101 Guiding Principles

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT/the Department) follows four guiding principles for community engagement. Using these guiding principles for your project can help ensure effective outcomes and adherence to the Department's policy on community engagement. The Public Involvement Handbook provides guidance, tools, and resources on how to apply these principles to your project and includes examples that illustrate best practices in the implementation of these principles.

Community engagement is two-way communication aimed at incorporating the views, concerns, and issues of the public into the decision-making process.

Guiding Principles for Community Engagement

Guiding Principle	**Description**
Process	Community engagement should be continuous through all phases of a project, allowing the public to hear and be heard through the project life cycle. Community engagement should be thought of as on-going communication that provides information to and receives information from the public during planning, project development, design, construction, and maintenance.
Defining Stakeholders	Public involvement should include all decision makers, those who will be affected and those with an interest in the project, such as community leaders, property owners and tenants, business owners, user groups, and the general public.
Outreach Tools and Techniques	Use the most appropriate technique for each audience. Knowing the community helps determine the most appropriate outreach techniques and establish the measure to evaluate those techniques.
Documentation	A project record shows that public comments have been heard and ensures that commitments will be carried into the next phase of the project. Documentation shows that a process was used to evaluate alternatives and determine solutions.

102 Federal Requirements

Federal acts, laws, and regulations affect how FDOT plans and conducts community engagement activities. The objectives identified by federal regulations that FDOT promotes for its community engagement programs and activities:

- Early and continuous opportunities for public input
- Consideration of public needs and preferences
- Informed decisions through collaborative efforts
- Mutual understanding and trust between the Department and its partners

The following are the most relevant federal laws and regulations to FDOT's projects and programs. For specific public involvement requirements related to Project Development and Environment (PD&E) studies, see Part 1, Chapter 11 of the PD&E Manual.

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)

42 USC § 12131-12134

Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, codified at 42 United States Code (USC) § 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 nondiscrimination policy and language statement regarding accommodating persons with disabilities such as hearing or visual impairment.

42 USC, § 12181-12189

Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act, codified at 42 USC § 12181-12189, requires public accommodations to provide equivalent access to individuals with disabilities. This is important for community engagement activities as the locations of public meetings, workshops, and public hearings must be accessible.

United States Code (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.

When hosting a public hearing or meeting, it is important to ensure that the facility, including the parking, bathrooms, and meeting space, is accessible for all.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

42 USC § 2000d-2000d-1

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, codified at 42 USC § 2000d-2000d-1, states, "No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

FDOT's Nondiscrimination Policy and Language

FDOT's nondiscrimination policy and language demonstrates the Department's intention to comply with the Civil Rights Act. Consistent with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the nondiscrimination language shown must be included in all materials sent to the public including meeting notifications and advertisements.

- 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 _____ at _____ at least seven days prior to the meeting.

Age Discrimination Act of 1975

42 USC § 6101-6107

The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, codified at 42 USC § 6101-6107, prohibits federally assisted programs from discrimination based on age.

Federal Laws and Regulations Relating to Highways

Title 23 USC – Highways

23 USC § 109(h)

Section 109(h) requires the consideration of possible adverse effects on the human and natural environment as part of the project development process.

23 USC § 128

Section 128 requires public hearings and consideration of economic and social effects, environmental impacts, and consistency with the goals and objectives of urban planning by the community as part of planning projects for Federally-aided highways.

23 USC § 135

Section 135 requires participation by interested parties in the development of statewide and nonmetropolitan transportation planning.

Title 23 CFR - Highways

23 CFR 450.210

Part 450, Section 210 states, "the state shall 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.

23 CFR 771.111

Part 771, Section 111 requires public hearings and consideration of environmental impacts for projects involving federal funds or a federal action. Fulfilling the requirements of this law are typically addressed through the PD&E process. By following Part 1, Chapter 11 of the PD&E Manual, it ensures compliance with this federal law.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969

42 USC § 4321-4370

The NEPA Act of 1969, codified at 42 USC § 4321-4370, requires federal agencies to consider human, natural, and physical impacts as part of their planning and decision-making processes, and established requirements for environmental impact reviews. The process outlined in the PD&E Manual is FDOT's procedure for complying with NEPA.

Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970

The Uniform Relocation Act establishes the requirements for how agencies acquire property that results in the displacement of people. FDOT's right-of-way staff ensure compliance with the Uniform Relocation Act.

49 CFR 24

49 CFR 24 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.

49 CFR 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.

103 State Requirements

The State of Florida's requirements for public involvement are found in the Florida Statutes (FS). The following are the most frequently referenced statutes and requirements. For specific public involvement requirements related to Project Development and Environment (PD&E) studies, see Part 1, Chapter 11 of the PD&E Manual.

Section 760.01, FS, Florida Civil Rights Act of 1992

The Florida Civil Rights Act of 1992 secures freedom from discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, pregnancy, national origin, age, handicap, or marital status for all individuals.

FDOT's nondiscrimination policy and language demonstrates the Department's intention to comply with the Civil Rights Act. The nondiscrimination language shown must be included in all materials sent to the public including meeting notifications and advertisements.

- *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 _____ at _____ at least seven days prior to the meeting.*

Section 120.525, FS, Administrative Procedures Act

- Any public hearing, workshop, or meeting must be advertised in the Florida Administrative Register (FAR) and on the Department's Public Meeting Notices website at least seven days in advance regardless of project phase.
- The advertisement must include the general subject matter to be considered.
- An agenda (containing the items to be considered in order of presentation) must be prepared seven days before the public hearing, workshop, or meeting and be published on the agency's website.

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

Florida's Government in the Sunshine Law, commonly referred to as the Sunshine Law, provides a right of access to governmental proceedings at both the state and local levels.

- Any meeting involving two or more members of the same board (elected, advisory, or committee members) must be advertised and open to the public.
- Minutes of any such meeting must be available for public inspection.

- Public meetings must not be held at a facility or location that discriminates based on 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 335.199, FS, State Highway System Access Modification

- Public meetings are required for access management changes.
- Applies to projects that will divide a state highway, erect median barriers modifying currently available vehicle turning movements, or have the effect of closing or modifying an existing access.
- The Department shall notify all affected property owners, municipalities, and counties at least 180 days before the design of the project is finalized.
- If the proposed changes were presented as part of the public hearing held during the Project Development and Environment (PD&E), then no further action is required.
- At least one public meeting must be held in the jurisdiction where the project is located before completing the design phase.

Section 339.155, FS, Transportation Finance and Planning

- The Department must develop a statewide transportation plan, the Florida Transportation Plan (FTP).
- Procedures for public participation in transportation planning include:
    - Provide an opportunity for the public and affected and/or interested parties to comment on the FTP.
    - Require one or more public hearings to be held during the development of major transportation improvements, such as capacity improvements, new interchanges, and new roadway or limited access facilities.
    - Require notification of all affected property owners 20 days prior to design public hearings. Notices must be published twice, the first notice being at least 15 days before the public hearing. Affected property owners are those whose property lies within 300 feet on either side of the centerline and those who the Department determines will be substantially affected environmentally, economically, socially, or safety wise.

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

This initiative ensures 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 1012.465, FS, Jessica Lunsford Act

This law requires background screenings for certain individuals entering school grounds when children are present. As a result of this, FDOT adopted the approach that public K-12 educational facilities should not be used for public hearings and meetings. There is a provision for exceptions.

- Public school facilities for grades K-12 should not be used for public meetings.
- Public schools may be used when no students are present, as confirmed by an appropriate school principal and approved by the Assistant Secretary of Engineering and Operations.
- Alternate facilities that may be used include colleges, universities, and private schools.

Section 339.135, FS, Work Program

- District offices must hold a public hearing in at least one urbanized area in the district and make a presentation at a meeting of each metropolitan planning organization in the district prior to submitting the District Work Program.
- The Florida Transportation Commission must conduct a statewide public hearing on the Tentative Work Program and advertise the time, place, and purpose of the public hearing in the FAR at least seven days prior to the public hearing.

Section 335.02, FS, Authority to Designate Transportation Facilities and Rights-of-Way and Establish Lanes

- Prior to reassigning transportation facilities into the State Highway System, a public hearing must be conducted in each affected county, with reasonable notice at least 14 days prior to the event.
- Notice must be published in a newspaper in each county in addition to any other notice required by law.

104 Department Resources

Community Engagement Policy (000-525-050-j)

This is the Department's policy for community engagement.

Project, Development and Environment (PD&E) Manual

The PD&E Manual is the Department's procedure for complying with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and associated federal and state laws and regulations.

Public Involvement (Part 1, Chapter 11 of the PD&E Manual)

Part 1, Chapter 11 provides guidance on public involvement activities regardless of project phase.

FDOT Design Manual (FDM)

The FDM, Chapter 104, provides procedures and guidance for the preparation of contract plans for roadways and structures.

Project Management (PM) Guide

The PM Guide is the Department's resource to help project managers develop and deliver projects. Section 245 discusses public involvement for project managers, including the components of a Community Awareness Plan (CAP) that will carry forward during the construction phase.

MPO Program Management Handbook

The MPO Program Management Handbook, found on this website, discusses federal and state public involvement requirements for metropolitan planning organizations in Florida.

105 Outreach During Project Phases

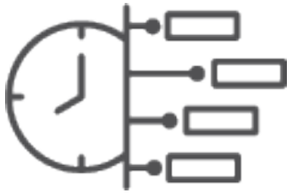
The typical phases of taking a transportation project from idea to reality include planning, Project Development and Environment (PD&E), design, construction, and operations and maintenance. Projects follow this path, but can start in the planning, PD&E, or design phase. Sometimes a project starts with a local government or regional agency, then transitions to the Department during the PD&E or design phase. Some projects begin in the design phase without preliminary studies, like a resurfacing project.

Outreach is essential throughout the entire project life cycle to ensure early and continuous opportunities for public input. This allows for consideration of public needs and preferences through the project phases and supports informed decisions through collaborative efforts. It also helps build mutual understanding and trust between the Department and its partners.

It is the Florida Department of Transportation's policy to use every possible opportunity to engage with and involve the public when planning, designing, constructing, and maintaining transportation facilities and services to meet the State's transportation needs.

Understanding outreach during the project phases helps the Department to:

- Identify community engagement requirements for each project phase
- Recognize past outreach efforts and the outcomes
- Identify engagement opportunities for future project phases
- Know when partners and the public can become involved



In the **planning phase**, a study is conducted to define a corridor or system need and develop an action plan for implementation. Public engagement in planning involves two-way communication to learn about community values and preferences. During this phase, public input is gathered to learn about the local vision, goals, objectives, priorities, and recommendations.

In the **PD&E phase**, the Department conducts a study for a specific roadway or corridor to define the project alternatives and evaluate the social, cultural, physical, and natural environmental impacts. Public engagement in PD&E includes gathering input on the proposed alternatives and potential impacts to assist with making a final recommendation. During this phase, information shared with the public may include the project need and supporting data, alternative concepts, impacts including right-of-way and property impacts, and any access management changes.

In the **design phase**, the Department completes detailed design plans that are used to construct the project. Public engagement in design includes sharing project information and gathering input on the design concept. During this phase, information shared with the public may include the design concept, proposed maintenance of traffic, construction schedule, right-of-way impacts, access management changes, and landscaping features. Access management changes require a public meeting and notification to the public during the design phase.

Remember that not all projects start in the planning or PD&E phase. For these projects, the design phase may be the first time that the public is hearing about the project or has an opportunity to provide input.

Public engagement during **construction** is about communicating lane closures, detours, and the construction duration. The Department may also share information about maintenance of traffic, construction sequencing, median changes, and other temporary impacts.

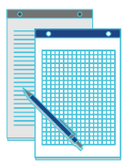
Maintenance is an ongoing activity that occurs throughout the state highway system. During the operations and maintenance phase, the public may be notified of traffic impacts. General maintenance activities or repairs may require temporary lane closures or detours. Variable message boards, social media, and press releases can be used to notify those traveling in the area.

The types of outreach and who is typically engaged during each project phase are summarized in the table below. *Section 500 Outreach Methods* describes how to conduct the different types of outreach mentioned below.

106 Outreach During Planning

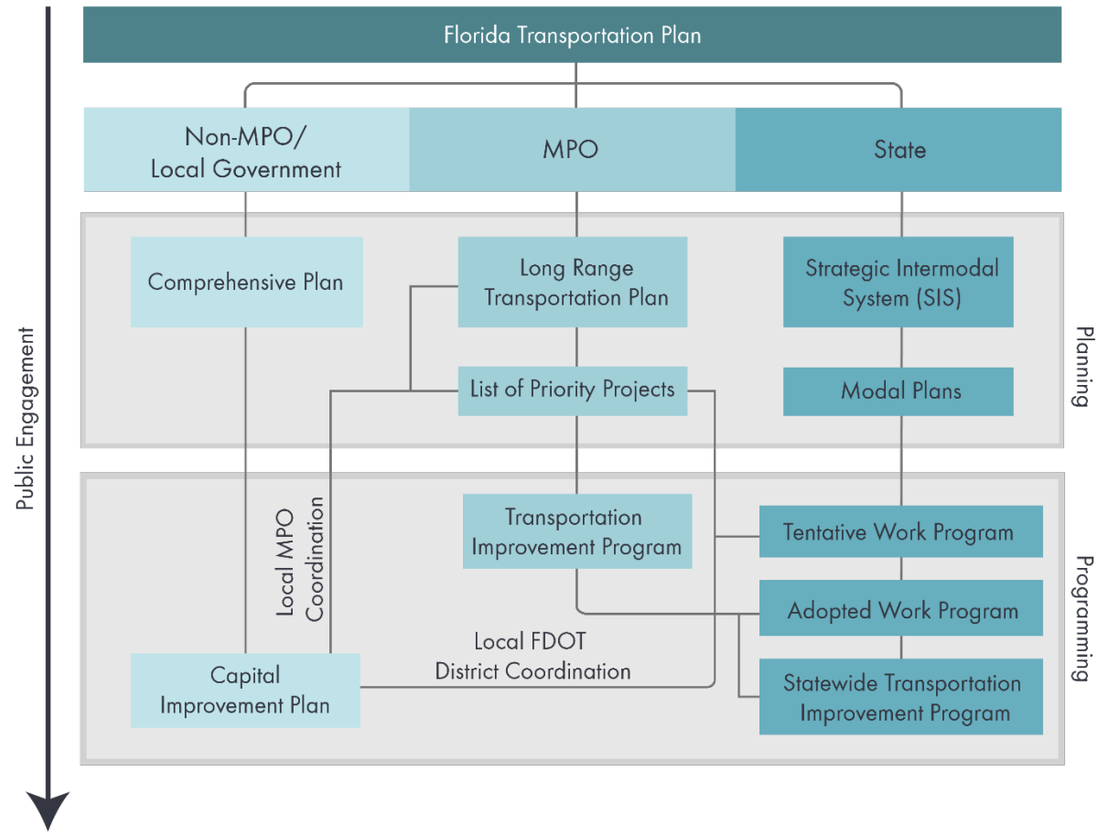
Transportation planning helps the Department make decisions about how to prioritize funding, implement transportation policy, and design projects. Planning also helps develop policy and projects that achieve outcomes consistent with statewide, regional, and local visions. Community engagement during 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. Certain federal and state requirements require public input and stakeholder coordination during transportation planning.

Statewide Policy Plans



Policy planning is the first step in the statewide transportation decision-making process and can involve a wide range of planning, policy, and research-related activities. The Office of Policy Planning (OPP) oversees a variety of these activities to advance Florida's statewide transportation system. These activities include the developing the Florida Transportation Plan (FTP) and the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) Strategic Plan and collecting information and data about trends and conditions that may influence future transportation efforts.

Statewide policy plans developed by the Department set overarching vision, policy, goals, priorities, and strategies to plan and implement transportation programs and projects throughout Florida. The following describes how the Department may engage partners and the public to develop these plans and the notification requirements in law.



Florida Transportation Plan

The state transportation plan, 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 the public to develop the plan, including a steering committee, subcommittees, and regional and local groups. The community engagement activities used to develop the FTP include:

Requirements for public involvement during the development of the FTP are found in 23 CFR 450.208, 23 CFR 450.210, and Section 339.155 F.S.

- Regular meetings of a steering committee and subcommittees
- Statewide events
- Regional workshops
- Briefings at regularly scheduled meetings of transportation
- partners
- Social media outreach
- Brochures, fact sheets, infographics, and videos
- An interactive website to gather public comments and suggestions
- Informal advisory groups
- A Public comment period on the draft plan

These activities are documented in a Partner and Public Involvement Plan, which can be found on the FTP website.

Strategic Intermodal System Plan

The SIS is the state's highest priority for transportation capacity investments and a primary focus for implementing the Florida Transportation Plan (FTP), the state's long-range transportation vision and policy plan. The SIS Policy Plan identifies objectives and approaches to address changing trends and position the SIS for future opportunities. The plan defines policies to guide planning and investment decisions for the next five years. Florida Statutes require FDOT to develop and regularly update a SIS Plan with input from transportation partners and the public.

Requirements for public involvement during the development of the SIS Plan are found in Section 339.64 F.S.

Systemwide Plans

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. Systems planning can be applied to a variety of different geographies and a variety of different transportation modes.

Modal Plans

The Office of Modal Development facilitates and promotes the safe and efficient movement of people and goods by rail, sea, air, aerospace, and road. This is carried out through five divisions: Aviation, Public Transit, Spaceports, Freight and Rail, and Seaports. Some divisions develop a modal plan, such as the Aviation System Plan or Florida Freight and Mobility Plan. Community engagement activities and stakeholder coordination are part of the planning process.

Statewide Programming

FDOT Five Year 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 to create the FDOT Five-Year Work Program.

Each District 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. The District must also provide a virtual component to the public hearing. The statewide Work Program Public Hearing website links to District Work Program information, a comment form, and an interactive GIS map.

Requirements for the Work Program are found in Section 339.135 F.S. and Section 339.175 F.S.

These public hearings provide an opportunity for the public to be involved in the transportation decision-making process, and are typically attended by local government officials, transportation professionals, and persons with land development interests in the area.

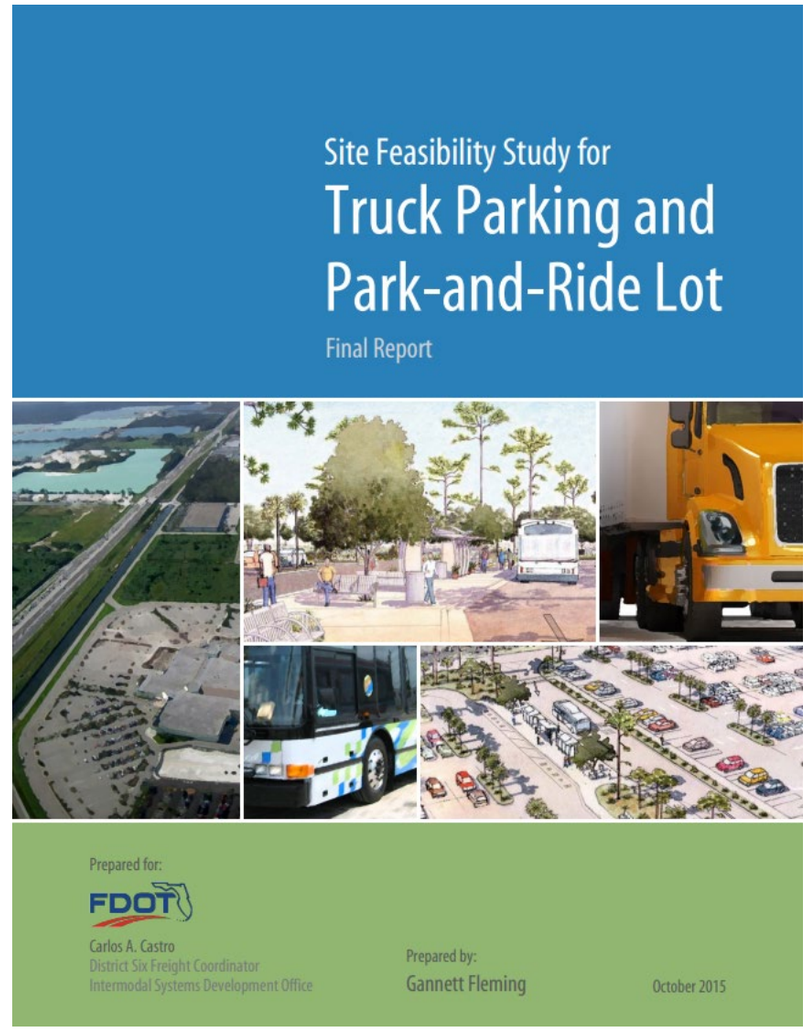
In addition to the public hearing, each District office makes a presentation at a meeting of each MPO in the district to determine if changes (additions, deletions, or revisions) are necessary to projects contained within the District Work Program. This provides an opportunity for the District to update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

The Florida Transportation Commission conducts an annual public hearing on the preliminary Tentative Work Program. FDOT submits the final Tentative Work Program to the Governor and Legislature for approval.

Feasibility and Corridor Plans

Feasibility Studies

The FDOT, MPO, or a local government may conduct a feasibility study to evaluate aspects of a transportation project and understand the constructability of a project concept. This allows for early identification of project complexities that could be minimized, avoided, or mitigated throughout the project development process. A feasibility study helps determine if a project development and environment (PD&E) study needs to be conducted and to what level of detail. During a feasibility study, community engagement should be included and documented (through public workshops, small group meetings, etc.). This helps determine the type of community engagement activities that may be needed in future phases of the project. Results of a feasibility study may feed back into the LRTP Cost Feasible Plan in order to be programmed.



Corridor Plans

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 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 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 community engagement activities that are easy for people to access, such as information available in locations where people already are. 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.

107 Outreach During PD&E

Public involvement activities are most extensive during the Project Development and Environment (PD&E) phase. This phase is critical because it links the planning process with the actual project location, design, and eventual construction and operation. During the PD&E phase, FDOT works closely with 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.

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 procedure to comply with all requirements is outlined in the Part 1, Chapter 11 of the PD&E Manual.

During the PD&E phase, public involvement activities are completed to solicit comments about the proposed project. Depending on the Class of Action for the project, different public involvement activities are undertaken to meet federal and state requirements.

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 community engagement 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. Refer to *Section 603 Notification Requirements*.

Requirements for public involvement during the PD&E phase are found in the PD&E Manual, Part 1, Chapter 11.

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.

108 Outreach During Design

When the design phase begins, it is important to keep in mind that not all projects have gone through a PD&E study. Projects such as resurfacing, sidewalks, and other enhancements generally do not go through the PD&E process and may be the first time that the public hears about the project. 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.

Community engagement 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 acquisition may overlap with the design phase. FDOT's staff typically deals with property owners and businesses on a one-on-one basis.

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.

Design Concept Changes

When substantial changes to the design concept occur after the completion of the PD&E phase (if applicable), a public hearing may be required. Changes are considered to be substantial 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 substantial design change should be coordinated Office of Environment Management (OEM) to determine the appropriate level of community engagement. In addition, a public information meeting is recommended if enough time has passed for there to be considerable changes in adjacent property ownership.

Requirements for public involvement during the design phase are found in the FDOT Design Manual, Chapter 104.

Access Management Changes

In accordance with Section 339.155 F.S., if an existing median access within a project is proposed for revision, a public meeting 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 or meeting was conducted during the PD&E phase and included the currently proposed median changes, it is not necessary to conduct another public meeting. 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, another public meeting is required.

Alternative Project Delivery

The alternative delivery approach combines design and construction into one phase such as design-build projects. A CAP outlines specific roles and responsibilities and should be prepared with sufficient flexibility to adapt to the dynamic nature of the project.

109 Outreach During Construction

During construction, community engagement 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.

Requirements for public involvement during the construction phase are found in the FDOT Design Manual, Chapter 104.

Construction open houses, which can either be formal meetings held in enclosed spaces or informal activities conducted within the project corridor.

All Department-hosted engagement events held during the construction phase must be noticed in the Florida Administrative Register (FAR) and on the Department's website, pursuant to Section 120.525, F.S.

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

110 Outreach During Maintenance

Like construction, community engagement during operations and maintenance 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. Community engagement during operations and maintenance activities may be limited to the use of variable message signs (VMS) and the PIO's weekly traffic report. However, there may be times when public meetings or one-on-one meetings are necessary to address the concerns of adjacent property owners, neighborhoods, or businesses.