



Overall Public Involvement Process

Connection to other phases

How info gathered in each phase of project planning and implementation feeds Public Involvement in later phases.

The goals of this module is to educate the participants about the overall Public Involvement process, public involvement requirements in each phase, and how it connects and should be carried forward through to other phases.



Best Practices for a Successful Public Meeting

Why public involvement?

2

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Why Public Involvement?



Our Mission
The department will provide a safe transportation system that ensures the mobility of people and goods, enhances economic prosperity and preserves the quality of our environment and communities.

Our Vision
Serving the people of Florida by delivering a transportation system that is fatality and congestion free.

Our Values
The fundamental principles which guide the behavior and actions of our employees and our organization.

Integrity
"We always do what is right"

Respect
"We value diversity, talent and ideas"

Commitment
"We do what we say we are going to do"

One FDOT
"We are one agency, one team"

Trust
"We are open and fair"

Customer Driven
"We listen to our customers"

- Public involvement is two-way communication aimed at incorporating the views, concerns and issues of the public into the decision-making process.
- Part of FDOT's mission and value statement



FDOT Requirements, Policies, and Guidance

Here are a few supporting policies and guidance:

- FDOT Environmental Policy
- FDOT Public Involvement Opportunities Policy
- FDOT Project Development and Environmental (PD&E) Manual
- ETDM Manual
- Public Involvement Handbook
- Public Involvement Handbook for Median Projects
- Sociocultural Effects Handbook
- Plans Preparation Manual (Transportation Design for Livable Communities)
- Cultural Resource Management Handbook

4

These are available online. Instructor provide some additional information about where to find other resources.

Handout with web addresses.

•FDOT Environmental Policy:

<http://www2.dot.state.fl.us/proceduraldocuments/procedures/bin/000625001.pdf>

•FDOT Public Involvement Opportunities Policy:

<http://www2.dot.state.fl.us/proceduraldocuments/procedures/bin/000525050.pdf>

•FDOT Transportation Design for Livable Communities Policy (Context Sensitive Solutions/CSS):

<http://www2.dot.state.fl.us/proceduraldocuments/procedures/bin/000650002.pdf>

•FDOT Project Development and Environmental (PD&E) Manual:

<http://www.dot.state.fl.us/emo/pubs/pdeman/pdeman1.shtm>

•Public Involvement Handbook for Median Projects:

http://www.cut.usf.edu/research/access_m/pdf/pimedian.pdf

•Plans Preparation Manual: <http://www.dot.state.fl.us/rddesign/PPMManual/PPM.shtm>

•ETDM Manual: <http://www.dot.state.fl.us/emo/pubs/etdm/etdmmanual.shtm>

•Public Involvement Handbook:

http://www.dot.state.fl.us/emo/pubs/public_involvement/pubinvolve1.shtm

•Florida Scenic Highway Program Manual:

<http://www.floridascenichighways.com/program/resources/references/>

•Cultural Resource Management Handbook:
<http://www.dot.state.fl.us/emo/pubs/cultmgmt/cultmgmt1.shtm>



FDOT Public Involvement Policy

“... 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.” #000-525-050-f

5

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Community Awareness Plan



- For the Design phase, Public Involvement begins with the Community Awareness Plan (CAP)
- Specific to each project and each District
- Emphasis is on communicating with the public
- Should provide a strategic plan to achieve and maintain support
- Helps determine design implications in relation to community impacts

Community Awareness Plan



- If PD&E was done before, talk to the PD&E project manager to learn about the community and potential issues
- Include commitments and recommendations made in PD&E

7

Throughout the design process it is important to continue outreach efforts to avoid conflict and a Community Awareness Plan is an effective way of achieving this goal.

The CAP should be specific to each job and each district has its own requirements on what should be included in a Community Awareness Plan.

Most of all the CAP should provide a strategic plan to achieve and maintain support.

PI during Design phase is located in the PPM Vol. 1, Chapter 1, Section 10 and in the PM Handbook Part 2, Chapter 5

Community Awareness Plan

Public Involvement effort based on project level:

- **Level 1** – Non-controversial with minimal impact on accessibility or traffic
- **Level 2** – General public acceptance with little impact on accessibility or traffic (i.e. urban resurfacing or bridge repair projects)
- **Level 3** – May be controversial with significant impact on accessibility or traffic (i.e. roadway widening or major reconstruction projects)
- **Level 4** – Involves interstate work and all projects that require temporary or permanent total closure

The FDOT Community Awareness Plans Guidelines for Design and Construction identifies 4 levels of public involvement for Community Awareness Plans.

Level 1 – Project is non-controversial, causes negligible accessibility impacts and minimal traffic disruption.

Level 2 – Project has general public acceptance, little impact on accessibility and a moderate degree of traffic disruption. Examples are: urban resurfacing, bridge repairs 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 involving interstate work including maintenance work, road widening, temporary ramp closures, construction a new interchange and major reconstruction. Also included in Level 4 are all projects that require total closure, either temporary or permanent (ie, for the duration of the construction or maintenance work) of the roadway, bridges and railroad crossings.

Recommended CAP Activities

- **All CAP Levels:**
 - Mailing of project information flyer/brochure (2 to 4 weeks prior to construction)
 - Affected public
 - Include in District PIO's weekly traffic report (1 week prior and throughout construction)
 - Presentation(s) to local government(s) and/or community groups as needed
- **Level 2:**
 - Hand-off meeting from design to construction (after letting)
- **Levels 3 and 4:**
 - Hand-off meeting from design to construction (after letting)
 - Determine need for consultant Public Information Officer (prior to scope for CEI)
 - Project information meeting/open house (2 to 4 weeks prior to construction)

Meetings vs Hearings



- Meetings are informal
- Hearings are formal
 - Required per 339.155, F.S.
 - Specific state and federal requirements
 - Notifications – ads and FAR
 - Transcripts
 - Comment period
 - Court reporter



Elements of a Public Meeting

Activities **BEFORE** a Meeting

Identify meeting location

- Free parking
- ADA compliant
- Easy to find
- No public, K -12th educational facilities (Jessica Lunsford Act)
- For hotel locations, must use Green Lodging facility



Jessica Lunsford Act



- Public school facilities should not be used for public meetings
- In rare circumstances, public K-12 schools may be used when no students are present, **as confirmed by an appropriate school principal**
 - Requires approval from the Department's Assistant Secretary of Engineering and Operations
- Alternative facilities include colleges, universities, and private schools

The Jessica Lunsford Act (1012.465. F.S.) states that school facilities should not be used while students are present.

It is the FDOTs policy to not use schools at all for public meetings.

Elements of a Public Meeting

Activities **BEFORE** a Meeting

– Prepare mailing list

- Some Districts provide this through the PIO office
- Consultant may be responsible for compiling list
- Need to include renters/tenants

– Notification letters/brochure

- Send notification to elected officials and government representatives a few days before distribution to public

– Press releases

- Submit through District PIO office



Elements of a Public Meeting

Activities **BEFORE** a Meeting

- **Advertise in Florida Administrative Register**
 - Required by Chapter 120, F.S., 7 days in advance of meeting
 - May be prepared by PIO or consultant
 - www.flrules.org

- **Advertise on FDOT's Public Notice Website**
 - <http://www2.dot.state.fl.us/publicsyndication/PublicMeetings.aspx>
 - Notice posted through FDOT INFONET site

- **Advertise in newspaper**
 - At least 15 days before but no more than 30 days before
 - Not required by law unless for Public Hearing
 - Example ad provided in Chapter 11 of PD&E manual
 - http://www.dot.state.fl.us/emo/pubs/pdeman/Pt1Ch11_061512-current.pdf

Elements of a Public Meeting

Activities **BEFORE** a Meeting



– Hire Off-duty Police Officers?

- Case-by-case basis
- Depends on level of controversy
- Too many officers at an event may send the wrong message
- Can be hired for parking control
- Talk about it within your team

Be Mindful of the Community Surrounding the Project

- **Our population is growing**
 - Florida is projected to be the 3rd largest state within 3 years
- **Our population is diverse**
 - 26% Hispanic population by 2030
 - 42.1% minority population (36.3% national average)



Be Mindful of the Community Surrounding the Project

- **Our population is getting older**
 - Population 65 and older increased from 8.6% to 17.3% from 1950 to 2010
- **Our population speaks many different languages**
 - More than 1/4 of Florida's population speaks a language other than English at home
 - Some 300 languages are spoken in Florida's public schools



Be Mindful of the Community Surrounding the Project

Community profile may require special accommodations:

- “English-only” ordinances do not exempt
- From US DOT: If demographic data indicates that 5% or 1,000 persons or more in a project area speak a language other than English, you should provide translations of brochures, meeting invitations, and newsletters
- At workshops or public meetings, provide interpreters if you meet the 5% threshold. Include notice of their availability in print materials in their language.
- Consider the meeting time if affected community is retired (65+)

FDOT Nondiscrimination Language

- *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.*

Plain Language Initiative



- Executive Order 07-01
- Requires clear language containing only necessary information presented in a logical sequence
- Short sentences written in the active voice that make it clear who is responsible for what

Elements of a Public Meeting

Activities **DURING** the Meeting



- Don't over-dress
- Prior to start time, discuss with team members specific roles and responsibilities
- Have everyone sign-in
- Use plain language when explaining the project
 - No acronyms
 - No technical language
- No clumping
- Be courteous and respectful

Elements of a Public Meeting

Activities **AFTER** the Meeting



- Document and summarize the meeting
 - Scan and file all comment and sign-in sheets
 - Create a PDF of all display materials and handouts
- Hold a debrief meeting with the team to discuss any significant comments

Public Hearings for Access Management Changes

- **Senate Bill 1842**
 - “Requires the Department to notify all affected property owners and local governments...”
 - “This provision requires at least one public hearing (advertised and recorded).”
- **For any projects (except permit applications):**
 - Reconstruction and RRR
 - Stand Alone Safety Projects
 - Design Build
- **If Public Hearing held in PD&E and no substantial changes, it suffices**
 - Changes to access management presented

Elements of a Public Hearing



Same as Public Meeting with the following exceptions:

- Two newspaper ads required
- Public Hearing script for moderator
- Provide opportunity for public statements at microphone
- Court reporter present to record public testimony
- Guidance provided in the PD&E manual, Part 1 – Chapter 11

http://www.dot.state.fl.us/emo/pubs/pdeman/Pt1Ch11_061512-current.pdf

Access Management Changes at Federal Highway and Poinciana Lane



Hobe Sound, FL
District 4

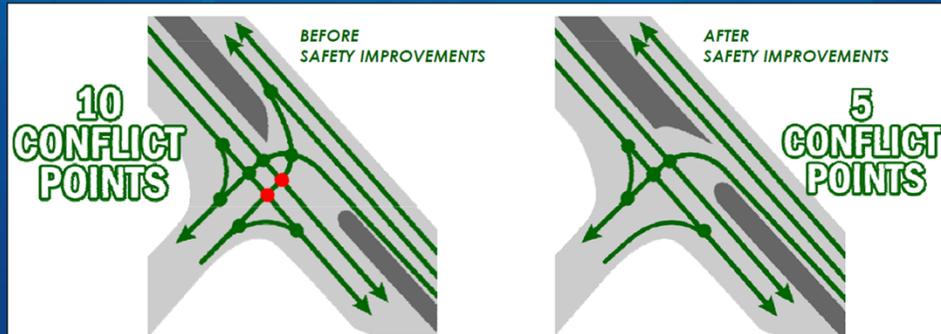
Project Overview



- Residents of Poinciana Gardens have been requesting a traffic signal at Poinciana Lane and Federal Highway for years
- FDOT acknowledged safety concerns with drivers making an EB to NB left turn and high rate of accidents
- Need for new signal studied multiple times:
 - December 2003
 - October 2007
 - April 2010
- New signal not warranted due to low traffic volumes

Proposed Improvements

- Department proposed to prohibit vehicles from turning left off of Poinciana Lane
- Change in median opening from full to directional



Public Hearing Required

- Senate Bill 1842 applies to any proposed work program project beginning design on or after November 17, 2010
- Notification must occur at least 180 days before design is finalized
- Not required if conducted during the PD&E phase
- If comments from Public Hearing result in changes to the access plan, then a new Public Hearing is required (D4 requirement)

Public Hearing



- Held on May 17, 2011
- Hearing conducted in accordance with Part 1, Chapter 11 of the PD&E manual
- 732 notifications sent
- Hearing advertised in Stuart Times and FAW
- Open house from 6:00 to 6:30
- Formal presentation at 6:30 (no PowerPoint)
- Court reporter present
- Speaker cards distributed for public comment period

Fact Sheet Distributed at Hearing

safety at the Federal Highway & Poinciana Lane Intersection

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Poinciana Gardens is a residential Hobe Sound community located in Martin County, Florida, lying east of both Interstate 95 and Florida's Turnpike, US-1 or Federal Highway, as it is known locally, provides the only access to Poinciana Gardens. Residents enter and exit their community at the intersection of Poinciana Lane and Federal Highway. A number of accidents have been reported at this intersection in the past several years. Therefore, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District Four, is looking at ways to improve safety at this intersection.



CONFLICT POINTS

Conflict points on a roadway are points where two vehicles can legally cross paths. At each of these points, the possibility of a crash exists. Through proper access management, conflict points at a median opening can be reduced, improving the operation and safety of the roadway. An analysis of the Federal Highway / Poinciana Lane intersection identified 10 conflict points.

The proposed safety improvements described below reduce that number to 5.

Crash data shows the conflicts shown in red as the most common at this intersection.



safety at the Federal Highway & Poinciana Lane Intersection

IMPROVING SAFETY

Safety analysis at an intersection begins with a review of the crash data. The crash data at this location indicates that the majority of crashes have occurred when vehicles exit Poinciana Lane and turn left across southbound traffic to go north on Federal Highway.

The proposed safety improvements would prohibit this movement. All motorists exiting Poinciana Lane would be required to make a right turn onto Federal Highway and make a safer U-turn further south. Motorists would still be able to turn left into Poinciana Gardens (onto Poinciana Lane) from northbound Federal Highway. The Department has studied this intersection's safety and operations numerous times over the years and has eliminated it as a candidate for a traffic signal due to the low traffic volume on Poinciana Lane.



WHEN WILL IT BE BUILT?

Public Hearing - May 2011
 Plans Finalized - November 2011
 Construction Start - January 2012
 Construction Duration - 30 days

GET INVOLVED

The public plays an important role in the development and decision making process of this project. Interaction between the public and the department is essential. FDOT encourages the public to get involved by providing comments, concerns, questions, and/or suggestions to this department. Public Participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, or family status.

HAVE A QUESTION?

Please contact:
 Beth Coe
 District Traffic Access Manager
 Florida Department of Transportation
 3400 West Commercial Boulevard
 Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309
 Phone: (954) 777-4333
 E-mail: Beth_Coe@dot.state.fl.us

Comments must be postmarked by May 27, 2011 to be considered part of the official Public Hearing Record.

Public Hearing Results



- 110 participants
- 27 written comments received
- 36 verbal statements
- Majority opposed proposed improvements and favored a new signal
- Questions received were answered by email or letter

Public Hearing Results



- Decision made to move forward with median project
- Public notified by letter 60 days after Hearing
- Final Plans completed in November 2011
- Construction initiated in January 2012

Don't Forget These Mandatory Requirements

- Use current Title VI language
- Advertise meeting in Florida Administrative Register 7 days in advance
- Post notification on FDOT's public notice website
- Do not hold meeting at public educational facilities
- Ensure meeting location is ADA accessible
- Make sure to invite or notify renters/tenants in addition to property owners

Contact Information

Rusty Ennemoser

FDOT Central Office

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(850) 414-5337

