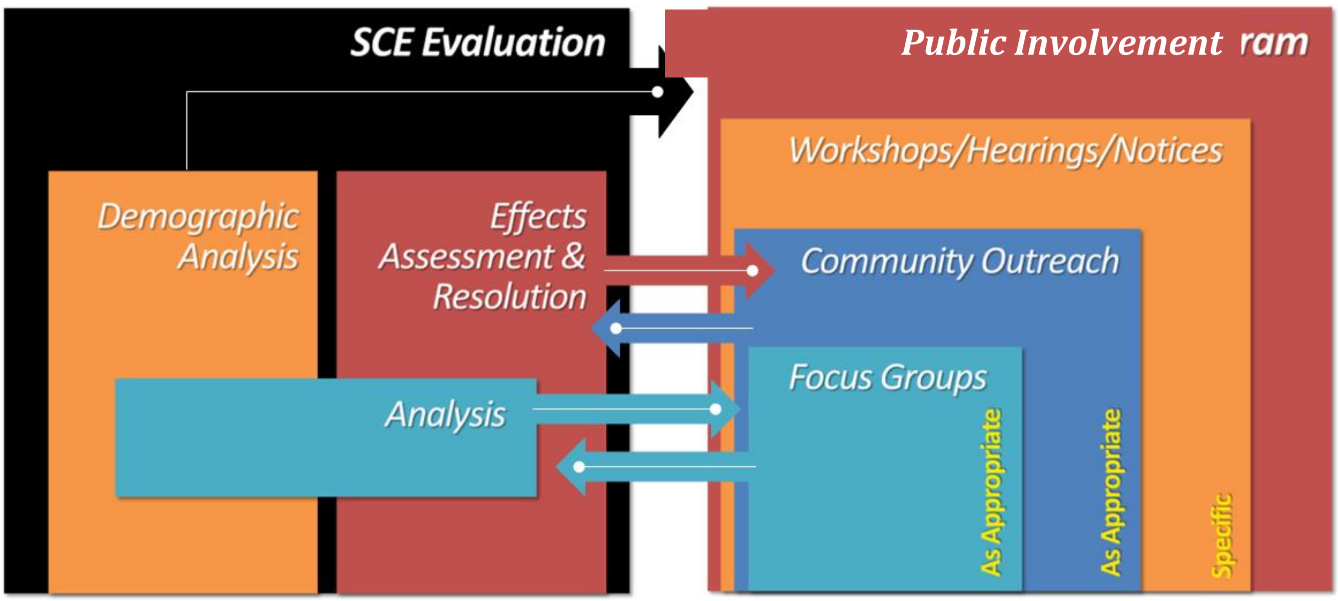
Successful public involvement is the key to facilitating equitable outcomes for transportation projects. This is accomplished by identifying populations potentially affected by a project, soliciting input from these groups, and keeping them informed through the various planning and project phases. It is critical to periodically make sure that all potentially affected populations have been considered, including traditionally underserved communities such as those with limited English proficiency, the disabled, etc. It is also important to maintain records of the public involvement activities, update the Public Involvement Plan (PIP) with project changes, and document the analysis, outreach activities, and outcomes. These activities are discussed in more detail later in this section.

Keys to Equitable Outcomes

1. Identify affected populations
2. Inform affected populations
3. Provide opportunity for feedback
4. Was anybody missed?
5. Keep the public informed as project progresses
6. Update PIP as needed
7. Document

Part of FDOT's compliance with Title VI and EJ requirements occurs through the Sociocultural Effects (SCE) Evaluation process. This process is part of a project's environmental review and includes equity analysis. The equity analysis supports public involvement, and public involvement supports the equity analysis. Each is informed by and responds to the activities and outcomes of the other. **Figure 10.1** shows the transfer of information between the SCE Evaluation and the public involvement activities. The results of the demographic analysis conducted in the study area can be conducted by or shared with the staff responsible for public involvement. If issues affecting traditionally underserved populations are present during the SCE Evaluation, the public involvement team will identify what additional community outreach may be necessary. For example, focus group meetings with an affected community could be a strategy for vetting potential mitigation strategies to address a potential adverse effect. For further explanation on the relationship between the SCE Evaluation and public involvement, please refer to the video titled: *Facilitating Equitable Outcomes (EJ Analysis) – Part 3: Methodology*, found on the FDOT website: http://www.fdot.gov/environment/pubs/sce/sceVideos.shtm.

Figure 10.1: Relationship of the Equity Analysis to Public Involvement



10.2.1 Principles of Public Involvement Support Equitable Outcomes

Public involvement throughout the transportation decision-making process is critical for equitable outcomes by:

- Informing affected populations
- Providing opportunity for feedback
- Identifying missing population groups
- Keeping the public informed as the project progresses

When preparing for public involvement activities with the aim of facilitating equitable outcomes, it is helpful to remember the following four guiding principles (previously introduced in Chapter 1):

1. **Two-way communication** – Public involvement is **two-way** communication aimed at incorporating the views, concerns, and issues of the public into the decision-making process. This is important in equity analysis because getting feedback from the public (two-way communication) is just as important as making the public aware of the project. The public needs to feel like their opinions are being heard and considered throughout all project phases.

2. **<u>Ongoing</u>** – Public involvement is **ongoing in all phases**. It allows the public to hear and be heard. Continuous public involvement will keep the public informed and solicit input as the project progresses, and changes are made.
3. **<u>Include all stakeholders</u>** – Public involvement should **be inclusive of all decision makers and stakeholders**. It should include as many groups and individuals as possible, especially those who will be most affected. This facilitates equitable outcomes by emphasizing the inclusion of all populations.
4. **<u>Understand the community</u> – Know your community context** to determine the most appropriate outreach techniques and establish the measures you are going to use to evaluate those techniques. This is especially important when the affected area includes traditional underserved or hard-to-reach populations.

It is important to be aware of potential barriers that may unintentionally exclude a particular group or community (prevent disparate impact discrimination). For example, some groups may be distrustful of government-sponsored meetings. In those cases, it can be helpful to involve a respected community leader or group early in the process to help encourage public participation. During public involvement activities, ask the question: Have we missed anyone? If so, identify how to reach these missing groups.

The public involvement strategy will vary based on the specific community context. Ask these questions when figuring out the best way to communicate:

- How does the community prefer to be contacted?
- What language do they speak?
- Do they live and/or work in the area?
- When is the best time to meet with them?
- Are there groups that represent the community?

Chapters 3 and 4 of this handbook provide information on a variety of public involvement strategies, aimed at engaging the public throughout the different transportation delivery phases. For more information on public involvement performance measures, see Chapter 9 of this handbook.

10.2.2 Early Public Engagement Supports Equity Analysis

Public involvement should begin early, during the transportation planning process. Transportation planning begins with a community vision. From this vision, strategies are developed for addressing mobility and the area's long-term goals. The planning phase is also when strategies are developed to help guide future development, identify and resolve community problems, promote public health and safety, and protect other important resources. The process needs to be cooperative and encourage participation from the business community, community groups, environmental organizations, freight operators, visitors, and the general public. During the planning process, stakeholders such as civic leaders, business representatives, property owners, and residents are engaged. From an equity perspective, this is a good point to begin making sure all populations are included, and begin asking "who have we missed?"

Planning activities help identify project priorities to address future transportation needs. These are identified in long range planning documents like the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) Plan or a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) or Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). As these plans are being developed or updated, the MPOs, TPOs, and FDOT organize public involvement activities to provide information and gather input from the public. Extra efforts may be needed to make sure information gets to all populations in the area and their concerns are addressed in the plans.

The transition from systems planning to project planning and development is made when a funding source is identified, and priority projects are advanced into project implementation phases through either the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP), or in MPO/TPO areas, the Transportation Improvement Plan. At this point in the process, the Planning Screen in the Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Process is available to Districts and MPOs to aid public involvement activities. Input received during the Planning Screen enables transportation planners to refine the project's concept and purpose and need, identify mitigation opportunities, and consider resource management plans and community values. Public involvement activities conducted before and during the Planning Screen are documented in a Planning Screen Summary Report.

Please refer to the *Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Manual* and training for more information on the ETDM Planning Screen: http://www.fdot.gov/environment/pubs/etdm/etdmmanual.shtm.

Public involvement efforts are influenced by the current transportation delivery phase, scope, and potential for project effects. However, early, effective public engagement is extremely important for reliable analyses and recommendations, especially when related to:

- Distribution of beneficial and adverse effects
- Severity of adverse effects
- Identifying solutions acceptable to the community
- Identifying population groups who may have been missed

Early public engagement helps those involved in later phases by allowing the affected public to have early input and influence.

10.2.3 Determining Who's Affected and Who's Interested

This section provides some guidance and helpful tools aimed at identifying the public. For more information and resources on identifying stakeholders, please refer to *Chapter 4 – Identifying the Public*, of this handbook.

In order to engage the public, the first step is to ask the question: "who is out there?" It is important to realize that the public includes many different groups of people, and within these groups are subgroups, which all may have differing needs. Therefore, be careful about lumping groups of people together. For example, minorities may or may not be low income. Likewise, low-income people might not be minorities.

Consider all populations, including:

- General public
- Underrepresented populations:
  - Low-income
  - Minority
  - Children and elderly
  - Disabled
  - Transit dependent
- Business community
- Environmental groups
- Local governments and organizations
- Other interested stakeholders

To assess what population groups make up the public, and how these groups overlap, also ask the questions: "who might be affected?" and "who is interested?" FDOT uses a three-pronged approach for identifying affected populations:

- Desktop Demographic Analysis
- Windshield Surveys or Field Reviews
- Public Involvement

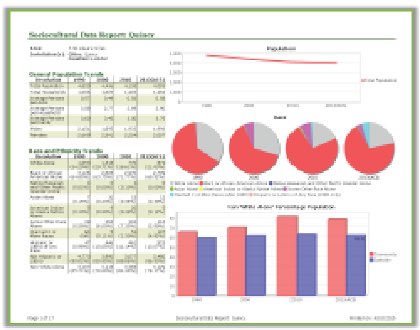
Desktop Demographic Analysis

Demographic analysis is the first step in determining who is present in the community, including those who own property, who live in the area, or who regularly occupy the area for work, study, or other purposes. The analysis will also provide information on special concern populations that are addressed in Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, and other nondiscrimination laws.

To help determine who is out there, start with a desktop review of socioeconomic and GIS data. The US Census is a large source of data; however, most cities and counties also have GIS data available that are more detailed than the census data.

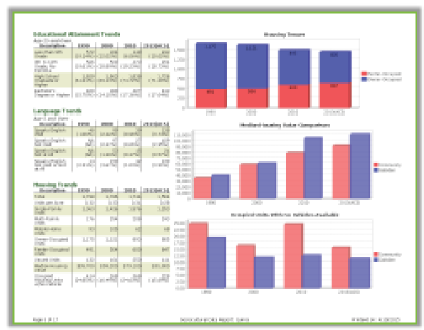
To get a feel for the general layout of the area, consider using Google Earth or another on-line mapping tool. One of the tools offered by FDOT to identify the demographic makeup of an area is the Sociocultural Data Report (SDR). The SDR uses data from the US Census Bureau's decennial census and the most recent American Community Survey to provide a summary of statistics and trends for a selected geographic area. It also provides a list of community facilities within a given area that can be very helpful in planning public involvement and outreach events. Examples of information provided by the SDR are presented on **Figure 10.2**.

Figure 10.2: Example of Information Provided by SDR

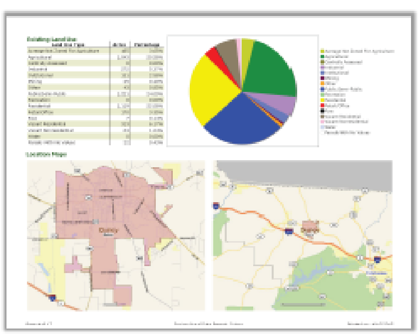


General population trends

Population by age, income, and number of people with disabilities

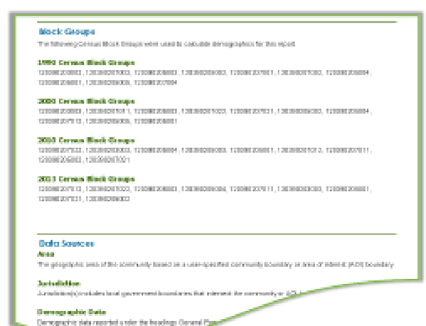


Education attainment, language, and housing



Number of acres for land use types within the area

Community facilities



Data sources and methodology

The SDR is available for:

- *User defined areas* – boundaries identified by project teams and stored in the Environmental Screening Tool (EST) database
- *Census places* – areas identified in the census (such as incorporated cities or unincorporated villages)
- *Counties*

- *Project alternatives* – areas within 500 feet of a selected transportation improvement project alternative

The tool for SDRs can be found on FDOT's Efficient Transportation Decision Making public website: https://etdmpub.fla-etat.org/est/. After opening the website, click on the Project Information menu, and then select Surrounding Resources. Then, click on Sociocultural Data Report (SDR). The tool will provide options for creating reports by county, place, or project. FDOT personnel or project team members may also request access to FDOT's Area of Interest Tool to create customized SDRs. For more information, email the help desk at help@fla-etat.org or call 850-414-5334.

A helpful video on how to use the SDR to research demographics is titled: Who is the Public: Using the SDR to identify Stakeholders, and is located on the FDOT website: http://www.fdot.gov/environment/pubs/sce/sceVideos.shtm.

Other potential sources of demographic information include transportation agencies, school boards, social service agencies, housing agencies, and health departments. Sources within the community can be used to obtain anecdotal information.

Understanding a community's values, preferences, concerns, and how their goals for the future relate to the project are important. Some resources where this information may be found include:

- MPO and local government planners
- Government advisory boards and committees
- Community and resource user groups
- Regional planning organizations

For more details on conducting a demographic analysis, please refer to the following three videos located on the FDOT website: http://www.fdot.gov/environment/pubs/sce/sceVideos.shtm:

- *Demographic Analysis Role*
- *Demographic Analysis Data*
- *Demographic Analysis Steps*

Windshield Survey or Field Review

Personally visiting the study area is key to learning about the potentially affected communities, businesses, and residents. While driving through or visiting the study area, try to get a feel for what the neighborhoods are like, and what grocery stores are available (for example, Whole Foods or Piggly Wiggly?). Are there locally-owned restaurants or a predominance of chain restaurants, or both? Are signs written in multiple languages? This may be an indication of limited English proficiency. Remember to take good field notes. Also use this field visit to verify or update the GIS data collected during the desktop study.

Public Involvement

Finally, speak with local planners, leaders, residents, and community groups. When planning public involvement activities, it is helpful to identify group leaders and community contacts to connect you with potentially affected populations.

Also consider who can affect the proposed project or plan. This could be political leaders, business leaders, public agencies, or organized community groups. Remember to expand discussions beyond those who may seem to represent the community.

10.2.4 Documentation

The Department's records should include documentation about public involvement activities and outcomes. When documenting, consider the following:

- Who was involved in the analysis?
- How were low-income and minority population groups considered?
- What was the public input?
- What commitments were made (if any)?

Remember to update the PIP throughout the study when identifying additional demographic groups who may be affected by the project, and when new public involvement opportunities are needed. Other updates to the PIP may include, but not be limited to, documentation of outreach activities, groups contacted, and comments received.

10.3 Equity Analysis

Additional equity analysis occurs as part of the SCE Evaluation when project effects are evaluated. When conducting equity analysis for a plan or project, it is helpful to ask the following six questions about the project and surrounding community:

- Who are potentially impacted populations and where are they?
- What is the adverse effect footprint, if any?
- How is the adverse effect distributed among the populations?
- If disproportionate, how severe is the adverse effect?
- Can disproportionately high and adverse effects be resolved?
- What are the conclusions/solutions?

This section provides a brief overview of the major steps involved in answering these questions. More information about the SCE Evaluation process can be found in *Part 2, Chapter 4 of the Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Manual*. The following link can be used to access the PD&E Manual: http://www.fdot.gov/environment/pubs/pdeman/pdeman1.shtm. The steps of equity analysis briefly outlined below are summarized and described in the video titled*: Facilitating Equitable Outcomes (EJ Analysis) – Part 3: Methodology*, found on the FDOT website: http://www.fdot.gov/environment/pubs/sce/sceVideos.shtm.

10.3.1 Who is Out There and Where?

This question should be familiar because it was discussed earlier in the chapter as the first question to ask when beginning public involvement during equity analysis. This step is a key link between public involvement and the SCE Evaluation. Remember the relationship from **Figure 10.1 – Relationship of the Equity Analysis to Public Involvement** - the SCE Evaluation supports public involvement and vice versa.

This first step of the equity analysis determines what populations are in the study area, and where they are located. This is achieved by researching the demographics of the study area. Demographic analysis is a process used to understand the aspects of a population, in a particular area, at a particular time.

Again, FDOT's goal is to consider all populations. Demographic characteristics considered in the analysis include:

- Race, color, or national origin
- Disability
- Age
- Gender
- Limited English proficiency
- Low-income

10.3.2 What is the Adverse Effect Footprint, if any?

First, identify the areas of potential adverse effects. Remember to include past actions. Resources include city or county governments, metropolitan planning organizations, state and federal agencies, and documentation from any previous community outreach. Another helpful resource is a United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) website called EJ View, which can be found at: https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen. Identify where the areas of adverse effects coincide wholly or partially with the population groups identified in the previous step. These are the areas of interest. A windshield study or site visit is also highly recommended during this step, to confirm areas of interest or verify that no areas of interest were identified. Use this information to map the footprint of any potential adverse effects, within the study area.

10.3.3 How is the Adverse Effect Distributed among Who's There?

By comparing the responses to the two questions above, get a sense for how the adverse effects are distributed among the populations within the study area. More specifically, assess the relative distribution of adverse effects, including direct, indirect, and cumulative effects among the various populations within the area(s) of interest. Remember to pay particular attention to those populations that may be traditionally underserved or underrepresented. Identify if there are any disproportionate distributions of adverse effects.

10.3.4 If Disproportionate, How Severe is the Adverse Effect?

Assess the severity of potential adverse effects found to be disproportionately distributed to an EJ population. To assess the severity of the adverse effect(s), consider:

- Totality of potential effects (beneficial and adverse)
- Scale or extent of effect
- Past adverse actions
- Duration of effect

Reminders:
- Involve the public!
- Who have we missed?

Remember that potential effects are required to be analyzed for severity, even if they are not disproportionate.

10.3.5 Can the Disproportionately High and Adverse Effect be Resolved?

To resolve potential adverse effects, consider the following solution categories:

- **Avoidance** – what actions can we consider so the adverse effect does not occur?
- **Minimization** – what can we do to reduce the severity of the effect?
- **Mitigation** – what actions can we take to offset or alleviate an effect, or replace a protected resource?
- **Enhancement** – what desirable or attractive features can be added to the project to make it fit more harmoniously into the community?

Reminder: Update the PIP when identifying additional population groups, or offering more public involvement opportunities.

The four solution categories to resolve adverse effects should be considered in the order they are presented above. Also, all proposed solutions must be practicable. Public involvement plays a key role in this step of the equity analysis. It is important to know your community to figure out the best ways to communicate. For example, homeowners associations, elected officials, elderly, and seasonal residents will all have different communication needs.

10.3.6 What are the Conclusions?

Conclusions from the equity analysis are documented and maintained in the Department's files. The files should include documentation of the analysis, findings that support the conclusions, and documentation of public involvement opportunities. The conclusions may also be summarized and published. For example, in the PD&E phase, the conclusions are summarized in the environmental document.

10.4 Resources

Table 10.1 provides a list of resources related to public involvement, equity, and SCE. Many of the FDOT resources listed in **Table 10.1** are available on FDOT's SCE Evaluation Process web page: http://www.fdot.gov/environment/pubs/sce/sce1.shtm.

Table 10.1: Resources

Reading Materials from FDOT Website: http://www.fdot.gov/environment/pubs/sce/sceReading.shtm
Demographic Analysis – Data Sources for Demographic Analysis
Demographic Analysis – Useful US Census Bureau Data Tables for Demographic Analysis
Demographic Analysis – Commonly Used Terms
Demographic Analysis – Demographic Analysis for SCE Evaluations (slides)
Demographic Analysis – Stepping Beyond Census Data for Community Impact Assessments (poster)
General Resources – A variety of general resources associated with SCE
SCE Issue Sheets – Includes issue sheets for social, economic, land use, mobility, aesthetics, and relocation
SCE and EST Videos from FDOT Website: http://www.fdot.gov/environment/pubs/sce/sceVideos.shtm
Facilitating Equitable Outcomes (EJ Analysis) – Part 1: Foundation of Environmental Justice
Facilitating Equitable Outcomes (EJ Analysis) – Part 2: Scope and Definitions
Facilitating Equitable Outcomes (EJ Analysis) – Part 3: Methodology
Demographic Analysis for SCE Evaluations – Demographic Analysis Data
Demographic Analysis for SCE Evaluations – Demographic Analysis Role
Demographic Analysis for SCE Evaluations – Demographic Analysis Steps
Demographic Analysis for SCE Evaluations – Who is the Public: Using the SDR to Identify Stakeholders
SCE and EST Videos from FDOT Website: http://www.fdot.gov/environment/pubs/sce/sceVideos.shtm
Instructional Videos for Environmental Screening Tool (EST) Users – Part 1: Area of Interest Tool
Instructional Videos for EST Users – Part 2: Area of Interest Tool with Sociocultural Data Report Overview

Table 10.1: Resources (Continued)

Environmental Screening Tool (EST) – Includes informative and instructional videos on the EST
Sociocultural Effects Process – Variety of videos on the SCE Process
EJ Resources from FDOT Website: http://www.fdot.gov/environment/pubs/sce/otherSCE.shtm
Environmental Justice: Guidance Under the National Environmental Policy Act (CEQ, 1997)
Guidance on Environmental Justice and NEPA (FHWA 2011)
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Website on Environmental Justice
Circular FTA C 4703.1: Environmental Justice Policy Guidance for Federal Transit Administration Recipients (FTA, 2012)
Report 532: Effective Methods of Environmental Justice Assessment (NCHRP, 2004)
Report 710: Practical Approaches for Involving Traditionally Underserved Populations in Transportation Decision Making (NCHRP, 2012)
Pursuing Equity in Pedestrian and Bicycle Planning (FHWA 2016)
Other Resources from FDOT Website and Others
Community Impact Assessment Website: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/livability/cia/index.cfm
Cultural Resources Management Handbook: http://www.fdot.gov/environment/pubs/cultmgmt/Handbook_11-04.pdf
Environmental Justice Screening & Mapping Tool (USEPA): https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen
Environmental Screening Tool (EST) Handbook: https://etdmpub.fla-etat.org/est/index.jsp?url=library.jsp
FDOT's Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Process Manual: http://www.fdot.gov/environment/pubs/etdm/etdmmanual.shtm
FDOT's Efficient Transportation Decision Making website – Published Sociocultural Data Reports (SDRs): https://etdmpub.fla-etat.org/est/
FDOT's Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Guidance: http://www.fdot.gov/equalopportunity/InvestigationsandCompliance/FDOT%20Limited%20English%20Proficiency%20(LEP)%20Guidance.pdf
FDOT's Office of Policy Planning – MPO Program Management Handbook: http://www.fdot.gov/planning/policy/metrosupport/FDOT%202017%20MPO%20Handbook.pdf
FDOT's Project Development & Environment (PD&E) Manual: http://www.fdot.gov/environment/pubs/pdeman/pdeman1.shtm
FDOT's Public Involvement Website: http://www.fdot.gov/environment/pubinvolvement.shtm
FDOT's Title VI Contacts: http://www.fdot.gov/equalopportunity/titlevicontacts.shtm
Gloria M. Shepherd Memorandum – Guidance on Environmental Justice and NEPA (December 16, 2011): https://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/env_topics/ej/guidance_ejustice-nepa.aspx
Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964: https://www.justice.gov/crt/title-vi-1964-civil-rights-act

Public Involvement Handbook

Appendix A
References & Resources

Chapter 1 – Introduction

1. FDOT Environmental Management Office - http://www.dot.state.fl.us/emo/
2. US DOT Public Involvement Techniques for Transportation Decision Making - http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/public_involvement/publications/techniques/
3. US DOT Guide to Transportation Decision Making - http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/publications/transportation_decision_making/

Chapter 2 – Requirements for Public Involvement

1. Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) Act - http://www.dot.state.fl.us/planning/map21/
2. Title 23 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 450.210 - http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/granule/CFR-2011-title23-vol1/CFR-2011-title23-vol1-sec450-210/content-detail.html
3. Title 23 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 450.316 - http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/granule/CFR-2011-title23-vol1/CFR-2011-title23-vol1-sec450-316/content-detail.html
4. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) - http://www.ada.gov/
5. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 - http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/cor/coord/titlevi.php
6. Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations - http://www2.epa.gov/laws-regulations/summary-executive-order-12898-federal-actions-address-environmental-justice
7. Executive Order 13166, Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency - http://www.lep.gov/13166/eo13166.html
8. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 - http://www2.epa.gov/laws-regulations/summary-national-environmental-policy-act
9. Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act - http://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title42/chapter61&edition=prelim
10. State of Florida Statutes (F.S.) - http://www.flsenate.gov/Laws/Statutes/
11. Jessica Lunsford Act - http://www.fldoe.org/edstandards/background_screening.asp
12. FDOT Project Development & Environment (PD&E) Manual - www.dot.state.fl.us/emo/pubs/pdeman/pdeman1.shtm
13. FDOT Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Program Management Handbook - http://www.dot.state.fl.us/planning/Policy/metrosupport/mpohandbook/

Chapter 3 – Public Involvement during the Decision-Making Process

1. Florida Transportation Plan (FTP) - http://www.dot.state.fl.us/planning/policy/
2. Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) Strategic Plan - http://www.dot.state.fl.us/planning/policy/
3. Pocket Guide to Florida Transportation Trends and Conditions - http://www.dot.state.fl.us/planning/policy/
4. Hillsborough County "Plan Hillsborough 2040" - http://www.planhillsborough.org/plan2040/
5. Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority Master Plan - http://www.tbarta.com/en/master-plan
6. FDOT MPO Program Management Handbook - http://www.dot.state.fl.us/planning/Policy/metrosupport/mpohandbook/

7. MetroPlan Orlando's 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan - http://www.metroplanorlando.com/plans/long-range-transportation-plan/
8. MetroPlan Orlando's 2030 Public Involvement Plan - http://www.metroplanorlando.com/public-involvement/
9. Florida's State Transportation Improvement Programs - http://www.dot.state.fl.us/ProgramDevelopmentOffice/federal/stip.shtm
10. FDOT 5-Year Work Program - http://www.dot.state.fl.us/programdevelopmentoffice/
11. FDOT Efficient Transportation Decision Making Manual (ETDM) - http://www.dot.state.fl.us/emo/pubs/etdm/etdmmanual.shtm
12. FDOT Project Development & Environment (PD&E) Manual - www.dot.state.fl.us/emo/pubs/pdeman/pdeman1.shtm
13. FDOT Plans Preparation Manual (PPM) - www.dot.state.fl.us/rddesign/PPMManual/PPM.shtm
14. FDOT Project Management Handbook (PMH) - www.dot.state.fl.us/projectmanagementoffice/PMHandbook/pmhandbookindex.shtm

Chapter 4 – Identifying the Public

1. FDOT's Sociocultural Effects (SCE) Evaluation Process - www.dot.state.fl.us/emo/pubs/sce/sce1.shtm
2. Southeast Florida Transportation Planner Outreach Tool - http://mpotransportationoutreachplanner.org/
3. U.S. Census Bureau and American Community Survey (ACS) Demographic Data - http://www.census.gov/
4. University of Florida Bureau of Economic and Business Research - http://www.bebr.ufl.edu/
5. University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences - http://ifas.ufl.edu/
6. Florida Geographic Data Library - http://www.fgdl.org/metadataexplorer/explorer.jsp
7. National Urban League - http://nul.iamempowered.com/
8. National Council of La Raza - http://www.nclr.org/
9. United States Department of Housing and Urban Development - http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD
10. United States Department of Agriculture - http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome
11. National Center for Education Statistics - http://nces.ed.gov/
12. National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Report 710: Practical Approaches for Involving Traditionally Underserved Populations in Transportation Decision Making - http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/nchrp/nchrp_rpt_710.pdf

Chapter 5 – Public Involvement Tools and Techniques

1. Plain Language Initiative Guidelines - http://www.plainlanguage.gov/howto/guidelines/FederalPLGuidelines/TOC.cfm
2. Global Development Research Center Media Toolbox - http://www.gdrc.org/ngo/media/index.html

Chapter 6 – Public Meetings

1. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) - *http://www.ada.gov/*
2. Jessica Lunsford Act - *http://www.fldoe.org/edstandards/background_screening.asp*
3. FDOT Green Lodging Policy - *http://www.dep.state.fl.us/mainpage/programs/green_lodging.htm*
4. National Highway Institute Course #142059: Effective Communications in Public Involvement - *http://www.nhi.fhwa.dot.gov/training/course_search.aspx?tab=0&key=public+involvement&sf=0&course_no=142059*

5. SurveyMonkey® - *https://www.surveymonkey.com/*
6. MetroQuest® - *http://metroquest.com/*
7. MindMixer® - *http://www.mindmixer.com/*
8. WebEx® - *http://www.webex.com/*
9. GoToMeeting® - *http://www.gotomeeting.com/online/collaboration/enter*
10. Florida Administrative Code (FAC),Chapter 28-109 - *https://www.flrules.org/gateway/ChapterHome.asp?Chapter=28-109*
11. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 - *http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/cor/coord/titlevi.php*
12. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Visualization in Planning Website - *http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/scenario_and_visualization/visualization_in_planning/*

Chapter 7 – Public Hearings

1. FDOT Project Development & Environment (PD&E) Manual - www.dot.state.fl.us/emo/pubs/pdeman/pdeman1.shtm
2. State of Florida Statutes (F.S.) - http://www.flsenate.gov/Laws/Statutes/
3. Florida Administrative Register (FAR) - https://www.flrules.org/
4. Title 23 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 771.111 - http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/guidance/superseded/23cfr771.cfm#sec.771.111
5. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 - http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/cor/coord/titlevi.php
6. Florida Administrative Code (FAC),Chapter 28-109 - https://www.flrules.org/gateway/ChapterHome.asp?Chapter=28-109

Chapter 8 – Documenting Public Involvement Activities

1. FDOT Project Commitment Tracking Procedures - http://www2.dot.state.fl.us/proceduraldocuments/procedures/bin/700011035.pdf
2. FDOT Project Development & Environment (PD&E) Manual - www.dot.state.fl.us/emo/pubs/pdeman/pdeman1.shtm
3. Federal Highway Administration(FHWA) Guide to NEPA Documentation - http://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/projdev/pd4document.asp
4. FDOT Efficient Transportation Decision Making Manual (ETDM) - http://www.dot.state.fl.us/emo/pubs/etdm/etdmmanual.shtm

Chapter 9 – Evaluating the Effectiveness of Public Involvement Programs

1. FDOT Public Involvement Resources - http://www.dot.state.fl.us/emo/pubinvolvement.shtm
2. Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) Report: Performance Measures to Evaluate the Effectiveness of Public Involvement Activities in Florida - http://www.cutr.usf.edu/pdf/PIPM%20Final%20Report%206-26.pdf
3. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) - http://www.ada.gov/
4. Google Maps – Transit® - http://maps.google.com/intl/en/landing/transit/#mdy
5. FDOT Customer Satisfaction Surveys - http://www.dot.state.fl.us/planning/customers/

Chapter 10 – Maximizing Equity in Transportation

1. FDOT SCE Evaluation Process - http://www.fdot.gov/environment/pubs/sce/sce1.shtm
2. FDOT Demographic Analysis, SCE General Resources, and SCE Issue Sheets Reading Materials - http://www.fdot.gov/environment/pubs/sce/sceReading.shtm
3. FDOT Environmental Justice and Demographic Analysis Videos - http://www.fdot.gov/environment/pubs/sce/sceVideos.shtm
4. FDOT Environmental Screening Tool and SCE Process Videos - http://www.fdot.gov/environment/pubs/sce/sceVideos.shtm
5. FDOT Environmental Justice Resources - http://www.fdot.gov/environment/pubs/sce/otherSCE.shtm
6. Community Impact Assessment Website - https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/livability/cia/index.cfm
7. Cultural Resources Management Handbook - http://www.fdot.gov/environment/pubs/cultmgmt/Handbook_11-04.pdf
8. Environmental Justice Screening & Mapping Tool (USEPA) - https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen
9. Environmental Screening Tool (EST) Handbook – https://etdmpub.fla-etat.org/est/index.jsp?url=library.jsp
10. FDOT's Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Process Manual - http://www.fdot.gov/environment/pubs/etdm/etdmmanual.shtm
11. FDOT's Efficient Transportation Decision Making website – Published Sociocultural Data Reports (SDRs) - https://etdmpub.fla-etat.org/est/
12. FDOT Efficient Transportation Decision Marking Website Help Desk - help@fla-etat.org
13. FDOT's Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Guidance - http://www.fdot.gov/equalopportunity/InvestigationsandCompliance/FDOT%20Limited%20English%20Proficiency%20(LEP)%20Guidance.pdf
14. FDOT's Office of Policy Planning – MPO Program Management Handbook - http://www.fdot.gov/planning/policy/metrosupport/FDOT%202017%20MPO%20Handbook.pdf
15. FDOT's Project Development & Environment (PD&E) Manual - http://www.fdot.gov/environment/pubs/pdeman/pdeman1.shtm
16. FDOT's Public Involvement Website - http://www.fdot.gov/environment/pubinvolvement.shtm
17. FDOT's Title VI Contacts - http://www.fdot.gov/equalopportunity/titlevicontacts.shtm
18. Gloria M. Shepherd Memorandum – Guidance on Environmental Justice and NEPA (December 16, 2011) - https://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/env_topics/ej/guidance_ejustice-nepa.aspx
19. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 - https://www.justice.gov/crt/title-vi-1964-civil-rights-act

Public Involvement Handbook

Appendix B
Glossary of Terms

A

Access/Accessibility - The opportunity to reach a given end use within a certain period of time, or without being impeded by physical, social or economic barriers. Enhancing mobility is one way of improving access.

Alternative Project Delivery – A means of providing design and construction services, and is some cases financing and/or operating and maintenance, for a project outside of the traditional separate FDOT phases of design, construction and operations. In many cases, this approach is utilized to identify an alternative means of financing a project, such as a public-private partnership, to allow it to be completed more quickly than if relying on the traditional approach. Common alternative project delivery methods include design-build, design-bid-build, design-build-operate-maintain (DBOM), or design-build-finance-operate-maintain (DBFOM).

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) - Federal law that requires public facilities, including transportation services, to be fully accessible for persons with disabilities. ADA also requires the provision of complementary or supplemental paratransit services in areas where fixed route transit service is operated. Expands definition of eligibility for accessible services to persons with mental disabilities, temporary disabilities, and the conditions related to substance abuse. The Act is an augmentation to, but does not supersede, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability against, otherwise qualified individuals in programs receiving federal assistance.

C

Categorical Exclusion (CE) - A technical exclusion for projects that do not result in significant environmental impacts. Such projects are not required to prepare environmental reviews.

Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) - Advisory committee utilized by Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) for citizen input into the transportation planning process.

Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) - Compilation of the rules of the executive department and agencies of the federal government.

Color Dots Survey – An activity that allows the participants to create a list of issues important to them and then individually vote on the relative importance of the issues through the use of colored dots/stickers. Each color is assigned a value, such as green = high priority, blue = medium priority, and yellow = low priority.

Community - Behavior patterns which individuals or groups of individuals hold in common, usually expressed through daily social interaction, the use of local facilities, participation in local organizations, and involvement in activities that satisfy the population's economic and social needs.

Community Awareness Plan – Used during the design and construction phases of project development, this document explains the activities that will take place to keep the community informed of the project and to minimize negative impacts. Projects are categorized into one of four levels of public concern they are likely to generate.

Contact Network – A database of residents and key community leaders who provide feedback to and from broad-based community organizations.

E

Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) - Creates a linkage between land use, transportation and environmental resource planning initiatives through early, interactive agency and public involvement.

Environmental Assessment (EA) – An interim decision document prepared for an action where the significance of social, economic, or environmental impact is not clearly established. If the action is determined to have significant impact, an Environmental Impact Statement is then prepared. If no significant impact is determined, a finding of no significant impact is prepared.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) - Report which details any adverse economic, social, and environmental effects of a proposed transportation project for which federal funding is being sought. Adverse effects could include air, water, or noise pollution; destruction or disruption of natural resources; adverse employment effects; injurious displacement of people or businesses; or disruption of desirable community or regional growth.

Environmental Justice (EJ) – As defined by the Environmental Protection Agency, it is the "fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies. Fair treatment means that no group of people, including racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic group, should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations or the execution of federal, state, local, and tribal programs and policies."

Environmental Screening Tool (EST) - The Internet-based GIS application used by ETAT members to examine potential effects to social, cultural and natural resources.

Environmental Technical Advisory Team (ETAT) - Established with each participating agency appointing a transportation representative with responsibility to coordinate transportation reviews within their respective agency in the ETDM process.

F

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) - Division of the U.S. Department of Transportation that funds highway planning and programs.

Federal Transit Administration (FTA) - Division of the U.S. Department of Transportation that funds transit planning and programs.

Federal Register (FR) - The federal publication where proposed rules, workshops, hearings and adopted rules are advertised for public notice.

Five-Year Work Program/Work Program – The statewide project-specific list of transportation activities and projects scheduled for implementation during the ensuing five-year period. It is developed through extensive coordination with local governments, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, regional planning groups, and the public. It is based on a balanced financial plan that maximizes available revenue sources and achieves equitable geographic distribution.

Florida Administrative Register - The publication in Florida where proposed rules, workshops, hearings and final rules are advertised for public notice.

Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) - State agency responsible for transportation issues and planning in Florida.

Florida Geographical Data Library (FGDL) – Housed at the GeoPlan Center at the University of Florida, contains GIS data from federal, state and local agencies.

Florida Intrastate Highway System (FIHS) - A statewide network of limited and controlled access highways whose primary function is for high speed and high volume traffic movements; built and maintained by FDOT.

Florida Statutes (FS) – The documents in which Florida's laws are found.

Florida Transportation Plan (FTP) - A statewide, comprehensive transportation plan that establishes long-range goals to be accomplished over a 20-25 year time frame; developed by Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT); updated on an annual basis.

G

Geographic Information System (GIS) - A computer system capable of capturing, storing, analyzing, and displaying geographically referenced information; data identified according to location.

L

Land Use - Refers to the manner in which parcels of land or the structures on them are utilized, i.e., commercial, residential, retail, industrial, etc.

Letting - An event at which a FDOT staff person opens and reads all bids for specific proposals, determines the winning bidders, and awards contracts.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) – The US Department of Health and Human Services defines this as "persons who are unable to communicate effectively in English because their primary language is not English and they have not developed fluency in the English language. A person with Limited English Proficiency may have difficult speaking or reading English."

Long Range - In transportation planning, refers to a time span of more than five years. The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is typically regarded as a short-range program.

Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) - A document resulting from a regional or statewide process of collaboration and consensus on a region or state's transportation system. This document serves as the defining vision for the region or state's transportation systems and services. In metropolitan areas, the plan indicates all of the transportation improvement scheduled for funding over the next 20 years.

M

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) - The organizational entity designated by law with lead responsibility for developing transportation plans and programs for urbanized areas of 50,000 or more in population. MPOs are established by agreement of the Governor and units of general-purpose local government that together represent 75 percent of the affected population within an urbanized area.

Mobility - The ability to move or be moved from place to place.

Mode, Intermodal, Multimodal - Form of transportation, such as automobile, transit, bicycle and walking. Intermodal refers to the connections between modes and multimodal refers to the availability of transportation options within a system or corridor.

N

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) - Federal law passed in 1969 that requires an analysis of environmental impacts of federal actions (including the funding of projects).

O

Outreach - Efforts to offer everyone in a community the opportunity to participate in transportation planning.

P

Project Development – The phase a proposed project undergoes once it has been through the planning process. The project development phase is a more detailed analysis of a proposed project's social, economic, and environmental impacts and various project alternatives. What comes from the project development phase is a decision reached through negotiation among all affected parties, including the public. After a proposal has successfully passed the project development phase, it may move to preliminary engineering, design, and construction.

Project Development and Environment Study (PD&E) – FDOT's name for a corridor study to establish conceptual design for a roadway and to determine its compliance with federal and state environmental laws and regulations.

Project Selection Survey – An activity that provides participants with information about different aspects of a project along with the associated costs and asks them to define their preferred approach within the context of available funding. The original concept was developed for a cost feasible plan and was single page survey that contained demographic information, space to add projects to the needs list and a return address/stamp area on one side. The other side of the survey asked, "You have $200 million dollars to spend in the next 20 years. What projects would you undertake with that money?" A list of projects was provided along with costs and the respondent simply had to circle their preferences.

Public Comment - Once a public involvement program is underway, extensive information begins to accumulate about the views of the public and interest groups in the form of public comment.

Public Hearing – A formal public meeting, often required by law, where comments are recorded and a transcript of the proceedings prepared to document a proposed action.

Public Information Officer (PIO) - The individual in an agency or district responsible for disseminating information and responding to inquiries from the media.

Public Involvement - The process by which public concerns, needs, and values are solicited and incorporated into decision-making.

Public Involvement Coordinator - The individual responsible for implementing effective public involvement to identify potential sociocultural effects for transportation projects and responsible for public involvement and assessment of sociocultural effects in the non-MPO areas of the state.

Public Involvement Plan (PIP) - A written plan of public involvement strategies and activities for a specific transportation plan or project. The PIP provides a systematic approach to how the results and outcomes of public involvement activities are integrated into the decision-making process.

Public Meeting – Any type of meeting that is used to convey information and engage the public in a discussion about a project. Although the Department has specific requirements that must be met anytime a public meeting is held, the conduct of these meetings is not specified by law and formal proceedings are not required.

Public Participation - The active and meaningful involvement of the public in the development of transportation plans and improvement programs. Federal and state law require that state departments of transportation and MPOs proactively seek the involvement of all interested parties, including those traditionally underserved by the current transportation system.

Public Record – The Florida Department of State defines this as "all documents, papers, letters, maps, books, tapes, photographs, films, sound recordings, data processing software, or other material, regardless of physical form, characteristics, or means of transmission, made or received pursuant to law or ordinance or in connection with the transaction of official business by any agency."

Public Service Announcement (PSA) - An announcement (including network) which promotes services, programs, or activities that serve community interests.

R

Regional Planning Council – A multipurpose organization composed of representatives of local governments and appointed representatives from the geographic area covered by the council, and designated as the primary organization to address problems and plan solutions that are of greater than local concern or scope; currently 11 regional planning councils exist in Florida.

S

Section 4f De Minimus Impact – A de minimis impact is one that, after taking into account any measures to minimize harm (such as avoidance, minimization, mitigation or enhancement measures), results in either a finding of no adverse effect on historic properties; or a determination that the project would not adversely affect the activities, features, or attributes qualifying a park, recreation area, or refuge for protection under Section 4(f).

Section 508 Access Standards – Standards enacted by the United States Access Board as a part of the Rehabilitation Act to ensure that technology procured by the federal government, including computer hardware and software, websites, phone systems, and copiers, meets technical criteria that ensures access for people with physical, sensory, or cognitive disabilities.

Social Media – Defined by Merriam Webster as "forms of electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content." Examples include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google+, Pinterest, and YouTube.

Sociocultural Effects Evaluation (SCE) – The effects a transportation action has on social, economic, aesthetic and livability, relocation and displacement, civil rights and land use issues.

Speakers Bureau – A group of volunteers who make presentations about a project, with guidance from the technical project team, to different groups and organizations. This is a way to expand the resources and reach of a project.

Stakeholder – A person, community or organization that has an interest in or may be affected by a transportation decision.

State Environmental Management Office (CEMO) – Represents FDOT in protecting and enhancing a sustainable human and natural environment while developing safe, cost effective and efficient transportation systems.

State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) - A staged, multiyear, statewide, intermodal program that is consistent with the state and metropolitan transportation plans and identifies the priority transportation projects to be undertaken over the next three years. The STIP is developed by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and incorporates the MPOs' TIPs. The STIP must be approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) at least every two years.

Strings and Ribbons – An activity that uses different lengths of string and ribbon to represent one year of funding for different types of transportation improvements. Participants are provided information about the funding available and are allowed to trade their strings and ribbons for other transportation improvements provided they stay within the available funding. At the end, the stings and ribbons are pasted onto a map to show where the improvements should occur.

T

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) - A standing committee of most metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs). The function of a TAC is to provide advice on plans or actions of the MPO from planners, engineers and other staff members (not general citizens). Also known as Transportation Technical Committee (TTC).

Title VI – Refers to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) - A financially-constrained list of prioritized transportation projects developed by a metropolitan planning organization. The TIP covers a period of at least three years but may cover a longer period for informational purposes. The TIP must include documentation of federal and state funding sources for each project and be consistent with the Long Range Plan and adopted local comprehensive plans.

Transportation Research Board (TRB) - A unit of the National Research Council whose purpose is to advance knowledge about transportation systems; publishes the Highway Capacity Manual.

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Appendix C Legal Requirements Regarding Public Involvement

Federal Requirements for Public Involvement

Code	Title	Description
Code of Federal Regulation		
23 CFR, Section (S.) 450.316	Interested parties, participation, and consultation	Conducting meetings at convenient accessible locations, reaching the underserved, maintaining coordination, allowing ample public review comment period.
23 CFR, S. 771.111	Early coordination, public involvement, and project development	Early coordination with stakeholders and the public should be maintained. For projects funded by the federal-aid highway program, states must have a FHWA-approved public hearing program that should provide for public engagement activities and reasonable notice of public hearings throughout the entire NEPA process.
23 CFR, S. 139	Efficient environmental reviews for project decision-making	Agencies should provide ample opportunity for public involvement in the environmental review and alternatives analysis processes as early as possible.
23 CFR, S. 128	Public Hearings	Projects funded by the federal-aid highway program should include public hearings at a convenient location and time, and an analysis of the economic and social effects of the proposed improvement project. These activities must be fully documented.
23 CFR, S. 450.210	Federal Highway Administration, DOT: Interested Parties, Public Involvement, and Consultation	In carrying out statewide transportation planning activities such as the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), the state shall apply and document a public involvement process early on that is transparent, accessible, with sufficient notice, where public meetings are held at convenient locations and times, utilizing visualization techniques, and should seek out traditionally underserved populations.
40 CFR, S. 93.105	Consultation	Requires public involvement activities during intergovernmental consultation. The public involvement process should follow 23 CFR 415.316(a).
49 CFR Part 24	Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition for Federal and Federally Assisted Programs	Ensures that property owners displaced by federally-assisted projects receive fair treatment and entitlement.

Code	Title	Description
United States Code		
23 United States Code (USC) 109 (h)	Highway, Standards	As part of the NEPA implementation process, this rule assures that potential economic, social, and environmental impacts of proposed transportation projects are addressed.
23 USC 128	Highways, Public Hearings	Any entity implementing a federal-aid highway project must conduct a public hearing that considers potential economic and social effects of the implementation of the project.
23 USC 135	Statewide Transportation Planning	Statewide transportation plans should involve all interested parties and hold public meetings at convenient and accessible locations, and provide public information electronically and utilize a variety of techniques. In developing the statewide transportation program, the State shall provide sufficient opportunity for public comment.

Code	Title	Description
Federal Laws		
MAP-21	Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (2012)	Public involvement remains a hallmark of the public transportation process.
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act of 1969	Requires the consideration of potential impacts on natural, human, and physical environment during transportation decision-making.
40 CFR, Title 40	Protection of the Environment	Establishes public involvement requirements as per the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
Technical Advisory 6640.8A	Guidance for Preparing and processing Environmental and Section 4(f) documents.	Emphasizes early coordination with agencies and the public in carrying out section 4(f) documents and processes

Code	Title	Description
Nondiscrimination Regulations		
Title VI	Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964	Prohibits federally-assisted programs from discrimination based on race, color, or national origin.
Executive Order 12898	Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations	Federal actions should address environmental justice concerns in low-income and minority communities.
Executive Order 13166	Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)	Federally-funded programs should identify and address LEP needs.
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973	Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)	Prohibits discrimination and ensures equal opportunity for persons with disabilities.
42 USC Sections 6101-6107	Age Discrimination Act of 1975	Prohibits federally-assisted program from discrimination based on age.

State Legal Requirements, Policies & Guidance

Code	Title	Description
Florida Statutes		
S. 120.525, F.S.	Meetings, hearings, and workshops	Requires at least seven days notice for public meetings, hearings, and workshops in the Florida Administrative Register and on the agency's website.
S. 286.011, F.S.	Government in the Sunshine Law	All meetings of public boards and commissions should be open to the public, with no discrimination, and with sufficient notice. Meeting minutes should also be publicly accessible.
S. 286.29, F.S.	Green Lodging	If using a hotel for a public meeting, requires using a Green Lodging hotel for public meetings. Exceptions require approval.
S. 335.02, F.S.	Authority to designate transportation facilities and rights-of-way and establish lanes; procedure for re-designation and relocation; application of local regulations	Prior to re/designating transportation facilities into the State Highway System, a public hearing should be conducted, with reasonable notice at least 14 days prior to the event.
S. 335.199	Transportation projects modifying access to adjacent property	Requires holding at least one public hearing at the proposed transportation project location, including access management projects.
S. 339.135, F.S.	Work program; legislative budget request; definitions; preparation, adoption, execution and amendment	District offices must hold a public hearing prior to submitting the District Work Program. Public hearing minimum advance notification requirements are also provided.
S. 339.155, F.S.	Transportation planning	Stipulates public involvement procedures for the transportation planning process. Ample opportunity should be provided to inform all stakeholders during the development of the Florida Transportation Plan, prior to major changes, through publishing notice in the Florida Administrative Register and in the local newspaper. In the event of a major transportation improvement, a public hearing should be held prior to selecting the project site and the improvement alternative.
S. 339.175, F.S.	Metropolitan planning organizations	Metropolitan transportation planning activities such as the transportation improvement program must provide reasonable opportunity for public comment. The annual list of prioritized projects prepared by the MPO must include public involvement procedures. Additionally, the MPO must publicly provide the annual list of federally-obligated projects from the previous year.
S. 341.051, F.S.	Administration and financing of public transit and intercity bus service programs and projects	Requires conducting public involvement activities during the development of public transit plans.

Code	Title	Description
Other State Laws		
1012.465. F.S.	Jessica Lunsford Act	FDOT policy prohibits holding any public meetings at public school facilities (K-12). For exceptions, approval from the Department's Assistant Secretary of Engineering and Operations is required. Alternate venues include colleges, universities, and private schools.
Executive Order 07-01	Plain Language Initiative	Requires the use of clear plain language in public meetings to ensure an understandable format.

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Appendix D
Examples of Best Practices in Public Involvement

List of Contents

Chapter 3 - Public Involvement during the Decision-Making Process

Chapter 5 - Public Involvement Tools and Techniques

Chapter 6 – Public Meetings

Chapter 9 – Evaluating the Effectiveness of Public Involvement Programs

Examples for Chapter 3
Public Involvement during the Decision-Making Process

Systems Plans

Project Name:	Blueprint 2040 for transportation (Long Range Transportation Plan)		
Agency & FDOT District:	Metroplan Orlando, FDOT District Five		
Year Completed:	2014		
Project Phase:	Planning	***If Planning, type of project:***	System-Wide Planning
Highlights/Key Points:	Variety of involvement methods, including involving youth		
Project Summary:	*Taken from "Blueprint 2040 for transportation Board Adoption Packet"*		

The 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan is a guide for the region's transportation system for the coming decades. The plan identifies current and future transportation needs in Orange, Osceola, and Seminole counties. Projects included in the plan must be cost feasible, based on currently available or new funding sources. The long range plan is updated every five years.

Putting together the Long Range Transportation Plan, which is a federally-required process, has three phases:
1) Developing models to project future travel demand;
2) Identifying transportation needs and funding options;
3) Matching transportation needs with anticipated funding to determine which projects are cost feasible.

The 2040 Plan includes elements that address:

- Public Involvement
- Safety
- Bicycle and pedestrian
- Congestion management
- Transit
- Highway
- Financial resources

For more information:
http://www.metroplanorlando.com/plans/long-range-transportation-plan/

Public Involvement Techniques Used:				☒	Print Media	☒	Radio and/or TV
☒	Public Involvement Teams			☐	Speakers Bureau	☒	Website
☒	Social Media	☐	Drive Thru Display	☒	Other: Video shared via website and social media Interactive games		
Meeting Formats:				*Refer to Chapter 6 for more information.*			
☒	Advisory/Working Group	☐	Charrette	☐	Focus Groups	☐	Interview/One-on-One
☒	Small Group	☒	Workshop/Community Forum/Open House	☒	Virtual	☒	Public Hearing

Corridor Plans

Project Name:	I-75 Master Plan Study		
Agency & FDOT District:	FDOT Districts Four and Six		
Year Completed:	2006		
Project Phase:	Planning	***If Planning, type of project:***	Corridor Plan
Highlights/Key Points:	Intergovernmental coordination due to multijurisdictional nature of project		

Project Summary:

The Florida Department of Transportation prepared this Master Plan for the year 2020 needs of the I-75 Corridor in Broward and Miami-Dade Counties. The study's recommended alternatives were presented and approved by the local Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO).

The I-75 Master Plan Study, managed by District Four, was a joint effort of Districts Four and Six. The Study was conducted to address growing congestion in the 18-mile study segment between I-595 in Broward County and SR 826/Palmetto Expressway in Miami-Dade County. The Study was undertaken as the result of explosive growth that has occurred in Southwest Broward and Northwest Miami-Dade in the late 1990's and early 2000's. The intent of this long-range study is to be proactive at identifying needed improvements that would be consistent with the adjacent community visions and that could possibly be constructed at the time congestion becomes critical, not afterwards.

The recommendation in this study came as a result of working with the local municipalities to address, essentially, local traffic problems. One result of this effort was to extend the southern project limits from the I-75/SR-826 interchange to the interchange of SR-826 and NW 103rd Street to address capacity issues that affect I-75.

The intent of this Master Plan was to separate local issues from the mainline improvement concepts in order finalize the Master Plan Study. The Department has made a commitment to the local municipalities to assist them in resolving the local traffic issues after completing the Master Plan Study.

Public Involvement Techniques Used:		☒	Print Media	☒	Radio and/or TV
☐	Public Involvement Teams	☐	Speakers Bureau	☒	Website
☐	Social Media	☐	Drive Thru Display	☐	Other:

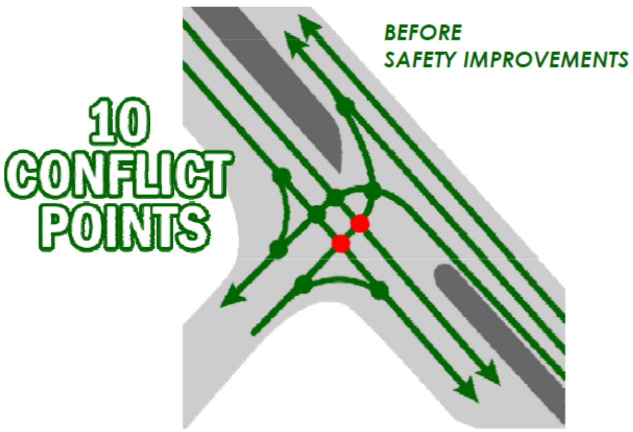
Meeting Formats:		*Refer to Chapter 6 for more information.*					
☐	Advisory/Working Group	☒	Charrette	☒	Focus Groups	☒	Interview/One-on-One
☒	Small Group	☒	Workshop/Community Forum/Open House	☐	Virtual	☐	Public Hearing

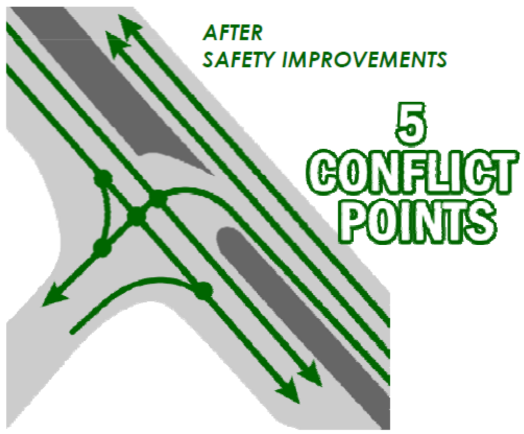
Operations & Maintenance

Project Name:	Poinciana Lane Access Management Changes		
Agency & FDOT District:	FDOT District Four		
Year Completed:	2011		
Project Phase:	Design	***If Planning, type of project:***	Choose an item.
Highlights/Key Points:	Required public hearing for access changes		

Project Summary:

Residents of Poinciana Gardens had requested a traffic signal at Poinciana Lane and Federal Highway/US 1 for years. The Department acknowledged the safety concerns that existed and conducted several signal warrant studies. Each study reached the same conclusion; a signal was not warranted due to low traffic volumes. However, as a way to address the residents' concerns, the Department proposed modifications to the median in Federal Highway/US 1 that would reduce the number of conflict points, as shown below.





Consistent with Chapter 339.155 of the Florida Statutes, a public hearing was held on May 17, 2011 to review the Department's proposed solution. The hearing was conducted consistent with the requirements of Part 1, Chapter 11 of the PD&E Manual. Notification letters, a newspaper advertisement, notice in the Florida Administrative Register and resident-posted signs were used to alert the neighborhood of the public hearing.

The public hearing began at 6:00 PM with an open house and a formal presentation at 6:30. A court reporter was present and speaker cards were distributed. A fact sheet was distributed during the hearing that provided information about the proposed improvements. Over 100 people participated and the Department received 27 written comments and 36 verbal statements. The majority of these opposed the Department's plan and favored a new signal. Questions received were answered by email or letter.

The Department decided to implement the proposed improvements presented at the hearing. The residents were notified by a letter 60 days after the hearing date. Final plans were completed in November 2011 and construction began in January 2012.

Public Involvement Techniques Used:	☒ Print Media	☐ Radio and/or TV	
☐ Public Involvement Teams	☐ Speakers Bureau	☐ Website	
☐ Social Media	☐ Drive Thru Display	☒ Other: Residents created their own signs and posted them throughout the neighborhood.	

Meeting Formats:	*Refer to Chapter 6 for more information.*		
☐ Advisory/Working Group	☐ Charrette	☐ Focus Groups	☐ Interview/One-on-One
☐ Small Group	☐ Workshop/Community Forum/Open House	☐ Virtual	☒ Public Hearing

Examples for Chapter 5 Public Involvement Tools and Techniques

Project Name:	Central Broward East-West Transit Study
Agency & FDOT District:	FDOT District Four
Year Completed:	Ongoing
Project Phase:	Planning — ***If Planning, type of project:*** Corridor Plan
Highlights/Key Points:	Use of public involvement teams to distribute workshop notices in neighborhoods with large percentage of rental units as well as at transit stops

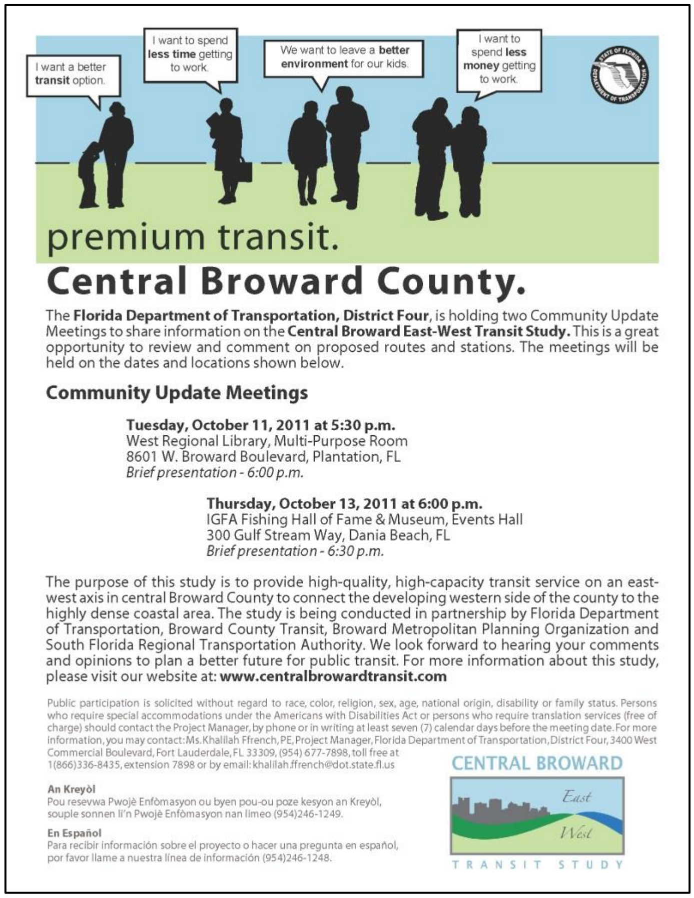
Project Summary:

The Central Broward East-West Transit Study is evaluating alternatives for providing premium transit service from the western portions of central Broward County to the eastern areas, including the cities of Sunrise, Plantation, Davie, Dania Beach, Hollywood and Fort Lauderdale, as well as unincorporated areas of the county. The alternatives considered were more than 20 miles in length and passed through a variety of land uses, including commercial and residential areas.

Portions of these areas were comprised of apartment communities and rental housing that were not being effectively noticed by the traditional letters. Even property owners in the area recommended alternative notification measures as they did not find the letters to be effective.

As a result, the study team developed a series of flyers advertising the upcoming public workshops and distributed throughout the study area as follows:

- As door hangers in specific neighborhoods (flyers were placed in plastic bags specifically designed to be hung on door knobs)
- At local businesses and community facilities along the corridors
- At bus stops during peak use
- At HOA meetings



Attendance at public workshops increased significantly as a result of these efforts. The same approach will be used as the study progresses to a public hearing for the NEPA document.

Public Involvement Techniques Used:			
☒ Public Involvement Teams	☒ Print Media	☒ Radio and/or TV	
☐ Social Media	☐ Speakers Bureau	☒ Website	
☐ Drive Thru Display	☐ Other:		

Meeting Formats:	*Refer to Chapter 6 for more information.*		
☒ Advisory/Working Group	☐ Charrette	☒ Focus Groups	☒ Interview/One-on-One
☒ Small Group	☒ Workshop/Community Forum/Open House	☐ Virtual	☐ Public Hearing

Project Name:	"Drive-Thru" Open House		
Agency & FDOT District:	FDOT District Two		
Year Completed:	Used as needed		
Project Phase:	Construction	***If Planning, type of project:***	Choose an item.
Highlights/Key Points:	Captures people in places they are already going instead of asking them to come to you		

Project Summary:

From time to time District Two sets up "Drive-Thru" open houses to provide information about upcoming construction projects to the community. Instead of asking the public to come to them, the District goes out to the public, setting up these mobile project booths in well-traveled areas in or near the project.

Representatives work with a facility or property owner to set up a tent for a few hours. Under the tent are a couple of tables for displaying project information that people can either walk or drive up to view. When selecting a location, it is important to choose one that allows for free access and a safe flow of traffic.

Another component often used is some type of give-away to encourage participation. For example, during an open house for a bicycle trail, children were fitted and provided with free bicycle helmets. Other give-away items include flashlights, pedometers and blinking safety lights for pedestrians or bicyclists.

Public Involvement Techniques Used:	☐ Print Media	☐ Radio and/or TV	
☐ Public Involvement Teams	☐ Speakers Bureau	☐ Website	
☐ Social Media	☒ Drive Thru Display	☐ Other:	

Meeting Formats:	*Refer to Chapter 6 for more information.*		
☐ Advisory/Working Group	☐ Charrette	☐ Focus Groups	☐ Interview/One-on-One
☐ Small Group	☒ Workshop/Community Forum/Open House	☐ Virtual	☐ Public Hearing

Project Name:	Multiple projects including planning, PD&E and construction phases		
Agency & FDOT District:	FDOT District Five		
Year Completed:	2013		
Project Phase:	Choose an item.	***If Planning, type of project:***	Choose an item.
Highlights/Key Points:	Use of a single article to bring attention to multiple events		

Project Summary:

The District Five office worked with a local business journal reporter to have an article promoting several upcoming public meetings published. The meetings included:

- An open house for an upcoming construction project on US Highway 192;
- A public kickoff meeting for the US 441 Corridor Study;
- An informational meeting on a corridor planning study for Orange Avenue;
- A series of community workshops focused on the Multi-modal Corridor Planning Guidebook; and
- Two pubic kickoff meetings for the Poinciana Parkway Southport Connector PD&E study

7/3/2014 FDOT to hold 11 public meetings on transporation projects, studies - Orlando Business Journal

From the Orlando Business Journal
:http://www.bizjournals.com/orlando/news/2013/08/27/transportation-updates-fdot-to-hold.html

Aug 27, 2013, 3:34pm EDT Updated: Aug 28, 2013, 9:54am EDT

Transportation updates: FDOT to hold 11 public meetings on projects, studies

Anjali Fluker
Senior Staff Writer- Orlando Business Journal
Email | Twitter | Google+

It's going to be a busy few weeks for folks interested in the future of transportation in Central Florida.

The Florida Department of Transportation is hosting 11 public information meetings on projects and corridor studies — those that could bring more projects and jobs to the region — through mid-September.

Here's a list of some of those:

• An open house is being held on Aug. 29 in Kissimmee to discuss the $10.2 million widening of U.S. Highway 192 along the Orange and Osceola counties border. The project involves widening the road from four to six lanes along with roadway reconstruction, rebuilding of three major intersections, milling and resurfacing, installing a curbed median plus sidewalks and a drainage system. Construction is expected to start on Sept. 3. The meeting will be from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at **Lighthouse Key Resort** and Spa, located at 8545 W. Irlo Bronson Memorial Highway in Kissimmee.

• Also on Aug. 29, the transportation department is hosting a public kickoff meeting for the U.S. 441 Corridor Study, which is evaluating options for transit service and improved mobility along the corridor. The study includes the cities of Eustis, Mount Dora and Tavares in Lake County, as well as northwest Orange County, the city of Apopka and downtown Orlando. The meeting will be from 6-8 p.m., with a formal presentation scheduled at 7 p.m. at the Rosemont Community Center at 4872 Rose Bay Drive in Orlando.

• The department plans to hold an informational meeting on Sept. 12 on a corridor planning study for Orange Avenue from Sand Lake Road to Hoffner Avenue — a study expected to enhance multi-modal travel and better access to the new SunRail commuter rail station that is under construction. The meeting will be from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at the Pine Castle Woman's Club at 5901 S. Orange Ave. in Orlando.

• The first of six districtwide community planning workshops is scheduled for Sept. 4 in Orlando. The workshops are focusing on corridor planning and will examine the district's newly adopted Multi-modal Corridor Planning Guidebook. The first meeting will be from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Lake Apopka Conference Rooms A and B at the transportation department's District 5 Urban Office, 133 S. Semoran Blvd. in Orlando.

• The department has two public kickoff meetings planned in September connected to the Poinciana Parkway Southport Connector project development and environmental study. The study is evaluating corridors for a limited-access expressway from Pleasant Hill Road to Florida's Turnpike in Osceola County. The first meeting will be 5:30-7:30 p.m. on Sept. 10 at the Association of Poinciana Villages Inc., 395 Marigold Ave. in Poinciana. The second is from 5:30-7:30 p.m. on Sept. 12 at the Church of St. Luke and St. Peter, 2745 Canoe Creek Road in St. Cloud.

See details on those meetings on the department's website and click on District 5.

Public Involvement Techniques Used:	☒ Print Media	☐ Radio and/or TV	
☐ Public Involvement Teams	☐ Speakers Bureau	☐ Website	
☐ Social Media	☐ Drive Thru Display	☐ Other:	

Meeting Formats:	*Refer to Chapter 6 for more information.*		
☐ Advisory/Working Group	☐ Charrette	☐ Focus Groups	☐ Interview/One-on-One
☐ Small Group	☒ Workshop/Community Forum/Open House	☐ Virtual	☐ Public Hearing

Examples for Chapter 6
Public Meetings

Fact Sheet Example

Project Name:	I-10 Master Plan		
Agency & FDOT District:	FDOT District Three		
Year Completed:	2014		
Project Phase:	Planning	***If Planning, type of project:***	Corridor Plan
Highlights/Key Points:			

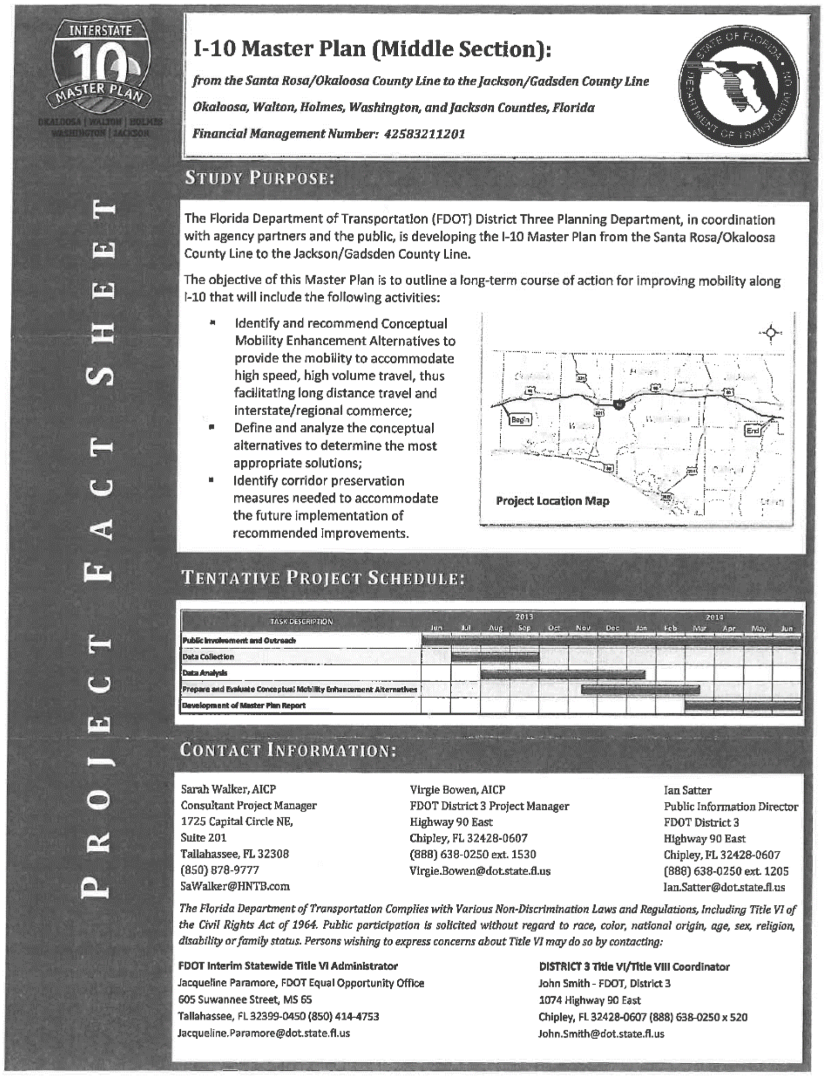
Project Summary:

District Three updated the master plan for I-10 for the portion between the Santa Rosa/Okaloosa County line east to the Jackson/Gadsden County line. The purpose of the master plan was to develop an integrated transportation system that is:

- Economically efficient,
- Environmentally sound, and
- Moves people and goods in an energy-efficient manner.

The plan recommended mobility enhancement alternatives to serve high speed, high volume travel, including long trips and regional commerce as well as protected right-of-way to accommodate future needs.

Public kickoff meetings were held and the image to the right is a copy of the project fact sheet that was distributed.



INTERSTATE 10 MASTER PLAN

OKALOOSA | WALTON | HOLMES WASHINGTON | JACKSON

PROJECT FACT SHEET

I-10 Master Plan (Middle Section):

from the Santa Rosa/Okaloosa County Line to the Jackson/Gadsden County Line

Okaloosa, Walton, Holmes, Washington, and Jackson Counties, Florida

Financial Management Number: 42583211201

STATE OF FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

STUDY PURPOSE:

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District Three Planning Department, in coordination with agency partners and the public, is developing the I-10 Master Plan from the Santa Rosa/Okaloosa County Line to the Jackson/Gadsden County Line.

The objective of this Master Plan is to outline a long-term course of action for improving mobility along I-10 that will include the following activities:

- Identify and recommend Conceptual Mobility Enhancement Alternatives to provide the mobility to accommodate high speed, high volume travel, thus facilitating long distance travel and interstate/regional commerce;
- Define and analyze the conceptual alternatives to determine the most appropriate solutions;
- Identify corridor preservation measures needed to accommodate the future implementation of recommended improvements.

TENTATIVE PROJECT SCHEDULE:

TASK DESCRIPTION	2013 Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	2014 Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Public Involvement and Outreach													
Data Collection													
Data Analysis													
Prepare and Evaluate Conceptual Mobility Enhancement Alternatives													
Development of Master Plan Report													

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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SaWalker@HNTB.com

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Virgie.Bowen@dot.state.fl.us

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Public Information Director
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Ian.Satter@dot.state.fl.us

The Florida Department of Transportation Complies with Various Non-Discrimination Laws and Regulations, Including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability or family status. Persons wishing to express concerns about Title VI may do so by contacting:

FDOT Interim Statewide Title VI Administrator
Jacqueline Paramore, FDOT Equal Opportunity Office
605 Suwannee Street, MS 65
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0450 (850) 414-4753
Jacqueline.Paramore@dot.state.fl.us

DISTRICT 3 Title VI/Title VIII Coordinator
John Smith - FDOT, District 3
1074 Highway 90 East
Chipley, FL 32428-0607 (888) 638-0250 x 520
John.Smith@dot.state.fl.us

Public Involvement Techniques Used:

☒	Print Media	☐	Radio and/or TV		
☐	Public Involvement Teams	☐	Speakers Bureau	☐	Website
☐	Social Media	☐	Drive Thru Display	☐	Other:

Meeting Formats: *Refer to Chapter 6 for more information.*

☐	Advisory/Working Group	☐	Charrette	☐	Focus Groups	☐	Interview/One-on-One
☐	Small Group	☒	Workshop/Community Forum/Open House	☐	Virtual	☐	Public Hearing

Notification

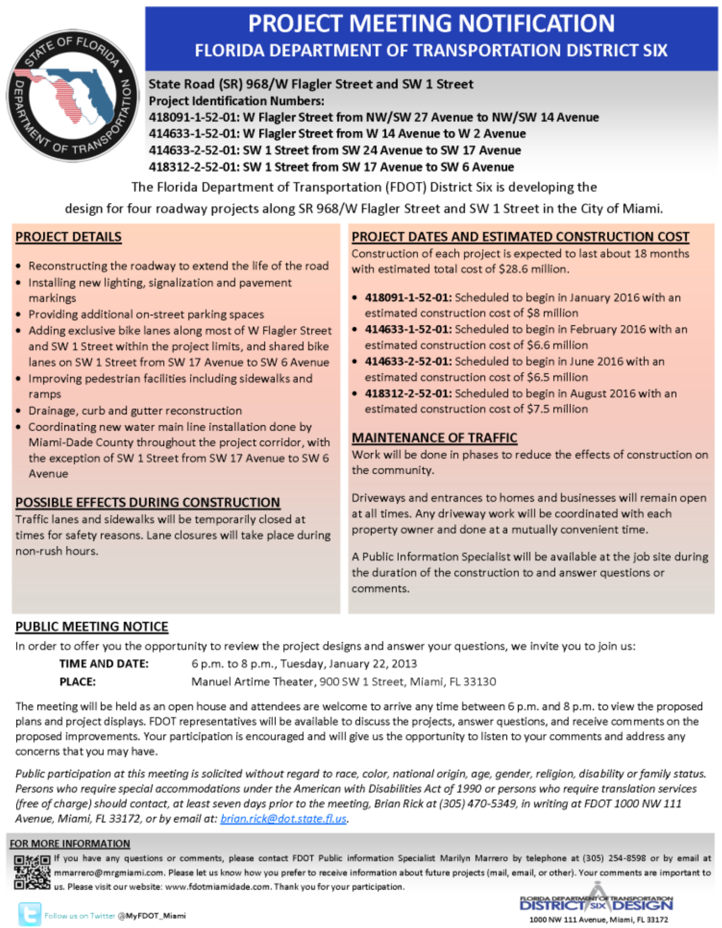
Project Name:	State Road 968/W Flagler Street and SW 1 Street		
Agency & FDOT District:	FDOT District Six		
Year Completed:	Ongoing		
Project Phase:	Design	***If Planning, type of project:***	Choose an item.
Highlights/Key Points:	Example of a Design phase public meeting notification		

Project Summary:

District Six is preparing design plans for four segments of SR 968/W Flagler Street and SW 1st Street. These projects are:

- Reconstructing the roadway to extend the life of the road;
- Installing new lighting, signalization and pavement markings
- Providing additional on-street parking spaces
- Adding exclusive bicycle lanes along most of W Flagler St and SW 1st St and shared bike lanes in other segments
- Improving pedestrian facilities including sidewalks and ramps
- Drainage, curb and gutter reconstruction
- Coordinating new water main line installation done by Miami-Dade County

Construction on these projects is scheduled to being in 2016 and the notification shown on the right hand side was for public workshops to preview the design plans.



PROJECT MEETING NOTIFICATION
FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT SIX

State Road (SR) 968/W Flagler Street and SW 1 Street
Project Identification Numbers:
418091-1-52-01: W Flagler Street from NW/SW 27 Avenue to NW/SW 14 Avenue
414633-1-52-01: W Flagler Street from W 14 Avenue to W 2 Avenue
414633-2-52-01: SW 1 Street from SW 24 Avenue to SW 17 Avenue
418312-2-52-01: SW 1 Street from SW 17 Avenue to SW 6 Avenue

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District Six is developing the design for four roadway projects along SR 968/W Flagler Street and SW 1 Street in the City of Miami.

PROJECT DETAILS

- Reconstructing the roadway to extend the life of the road
- Installing new lighting, signalization and pavement markings
- Providing additional on-street parking spaces
- Adding exclusive bike lanes along most of W Flagler Street and SW 1 Street within the project limits, and shared bike lanes on SW 1 Street from SW 17 Avenue to SW 6 Avenue
- Improving pedestrian facilities including sidewalks and ramps
- Drainage, curb and gutter reconstruction
- Coordinating new water main line installation done by Miami-Dade County throughout the project corridor, with the exception of SW 1 Street from SW 17 Avenue to SW 6 Avenue

POSSIBLE EFFECTS DURING CONSTRUCTION

Traffic lanes and sidewalks will be temporarily closed at times for safety reasons. Lane closures will take place during non-rush hours.

PROJECT DATES AND ESTIMATED CONSTRUCTION COST

Construction of each project is expected to last about 18 months with estimated total cost of $28.6 million.

- **418091-1-52-01:** Scheduled to begin in January 2016 with an estimated construction cost of $8 million
- **414633-1-52-01:** Scheduled to begin in February 2016 with an estimated construction cost of $6.6 million
- **414633-2-52-01:** Scheduled to begin in June 2016 with an estimated construction cost of $6.5 million
- **418312-2-52-01:** Scheduled to begin in August 2016 with an estimated construction cost of $7.5 million

MAINTENANCE OF TRAFFIC

Work will be done in phases to reduce the effects of construction on the community.

Driveways and entrances to homes and businesses will remain open at all times. Any driveway work will be coordinated with each property owner and done at a mutually convenient time.

A Public Information Specialist will be available at the job site during the duration of the construction to and answer questions or comments.

PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE

In order to offer you the opportunity to review the project designs and answer your questions, we invite you to join us:

TIME AND DATE: 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., Tuesday, January 22, 2013
PLACE: Manuel Artime Theater, 900 SW 1 Street, Miami, FL 33130

The meeting will be held as an open house and attendees are welcome to arrive any time between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. to view the proposed plans and project displays. FDOT representatives will be available to discuss the projects, answer questions, and receive comments on the proposed improvements. Your participation is encouraged and will give us the opportunity to listen to your comments and address any concerns that you may have.

Public participation at this meeting is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, gender, religion, disability or family status. Persons who require special accommodations under the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 or persons who require translation services (free of charge) should contact, at least seven days prior to the meeting, Brian Rick at (305) 470-5349, in writing at FDOT 1000 NW 111 Avenue, Miami, FL 33172, or by email at: brian.rick@dot.state.fl.us.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you have any questions or comments, please contact FDOT Public information Specialist Marilyn Marrero by telephone at (305) 254-8598 or by email at mmarrero@mrgmiami.com. Please let us know how you prefer to receive information about future projects (mail, email, or other). Your comments are important to us. Please visit our website: www.fdotmiamidade.com. Thank you for your participation.

Follow us on Twitter @MyFDOT_Miami

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT SIX DESIGN
1000 NW 111 Avenue, Miami, FL 33172

Public Involvement Techniques Used:		☒	Print Media	☐	Radio and/or TV
☐	Public Involvement Teams	☐	Speakers Bureau	☐	Website
☐	Social Media	☐	Drive Thru Display	☐	Other:

Meeting Formats:		*Refer to Chapter 6 for more information.*					
☐	Advisory/Working Group	☐	Charrette	☐	Focus Groups	☐	Interview/One-on-One
☐	Small Group	☒	Workshop/Community Forum/Open House	☐	Virtual	☐	Public Hearing

Meeting Evaluation Form

Project Name:	SR 434 (Alafaya Trail)		
Agency & FDOT District:	FDOT District 5		
Year Completed:	2011		
Project Phase:	Design	***If Planning, type of project:***	Choose an item.
Highlights/Key Points:	Public hearing evaluation form		
Project Summary:	*The following images are the public hearing evaluation form utilized by the project team.*		

Attendee Questionnaire

Financial Management Number: **428952-1-32-01**

Hearing Date: **9/13/2011**

Project Description: **SR 434 (Alafaya Trail)**

From North of SR 50 (Colonial Drive) to South of Centaurus Drive/ Westinghouse Drive

Hearing Purpose: **Access Management Improvements**

Hearing Location: **Spirit of Joy Lutheran Church**

1801 Rouse Road, Orlando, Florida 32817

(Circle One)

Was this hearing held at a convenient time?	YES	NO
If No, What times would be better for you? 11 AM-1 PM 3 PM-5 PM 6 PM-8 PM		
Was this hearing held at a convenient location?	YES	NO
Was there ample notice of this hearing?	YES	NO
Was the information at the hearing provided to you in a clear manner?	YES	NO
Was the information at the hearing provided to you adequate?	YES	NO
Were you given adequate opportunity to participate?	YES	NO
Was the hearing of value for conveying project information?	YES	NO
Was the hearing of value for capturing your input?	YES	NO
Do you feel that your input was considered?	YES	NO

Special Accommodation Requests (ONLY For those that made a request prioir to the hearing)

If you requested special accommodation, were your expectations met?	YES	NO
Were ADA accessible features satisfactory?	YES	NO
Was ADA project information satisfactory?	YES	NO

For NO answers, please add comments on page 2.

Page 1 of 3

Attendee Questionnaire

Financial Management Number: 428952-1-32-01

Hearing Date: 9/13/2011

We encourage your general comments regarding this hearing and project.

Please provide Special Accommodation / Accessibility Comments here.

So that we may respond to you regarding your comments, would you please provide the following:

Name:

Address:

Address:

City, State, Zip:

Email:

Preferred method of contact: U.S. Mail ☐ Email ☐

Page 2 of 3

FDOT Invitee Follow-up Survey

You are receiving this survey because you were recently invited to the SR 434 (Alafaya Trail) Public Hearing. We would like to receive feedback from you about this meeting. Please complete the form below and Mail it back using Address on Back or leave it with your Apartment Complex's Front Office in the envelope provided to them. This will help us find out how we can better serve for future FDOT public meetings. Thank you!

Project Description: SR 434 (Alafaya Trail)

From North of SR 50 (Colonial Drive) to South of Centaurus Drive/ Westinghouse Drive

Financial Management Number: 428952-1-32-01

Hearing Purpose: Access Management Improvements

Hearing Location: Spirit of Joy Lutheran Church

1801 Rouse Road, Orlando, Florida 32817

Hearing Date: Tuesday, September 13, 2011

Hearing Time: 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM

Did you receive a notice of this Hearing either in the mail or in an email prior to the Hearing?				YES NO
Did you attend this Hearing?				YES NO
Was this Hearing held at a convenient time?				YES NO
	If No, What times would be better for you?	11 AM-1 PM	3 PM-5 PM	6 PM-8 PM
Was this Hearing held at a convenient location?				YES NO
Was there ample notice of this Hearing?				YES NO
Was the information at the Hearing provided to you in a clear manner?				YES NO
Was the information at the Hearing provided to you adequate?				YES NO

If you would like to be added to our distribution list please provide your Name and Email address:

You can access information about all Central Florida Road projects including this one at the following website:
http://CFLRoads.com

Affix Postage
Here or Return
to Apartment
Complex Office

Ghyabi & Associates
C/O Rebecca Zawadski
1459 North US Highway 1, Suite 3
Ormond Beach, Florida 32174

FOLD HERE

Public Involvement Techniques Used:				☐	Print Media	☐	Radio and/or TV
☐	Public Involvement Teams			☐	Speakers Bureau	☐	Website
☐	Social Media	☐	Drive Thru Display	☐	Other:		
Meeting Formats:				*Refer to Chapter 6 for more information.*			
☐	Advisory/Working Group	☐	Charrette	☐	Focus Groups	☐	Interview/One-on-One
☐	Small Group	☐	Workshop/Community Forum/Open House	☐	Virtual	☒	Public Hearing

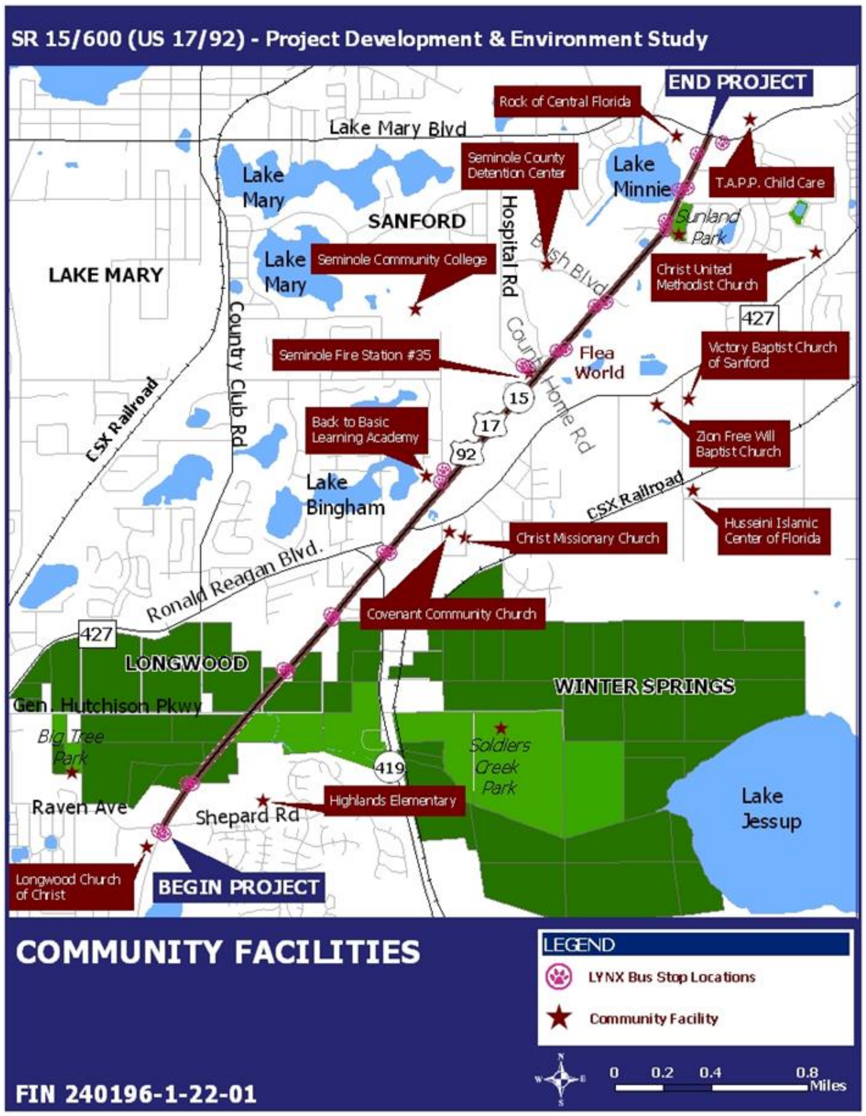
Effective Use of Maps

Project Name:	SR 15/600 (US 17/92) PD&E		
Agency & FDOT District:	FDOT District Five		
Year Completed:	2006		
Project Phase:	PD&E	***If Planning, type of project:***	Choose an item.
Highlights/Key Points:	Reader-friendly map that displays the study area and its features.		

Project Summary:

This map from a PD&E Study shows an effective way to identify and verify with the public:

- Community features
- Potential issues/concerns
- Community resources and facilities



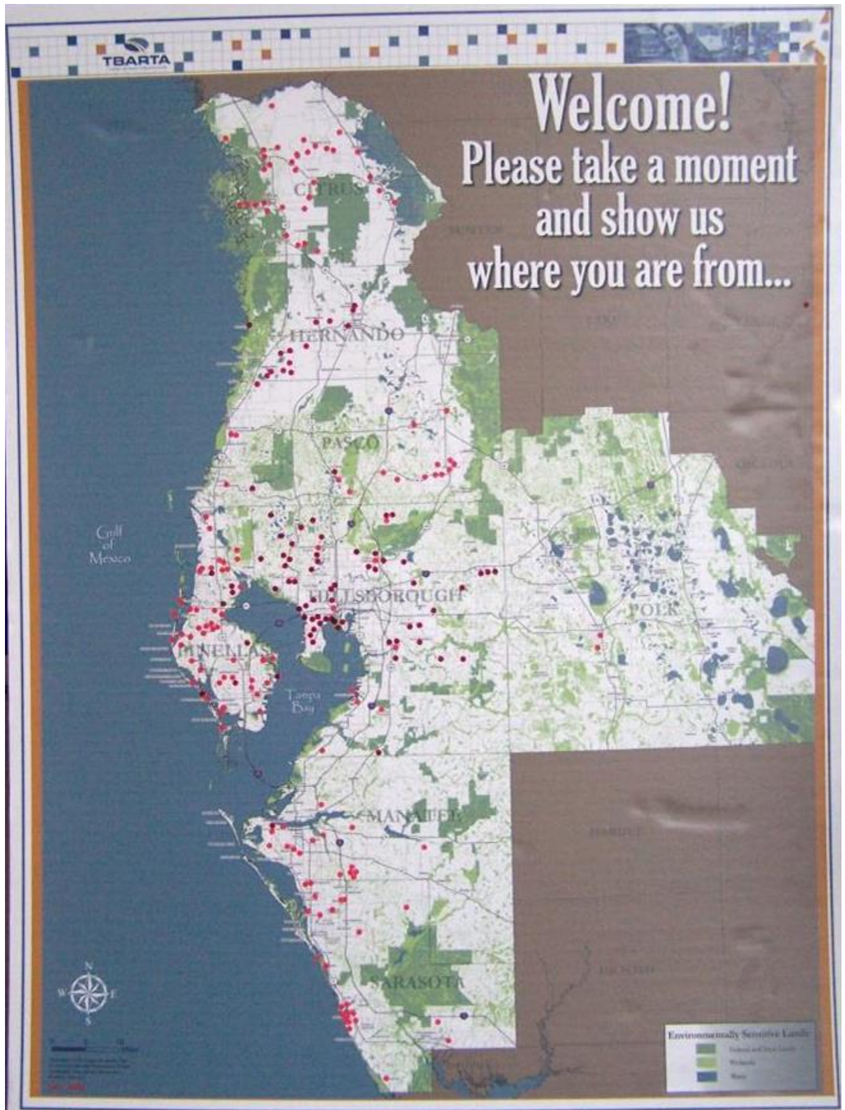
Public Involvement Techniques Used:		☐	Print Media	☐	Radio and/or TV
☐	Public Involvement Teams	☐	Speakers Bureau	☐	Website
☐	Social Media	☐	Drive Thru Display	☐	Other:

Meeting Formats:		*Refer to Chapter 6 for more information.*					
☐	Advisory/Working Group	☐	Charrette	☐	Focus Groups	☐	Interview/One-on-One
☐	Small Group	☐	Workshop/Community Forum/Open House	☐	Virtual	☐	Public Hearing

Project Name:	TBARTA Master Plan		
Agency & FDOT District:	Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority, FDOT Districts One and Seven		
Year Completed:	2009		
Project Phase:	Planning	***If Planning, type of project:***	System-Wide Planning
Highlights/Key Points:	Regional systems plan with substantial public outreach		

Project Summary:

The image shown here is a map from one of the public meetings that was used to document where participants live. This is a good way to show both the public and the project team where participants are coming from.



Public Involvement Techniques Used:		☒	Print Media	☒	Radio and/or TV
☒	Public Involvement Teams	☒	Speakers Bureau	☒	Website
☒	Social Media	☐	Drive Thru Display	☐	Other:

Meeting Formats: *Refer to Chapter 6 for more information.*

☒	Advisory/Working Group	☐	Charrette	☐	Focus Groups	☐	Interview/One-on-One
☐	Small Group	☒	Workshop/Community Forum/Open House	☐	Virtual	☒	Public Hearing

Examples for Chapter 9
Evaluating the Effectiveness of Public Involvement

Project Name:	FDOT Construction Customer Satisfaction Surveys		
Agency & FDOT District:	FDOT statewide		
Year Completed:	Ongoing		
Project Phase:	Construction	***If Planning, type of project:***	Choose an item.
Highlights/Key Points:	Improvement surveys for residents and businesses in FDOT construction areas.		

Project Summary:

Since 2004, the FDOT Office of Construction has conducted customer satisfaction surveys statewide on ongoing and completed construction projects. Since 2008, all seven districts have participated in the surveys. Two completed projects and three active projects are selected from each District, and property owners (resident and business) around those areas are selected and surveyed. FDOT has selected Florida State University to conduct the survey, analyze the results, and prepare the final report.

The questions, shown below, evaluate public satisfaction with the construction process and with FDOT staff and contractors. The results are used to make adjustments in the District-wide and statewide Work Plan and to define best practices for Districts to implement. A meeting is held three times a year with each District construction manager to discuss the results and how to improve customer satisfaction.

A. I was provided advance notification of the FDOT construction project.
B. Information I received prior to the construction project was easy to understand and accurate.
C. I was notified in advance when construction activities would begin.
D. I was provided with the names and phone numbers of contact people for questions about the construction project.
E. When contacted, FDOT personnel satisfactorily answered my questions.
F. I was provided timely notice of lane closures/restrictions.

Public Involvement Techniques Used:	☐ Print Media	☐ Radio and/or TV	
☐ Public Involvement Teams	☐ Speakers Bureau	☐ Website	
☐ Social Media	☐ Drive Thru Display	☒ Other: Surveys	

Meeting Formats:	*Refer to Chapter 6 for more information.*		
☐ Advisory/Working Group	☐ Charrette	☐ Focus Groups	☐ Interview/One-on-One
☐ Small Group	☐ Workshop/Community Forum/Open House	☐ Virtual	☐ Public Hearing

Project Name:	SR 600/John Young Parkway		
Agency & FDOT District:	FDOT District Five		
Year Completed:	2011		
Project Phase:	Construction	***If Planning, type of project:***	Choose an item.
Highlights/Key Points:	Survey of public meeting participants at and after the meeting		

Project Summary:

FDOT District Five involved a consultant to evaluate a public involvement meeting conducted for the SR 600/John Young Parkway project. Initial and follow-up questionnaires were developed for this purpose, drawing upon those provided in the FDOT PIPM research report. Copies of the questionnaires used in the evaluation are provided on the following pages. These surveys were anonymous unless participants chose to provide their name and responses to demographic items were voluntary.

During a project presentation at a public meeting on the project, attendees were asked to complete the attendee questionnaire. A follow-up survey was also distributed to all those invited to attend on the original notification mailing list. This survey was emailed to all elected officials and stakeholders and mailed to all property owners and tenants. The emails were sent by the project consultant and included an electronic version of the survey with check boxes for easy return. Mail surveys included pre-addressed and stamped return envelopes.

Forty percent of those who responded indicated that the meeting time was not convenient, suggesting the need to reconsider the normal meeting time of 5 PM to 7 PM. A demographic analysis of the results indicated that no one under the age of 35 attended the meeting, suggesting a potential need for alternative methods to engage young people in the decision-making process.

The consultant developed a series of recommendations based upon the analysis. Among these was a recommendation to notify the public two or three weeks in advance to provide people more time to fit the meeting into their schedule. Another recommendation was to add a website link to the mailed flyers and notices where those unable to attend the meeting at the scheduled time could see the materials at a specific period of time and comment via a message board. Several other improvement strategies were also identified for future consideration.

Attendee Questionnaire

Financial Management Number: 418403-2-52-01

Meeting Date: 5/26/2011

Project Description: SR 600 (John Young Parkway) ~ from Portage Street to Vine Street

Meeting Purpose: Public Information Meeting

Meeting Location: Kissimmee Civic Center, 201 East Dakin Ave., Kissimmee, FL 34741

Was this meeting held at a convenient time?	YES		NO
If no, what times would be better for you?	11 AM-1 PM	3 PM-5 PM	6 PM-8 PM
Was this meeting held at a convenient location?	YES		NO
Was there ample notice of this meeting?	YES		NO
Was the information at the meeting provided to you in a clear manner?	YES		NO
Was the information at the meeting provided to you adequate?	YES		NO
Were you given adequate opportunity to participate?	YES		NO
Was the meeting of value for conveying project information?	YES		NO
Was the meeting of value for capturing your input?	YES		NO
Do you feel that your input was considered?	YES		NO

Special Accommodation Requests (for those that made a request prior to the meeting)

If you requested special accommodation, were your expectations met?	YES	NO
Were ADA accessible features satisfactory?	YES	NO
Was ADA project information satisfactory?	YES	NO

Attendee Demographics

- Racial/Ethnic: American Indian; Asian; Black/African American; Hispanic/Latino; Caucasian
- Age: Under 18; 18-24; 25-34; 35-44; 45-54; 55-65; 65+
- Income: Less than $15,000; $15,001-30,000; $30,001-50,000; $50,001-75,000; $75,000-100,000; Over $100,000
- Gender: Male; Female; Other
- Employment: Employed-Full Time; Employed-Part Time; Unemployed; Retired

We encourage your general comments regarding this meeting.

Please provide Special Accommodation/Accessibility Comments here.

FDOT Invitee Follow-up Survey

You are receiving this survey because you were recently invited to the SR 600 (John Young Parkway) Public Information Meeting. We would like to receive feedback from you about this meeting. Please complete the form below and mail it back in the pre-addressed and stamped envelope provided. This will help us find out how we can better serve you for future FDOT public meetings. Thank you!

Project Description: SR 600 (John Young Parkway) from Portage Street to Vine Street

Financial Management Number: 418403-2-52-01

Meeting Purpose: Public Information Meeting

Meeting Location: Kissimmee Civic Center, 201 East Dakin Ave., Kissimmee, FL 34741

Meeting Date: 5/26/2011

Meeting Time: 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM

Did you receive a notice of this meeting either in the mail or in an email prior to the meeting?	YES NO
Did you attend this meeting?	YES NO
Was this meeting held at a convenient time?	YES NO
If no, what times would be better for you? (11 AM-1 PM 3 PM-5 PM 5 PM-7 PM)	
Was this meeting held at a convenient location?	YES NO
Was there ample notice of this meeting?	YES NO
Was the information at the meeting provided to you in a clear manner?	YES NO
Was the information at the meeting provided to you adequate?	YES NO
If you would like to be added to our distribution list please provide your Name and Email address:	

You can access information about all Central Florida Road projects, including this one, at the following website: http://CFLRoads.com

Public Involvement Techniques Used:		☐	Print Media	☐	Radio and/or TV
☐	Public Involvement Teams	☐	Speakers Bureau	☐	Website
☐	Social Media	☐ Drive Thru Display		☒	Other: Surveys

Meeting Formats:		*Refer to Chapter 6 for more information.*					
☐	Advisory/Working Group	☐	Charrette	☐	Focus Groups	☐	Interview/One-on-One
☐	Small Group	☒	Workshop/Community Forum/Open House	☐	Virtual	☐	Public Hearing

Public Involvement Handbook

Appendix E
Meeting Checklists & Room Layouts

Public Meeting Site Selection Checklist

Location-Specific Criteria	☐ Green Lodging policy compliant (hotels only)
	☐ Jessica Lunsford Act compliant
	☐ Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance
	☐ Circulation space for wheelchairs/walkers
	☐ Ample ADA parking
	☐ Transit accessibility (e.g. on bus route)
	☐ Adequate, safe and convenient parking
	☐ Easy to find/provide directions
	☐ Recognized as a meeting place
	☐ Proximity to project subject area
	☐ Sufficient number of tables/chairs
	☐ Insurance requirements
	☐ Cost of site rental/discount for government use
Room-Specific Criteria	☐ Sufficient room occupancy capacity
	☐ Space is adequate for meeting format
	☐ Audio-visual capabilities
	☐ Projector
	☐ Sound system/microphone
	☐ Power supply
	☐ Break-out room(s), if needed
	☐ Lighting

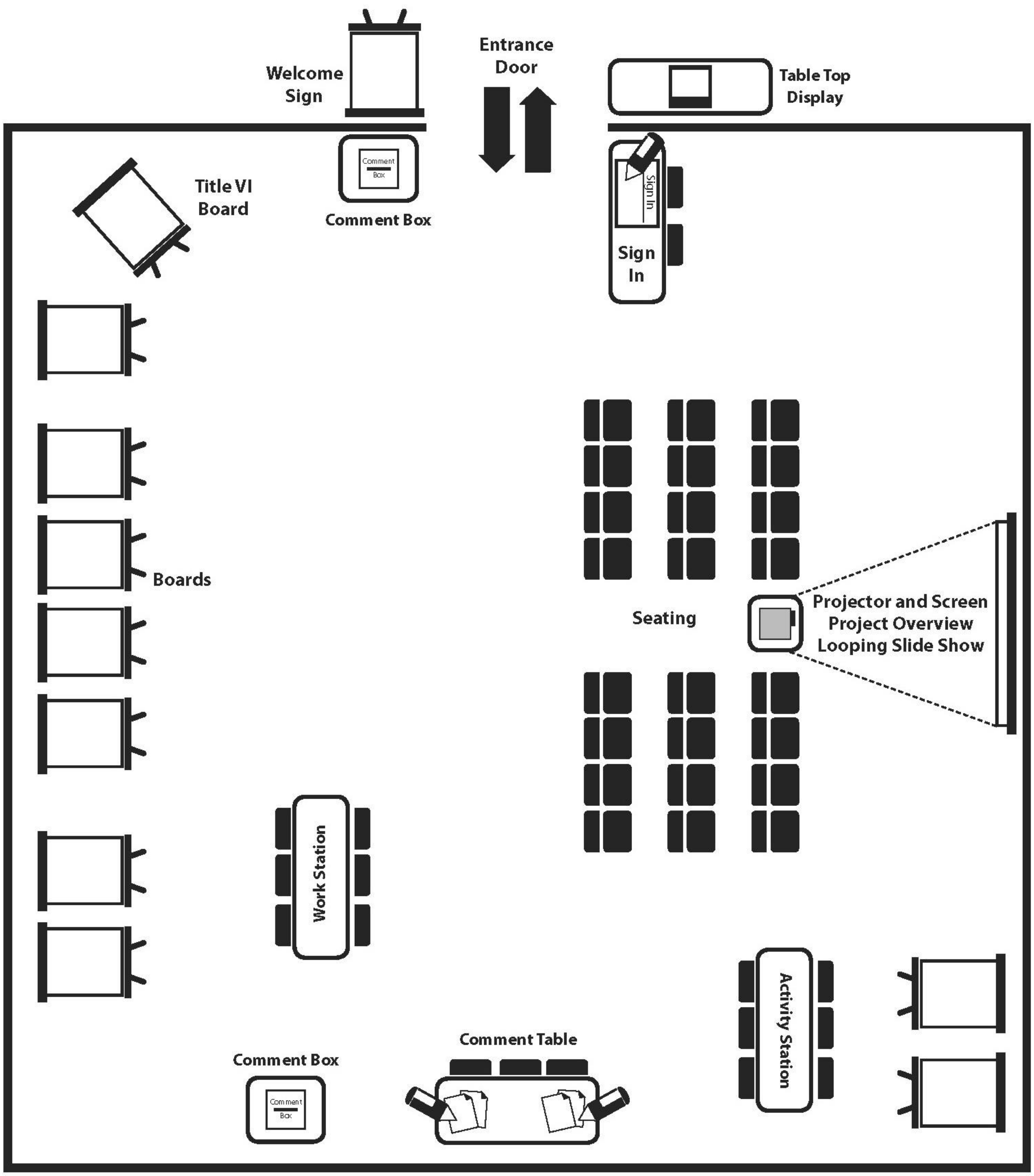
Public Meeting Supplies Checklist

	Items	Complete
Project-specific Materials	Agenda/Instructions	
	PowerPoint Presentation (if needed)	
	Room Layout	
	Sign-in Sheets	
	Handouts	
	Station Number Signs	
	Boards/Maps	
	Meeting Evaluation Forms	
	Name Tags	
	Meeting Directional Signs	
	Comment Forms	
	Comment Box(es)	
	Games or Puzzles	
AV Equipment	Laptop	
	Wireless Mouse	
	Remote Presentation Clicker	
	Laser Pointer	
	Projector	
	Audience Response System Equipment	
	Recording Devices	
	Camera	
	Microphones	
	Screen	
	TV/VCR	
	Extension Cords	
Office Supplies	Pens & Pencils	
	Markers	
	Post It Notes	
	Sticker Dots	
	Stapler	
	Tape (Scotch, Masking, Duct, Double-Sided)	
	Scissors	
	Rubber Bands	
	Paper Clips/Binders	
	Tools - Screwdriver, Hammer	
	Extra Notepads	
	Flashlights and Batteries	
	Flip Charts	
	Easels	
Additional Supplies	Safety Vests (for posting signs and directing traffic)	
	Umbrella	
	Door Stop	
	Air Freshener	
	Table Cloths	
	Hand Wipes/Antibacterial Gel	

Public Meeting Room Layout Examples

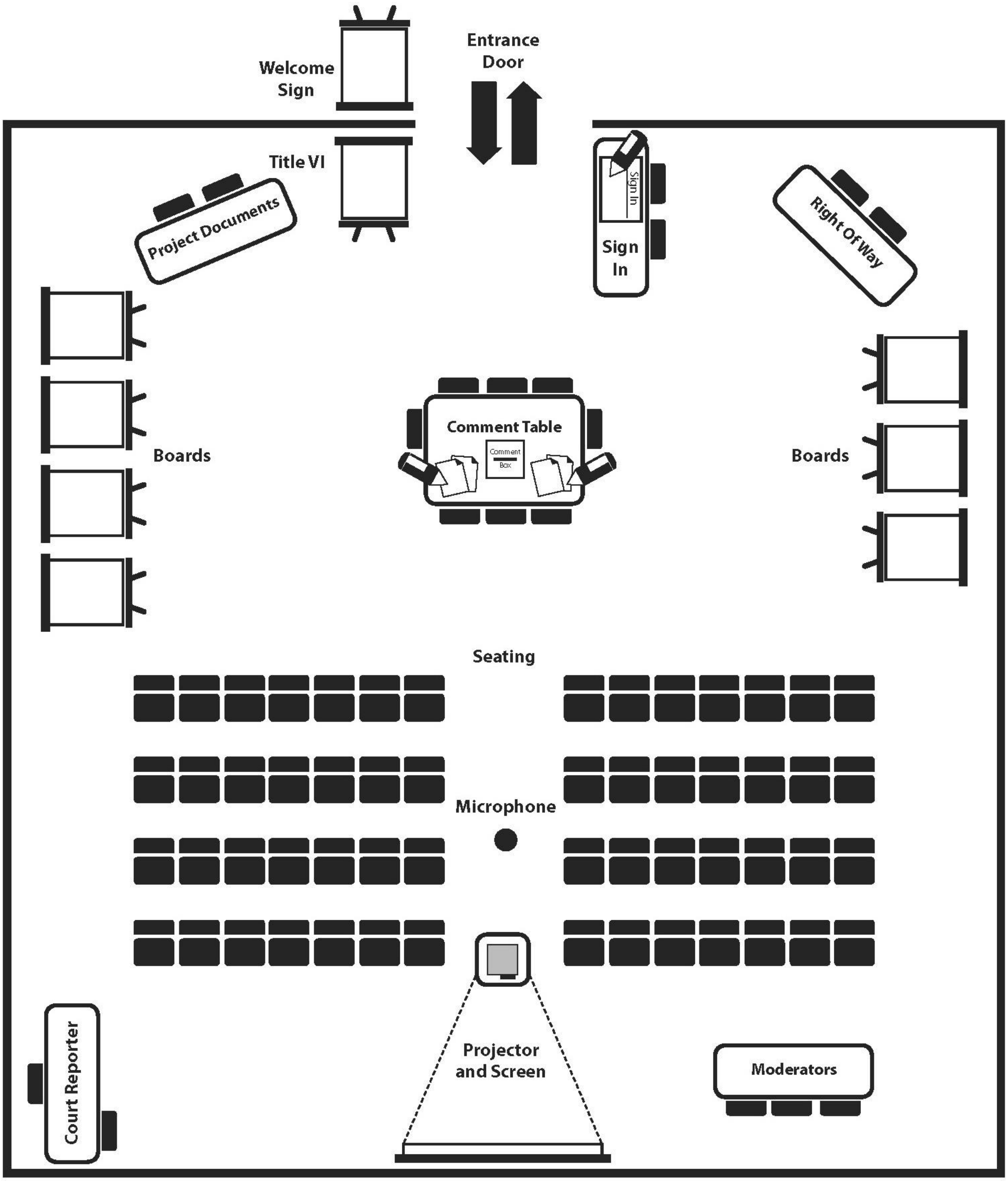
Public Meeting/Workshop Layout

The figure below is from a corridor workshop conducted throughout the community in Northwest Orange County. Each person visited the workstations on a rotating basis at their own pace. Since each venue was different, this layout plan was adapted to each workshop.



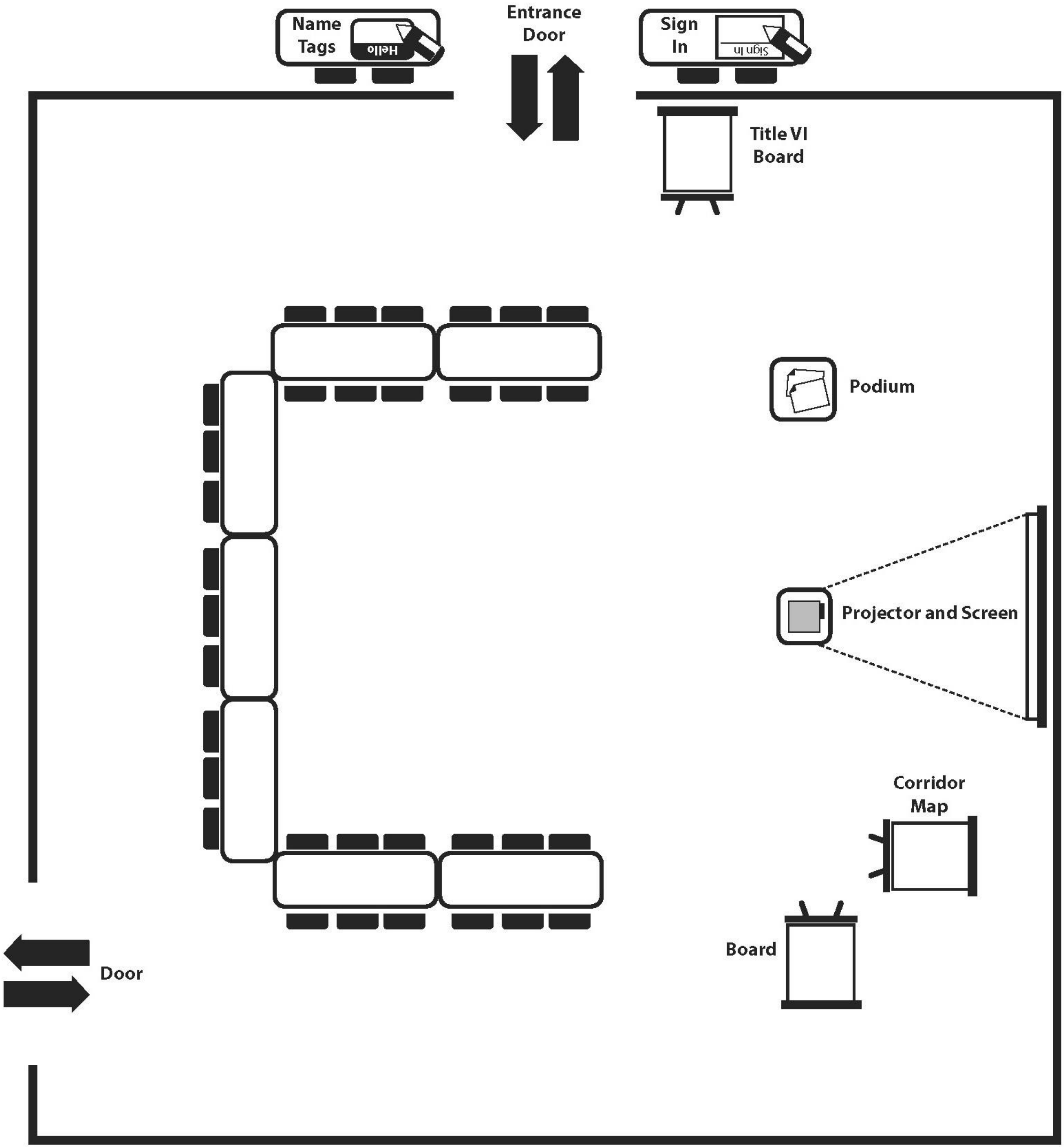
Public Hearing Layout

These are formal meetings designed to comply with specific state and federal requirements. Specific notifications, as well as transcripts of the hearing, must be provided. A designated comment period may extend beyond the actual meeting date.



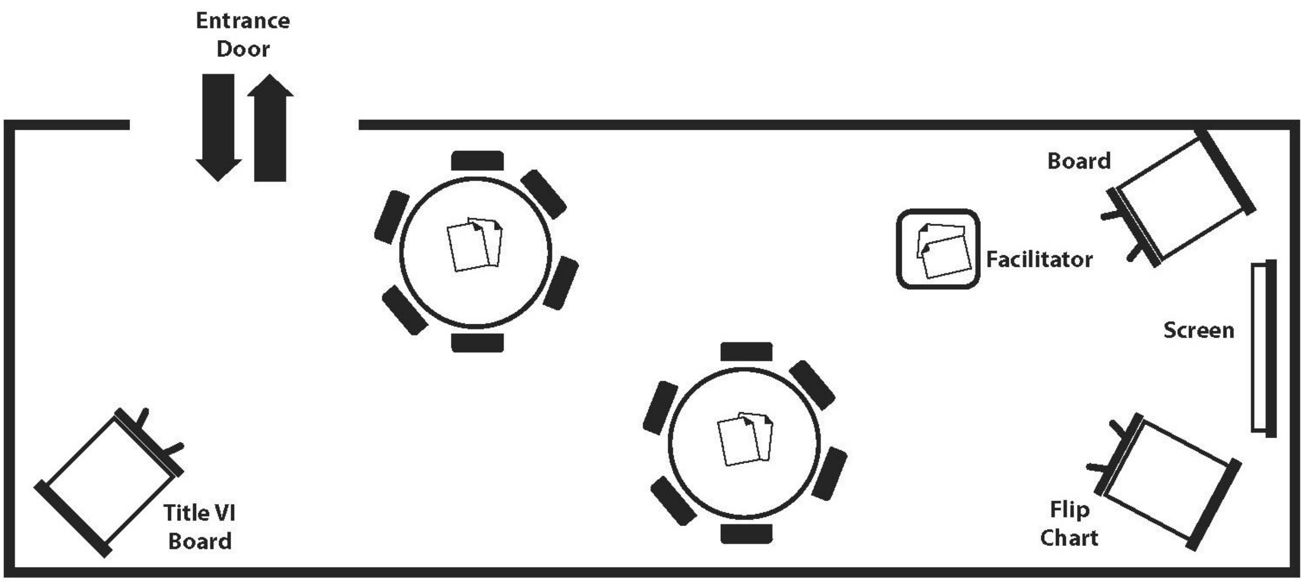
Advisory Committee Meeting Format

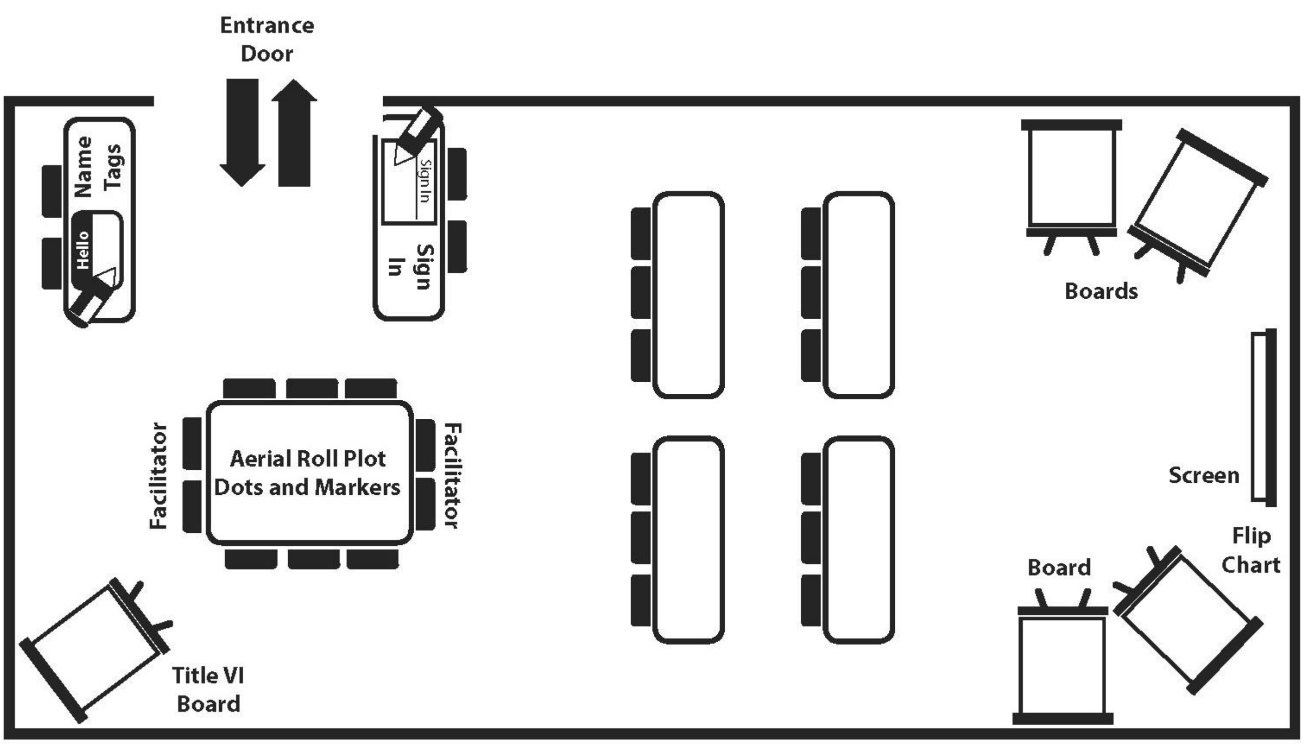
A representative gathering of individuals brought together to focus on either specific issues or geographic areas, or to provide overall guidance or comment on a project. Common examples are technical advisory groups that include professionals from agencies (other than FDOT) and committees/groups that include one representative from each neighborhood or community group.



Small Group/Focus Group Meetings

While this can include focus groups, in this context it is meant more for self-identified groups, such as homeowner associations, special interest groups, civic associations or standby committees of local organizations such as the citizens advisory committee of the local MPO.





Public Involvement Handbook

Appendix F
Public Hearing Scripts

PD&E Public Hearing Script

The formal proceedings for the public hearing are officiated by the moderator and include a live or voiced-over presentation followed by the public testimony portion of the hearing. The moderator is generally an FDOT employee. The following information is included in the presentation. The information shown in *italic,* and modified as applicable, **must** be contained in the public hearing presentation, either as a specific citation or as a content item tailored to the specific topic within the script and/or supplemental handout. Adjust accordingly for state-funded projects with no Federal Highway involvement.

Introduction

Good evening. The Florida Department of Transportation would like to welcome you to the public hearing for the (name of project). My name is _______. I am the District _____ Project Development Engineer (or insert other title) for the Florida Department of Transportation. This public hearing is relative to State Project Number ________and Federal Aid Project Number _______. The proposed improvement involves _(describe the project action including the location and limits)_. This hearing is being held to provide you with the opportunity to comment on this project.

Here with me tonight are:

- *(Name and position of persons(s) sitting next to moderator)*
- *And other representatives of the FDOT and consultant project team.*

At this time, we would like to recognize any federal, state, county, or city officials who may be present tonight. Are there any officials who would like to be recognized?

We now will begin the presentation.

After the live introduction by the moderator, the rest of the presentation may be live or recorded, but the content generally follows the outline and standard statements provided below. This portion of the presentation can be conducted by the moderator, other FDOT staff, consultant representative, or pre-recording.

Purpose of the public hearing and nondiscrimination compliance

The purpose of this public hearing is to share information with the general public about the proposed improvement; its conceptual design; all alternatives under study; and the potential beneficial and adverse social, economic, and environmental impacts upon the community. The public hearing also serves as an official forum providing an opportunity to the public to express their opinions and concerns regarding the project. Public participation at this hearing is encouraged and solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, or family status.

There are three primary components to tonight's hearing:

- *First, the open house, which occurred prior to this presentation where you were invited to view the project displays and to speak directly with the project team and provide your comments in writing or to the court reporter;*
- *Second, this presentation, which will explain the project purpose and need, study alternatives, potential impacts, both beneficial and adverse, and proposed methods to mitigate adverse project impacts; and*
- *Third, a formal comment period following this presentation, where you will have the opportunity to provide oral statements at the microphone or you may continue to provide your comments to the court reporter or in writing.*

This public hearing was advertised consistent with federal and state requirements. Persons wishing to express their concerns about Title VI may do so by contacting either the Florida Department of Transportation, District ____ office, or the Tallahassee office of the Florida Department of Transportation. This contact information is also provided in the project brochure and on a sign displayed at this hearing.

Purpose and need and project's consistency with local and regional plans
Provide a brief summary of the project's purpose and need and consistency with the Long Range Transportation Plan, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), State TIP, and other regional plans.

Discussion of alternatives
All alternatives studied, including the No-Build option, must be briefly discussed; with additional information provided on the recommended alternatives that have been studied in further detail and documented in the environmental document. The advantages and disadvantages of each alternative must be provided, including major design features and estimated costs.

Discussion of potential access management changes
Chapter 335.199, FS requires a public hearing whenever access management changes are proposed. These include the modification, addition, or closure of existing median openings, intersections, or interchanges. When access management changes are proposed, specific impacts must be discussed in the public hearing presentation. Additional information is available in ***FDOT Procedural Topic No. 625-010-021-h, Median Openings and Access Management***.

Discussion of social, economic, and environmental impact
The potential social, economic, and environmental impacts of the project must be briefly outlined. Key factors to be discussed include impacts on air quality, noise, floodplain impacts, wetlands, endangered and threatened species, archaeological or historical resources, residential and business

displacements or relocations, right-of-way requirements, and any other pertinent issues. Information regarding these specific issues can be found in Part 2 of the PD&E Manual.

Explanation of FDOT's right-of-way acquisition process
Property owners and tenants are given certain rights under federal law. During a public hearing, the following information must be provided to explain the right-of-way acquisition process to the public and describe some of the compensation requirements during public hearings. If no acquisition or relocation will take place, the script does not need to be used.

One of the unavoidable consequences on a project such as this is the necessary relocation of families or businesses. On this project, we anticipate the relocation of __ families and __ businesses. All right-of-way acquisition will be conducted in accordance with the federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, commonly known as the Uniform Act.

If you are required to make any type of move as a result of a Department of Transportation project, you can expect to be treated in a fair and helpful manner and in compliance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance Act.

If a move is required, you will be contacted by an appraiser who will inspect your property. We encourage you to be present during the inspection and provide information about the value of your property.

You may also be eligible for relocation advisory services and payment benefits. If you are being moved and you are unsatisfied with the Department's determination of your eligibility for payment or the amount of that payment, you may appeal that determination.

You will be promptly furnished necessary forms and notified of the procedures to be followed in making that appeal.

A special word of caution – if you move before you receive notification of the relocation benefits that you might be entitled to, your benefits may be jeopardized.

The relocation specialists who are supervising this program are (NAME) and (NAME). They will be happy to answer your questions and will also furnish you with copies of relocation assistance brochures.

(NAME) and (NAME), please stand (pause) so that anyone who is involved in relocation on this project will know that they need to see you regarding their property."

Explanation of how the public can provide their comments
There have been various opportunities for the public to provide input on this project. Several public meetings have been held, dating from _________ until tonight. We welcome any oral or written comments you might have that will help us make this important decision. At the conclusion of this presentation our personnel will distribute speaker cards to those in the audience who have not

received one and would like to make a statement. A court reporter will record your statement and a verbatim transcript will be made of all oral proceedings at this hearing. If you do not wish to speak at the microphone, you may present your comments in writing or directly to the court reporter at the comment table. Each method of submitting a comment carries equal weight.

Written comments received or postmarked no later than ten days following the date of this public hearing will become a part of the public record for this public hearing. All written comments should be mailed to the address shown on the slide or in your handout.

Next steps and concluding statement

*The next step is to incorporate your input on this Public Hearing into our decision-making process. After the comment period closes and your input has been considered, a decision will be made and the Final PD&E document will be sent to the Federal Highway Administration for location and design concept acceptance (*if applicable*).*

This project has and will continue to be undertaken within all applicable state and federal rules and regulations.

This concludes our presentation. We will now offer you the opportunity to make a public statement.

At the conclusion of the live or voiced-over presentation, attendees who completed a speaker's card upon registering at the door will be given an opportunity to speak into a microphone. Project staff will also distribute speaker's cards to additional attendees who wish to make a verbal statement.

Anyone desiring to make a statement or present written views and/or exhibits regarding the location; conceptual design, or social, economic, and environmental effects of the improvements will now have an opportunity to do so. If you are holding a speaker's card, please give it to a member of the project team. If you have not received a speaker's card and wish to speak, please raise your hand so you can receive a card to fill out.

Written statements and exhibits may be presented in lieu of or in addition to oral statements. All written material received at this public hearing and at the Florida Department of Transportation District office located at ____(street address)________________, postmarked no later than 10 days following the date of this public hearing will become a part of the public record for this hearing. All written comments should be addressed to ____________________(contact person's name)__. Comments may also be emailed to _______________________(e-mail address)____________.

We will now call upon those who have turned in speaker's cards. When you come forward, please state your name and address. If you represent an organization, municipality, or other public body, please provide that information as well. We ask that you limit your input to __ minutes. If you have additional comments, you may continue after other people have had an opportunity to comment (optional). Please come to the microphone so the court reporter will be able to get a complete record of your comments.

After everyone has been given the opportunity to speak, the moderator may close the public hearing with the following statement:

Does anyone else desire to speak? If you have completed a speaker's card, please repeat your name and address. If not, state your name and address and complete a speaker's card after you've given your statement for the public record.

The verbatim transcript of this hearing's oral proceedings, together with all written material received as part of the hearing record and all studies, displays, and informational material provided at the hearing will be made a part of the project decision-making process and will be available at the District Office for public review upon request.

Thank you for attending this public hearing and for providing your input into this project. It is now ______(state the time)_____. I hereby officially close the public hearing for …..(project name). Thank you again and have a good evening.

Design Public Hearings

The information shown in *italic* should be contained in the public hearing presentation either as it is written or tailored to the specific project.

Public Hearing Script
This public hearing was advertised consistent with federal and state requirements. Persons wishing to express their concerns about Title VI may do so by contacting either the Florida Department of Transportation, District ____ office, or the Tallahassee office of the Florida Department of Transportation. This contact information is also provided in the project brochure and on a sign displayed at this hearing.

This hearing is being held to give all interested persons the right to understand the project and comment on their concerns to the Department. Public participation at this hearing is encouraged and solicited without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability or family status.

I am _____________ and I will be giving a presentation about this design project. My presentation will last approximately ____ minutes. A transcript is being made of all oral proceedings and will be part of the public record for this project...

The purpose of this public hearing is to share information about (project name) ________________. This public hearing also serves as an official forum to give you the opportunity to express your opinions and concerns about this project. The improvement involves *(describe the project action including the location).*

At the conclusion of the presentation, attendees who completed a speaker's card upon registering at the door will be given an opportunity to speak into a microphone. Project staff will also distribute speaker's cards to additional attendees who wish to make a verbal statement.

Right of Way Program (If no acquisition or relocation will take place, the script will not need to be used.)

One of the unavoidable consequences on projects such as this is the necessary relocation of families or businesses, or the acquisition of property. On this project, we anticipate the relocation of __FAMILIES and __ BUSINESSES (or) the acquisition of ___ feet/acres, etc.

If you are required to make any type of move as a result of a Department of Transportation project, you can expect to be treated in a fair and helpful manner and in compliance with the ***Uniform Relocation Assistance Act****.*

You will be contacted by an appraiser who will inspect your property. We encourage you to be *present during the inspection and provide information about the value of your property.*

You may also be eligible for relocation advisory services and payment benefits. If you are being moved and you are unsatisfied with the Department's determination of your eligibility for payment or the amount of that payment, you may appeal that determination.

You will be promptly furnished necessary forms and notified of the procedures to be followed in making that appeal.

A special word of caution – if you move before you receive notification of the relocation benefits that you might be entitled to, your benefits may be jeopardized. The relocation and acquisition specialists who are supervising this program are (NAME) and (NAME). They will be happy to answer your questions and will also furnish you with copies of relocation assistance brochures.

(NAME) and (NAME), if you would please stand (pause) so that anyone who is involved in relocation on this project will know that they need to see you regarding their property."

After the presentation:

If you want to make a statement regarding the design or effects of the improvement, you will now have an opportunity to do so. If you are holding speaker's cards, please give them to meeting staff. If you have not received a speaker's card and wish to speak, please raise your hand so you can receive a card to fill out.

If you would rather provide a written statement than speak at the microphone you may give that statement to the court reporter. All written material received at this public hearing and or the Florida Department of Transportation office located at ________(street address) postmarked no later than ten (10) days following the date of this public hearing will become a part of the public record for this hearing. All written comments should be addressed to ______(contact person's name) ______. Comments may also be emailed to ______________(e-mail address)___________.

We will now call upon those who have turned in speaker's cards. When you come forward, please state your name and address. If you represent an organization, municipality or other public body, please provide that information as well. We ask that you limit your input to __ minutes. Please come to the microphone so the court reporter will be able to get a complete record of your comments.

Does anyone else desire to speak? If you have completed a speaker's card, please repeat your name and address. If not, state your name and address and complete a speaker's card after you've given your statement for the public record.

The verbatim transcript of the hearing's oral proceedings, together with all written material received as part of the hearing record and all studies, displays and informational material provided at the hearing will be made a part of the project decision-making process and will be available at the District Office for public review upon request.

Thank you for attending this public hearing and for providing your input into this project. It is now __(state the time)____. I hereby officially close the public hearing for ....(project name). Thank you again and have a good evening.