



# HANDLING PUBLIC COMMENTS

*for transportation decision making*

*After soliciting and receiving public comments, the information is analyzed, synthesized, and disseminated to be responsive and transparent to the public, and inform decision making.*

## STEPS FOR HANDLING COMMENTS



### STEP 1: COLLECT

Collect public comments received at any time during the decision-making process. Comments may be in the form of letter, email, text, website form, telephone call, or public hearing transcript. All comments are part of the public record.

### STEP 2: DOCUMENT

Document public comments received by logging each with the following information:

- Comment date
- Commenter contact information (if provided)
- Comment statements
- Comment tracking number (optional but useful)

### STEP 3: ANALYZE

Sort the public comments using the categories below, then look for trends among the issues. Prepare a summary of the comments and key issues raised including the number and type of comments received.

- **General:** The comment is directly related to the project but does not require a detailed response.
- **Procedural:** The comment is related to the public involvement process.
- **Substantive:** The comment is directly related to the project and requires further analysis.
- **Other:** The comment is beyond the scope of the project (relates to another Department project or is completely outside Department's influence).

### STEP 4: ACKNOWLEDGE

Acknowledge each comment within 10 working days, if possible, even if research is still in process for a complete response. At this stage, the objective is to thank participants in the process and let them know their comment was received and is being considered.

### STEP 5: DISTRIBUTE

Distribute comments pertaining to other projects or issues to the appropriate personnel. Note in the acknowledgement correspondence to whom the comment was distributed and why.

### STEP 6: INCORPORATE

Incorporate relevant public comments into the decision-making process.

### STEP 7: RESPOND

Promptly and adequately respond to all comments that require a detailed reply via email or letter. Clearly explain the basis of any research or analysis that informed the response, citing specific statutes or other supporting information as appropriate. Encourage continued participation in the decision-making process.

Quick Start Resources and other guidance are available on the [Public Involvement webpage](#).

### PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES REPORT

Glean information from the public comments and Department responses for the Public Involvement Activities Report. To learn more about this report, refer to the [FDOT Public Involvement Handbook](#).