

Resolving Community Issues

Potential solutions to project-related community effects are identified during the sociocultural effects (SCE) evaluation process. Community outreach is a crucial part of this problem-solving effort to ensure project outcomes that are consistent with community values and preferences. Community outreach is also a mechanism for identifying potential project features that enhance the project’s compatibility with the community context.

A SCE evaluation performed in a previous project phase (if applicable) provides a basis for a discussion with the community about project issues and potential solutions/enhancements. The present SCE evaluation takes into consideration changes in the project area since the prior SCE evaluation as well as new suggestions for project solutions/enhancements.

In all cases, project solutions/enhancements must be consistent with the project purpose and need and applicable engineering standards and other requirements. Cost and the potential to create other issues (unintended consequences) are also factors when considering the feasibility of a project solution/enhancement. Detailed, interdisciplinary examination of potential project solutions/enhancements and any related commitments typically occurs in the PD&E phase. Generally, commitments are not made during the planning phase. However, if a commitment is made, follow FDOT procedure [Project Commitment Tracking 700-011-035-a](#).

There are four general methods for addressing project impacts and compatibility preferences: avoidance, minimization, mitigation, and enhancement.

AVOIDANCE

Avoidance measures are alterations to the project so that an impact does not occur.

Examples of avoidance measures:

- Redefining the project description
- Greater consideration for another project alternative
- A roadway bridge segment allowing continued direct access to community focal points
- Shift in roadway alignment to avoid a community focal point
- Shift in roadway alignment to avoid creating a barrier through a cohesive neighborhood or between a community facility and a neighborhood that uses the facility
- Shift in roadway alignment or reduced roadway cross-section to avoid parking spaces in a central business district

If it is determined that no feasible and prudent avoidance alternative exists to resolve a project effect, minimization measures are explored.

MINIMIZATION

Minimization measures involve modifications to the project to reduce the severity of the effect.

Examples of minimization measures:

- Minor shift in roadway alignment to impact the perimeter of farmland rather than bisecting it
- Minor shift in roadway alignment to limit business impacts to only one side of the roadway rather than both
- A new transit facility sited on vacant land rather than on a developed, revenue-generating parcel
- Use of color and/or materials to visually blend the project with its surroundings

Typically, after all minimization efforts have been explored for their ability to resolve a project effect, mitigation measures are pursued.

MITIGATION

Mitigation measures alleviate or offset a project effect that cannot be avoided through replacement or compensation.

Examples of mitigation measures:

- Access management creating new business accesses where driveways are eliminated
- A public parking structure to compensate for eliminated privately-owned parking spaces
- Land for a park to replace parkland needed to accommodate the project
- Replacement of an impacted community facility of at least comparable value, and of reasonably equivalent usefulness and location
- Improved crosswalks, pedestrians signals, and traffic calming features in areas with high-levels of pedestrian traffic
- Replacement trees in another location to compensate for trees removed to accommodate the project
- Sound barrier to mitigate noise impacts on a surrounding neighborhood
- Vegetative screening to block a view of the project that is incompatible with the e surroundings
- Elimination of incompatible land uses
- A pedestrian/bicycle overpass to restore an impacted access to a school
- Restoration of disturbed vegetation
- Compensation for acquired properties and/or business damages

ENHANCEMENT

Enhancement measures are project features intended to increase the project’s compatibility with the community context.

Examples of enhancement measures:

- Textured pedestrian crosswalks in a downtown
- Roadside or median landscaping to complement existing or planned landscaping in a neighborhood
- Street trees and furniture at a transit stop
- A wayside park along a causeway or a fishing pier under a bridge
- Scenic area or rest area
- Public art integrated in a project structure (embossed art on bridge wall embankment or mural on a sound barrier wall
- Multi-use trail