

## 505 Public Hearings



A public hearing is different from a public meeting in several ways. Hearings include a formal public comment period. Public hearings also require the transcription of comments, which become a formal part of the public record. At times, public hearings may be scheduled when there is a high level of controversy with a project or when there is a substantial change in design after the Project Development and Environment (PD&E) phase.

Public hearings are required for all federal and state-funded major transportation improvements prior to a decision on a proposed action. 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 (Section 339.155, FS). The same law also identifies specific time frames associated with advertising and notifying elected officials and the public.

During PD&E, 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.



*All public hearings are required to be conducted in a hybrid format, incorporating both an in-person component and an interactive, virtual component. These do not have to be held at the same time.*

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.

### Components of a Public Hearing

The following are the elements that are generally included in a public hearing.

- A presentation that is given either live or using a voiced-over presentation or video at a time specified in the public hearing notifications
- Project handouts
- Speaker registration cards
- One or more microphones for attendees to address the hearing officer directly with comments and questions following the presentation
- Court reporter(s) or method of recording to prepare a verbatim transcript. Court reporter(s) are required for PD&E hearings.
- Written comment forms for those not wishing to make a verbal statement

REFER TO **SECTION 700** FOR SPECIFIC DETAILS ABOUT PUBLIC HEARINGS.

See **Section 701** for information about advertising and notification of public hearings.

See **Section 702** for information about public hearing scripts.

See **Section 703** for meeting materials.

See **Section 704** for information about recording the public hearing.

See **Section 705** for information about public comments.