

## 104 Public Involvement

### 104.1 General

FDOT's policy on [Public Involvement Opportunities](#), *Topic No. 000-525-050* states:

"The Department recognizes the importance of involving the public in information exchange when providing transportation facilities and services to best meet the State's transportation needs. Therefore, 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 condition and project requirements."

Detailed information on Public Involvement activities and requirements can be found in the *Project Development and Environment Manual (PD&E Manual) Part 1, Chapter 11* and the [Public Involvement Handbook](#).

Typically, when a project reaches the design phase, many of the project commitments and community issues have already been identified. However, there are times when design alternatives need to be reevaluated to determine their community impacts. Any commitments made in previous phases are communicated to designers, who are responsible for carrying them out. If constraints arise that require design changes which affect FDOT's ability to meet commitments, then the process would require follow-up with the affected community. In such cases, additional public involvement and community impact assessment may be necessary to address public concerns.

Projects may have the following potential community impacts that are not identified until the design phase:

- (1) Impacts on public safety, including people with disabilities
- (2) School crossings or other areas of high pedestrian activity
- (3) Aesthetic features such as landscaping or tree replacement
- (4) Medians or access changes
- (5) Intersections and driveways, including audible signalized intersections
- (6) Accessibility of corridor businesses and neighborhoods
- (7) Significant improvements to bicycle, pedestrian and transit facilities
- (8) Lighting
- (9) Maintenance of Traffic

- (10) Railroad crossings
- (11) Location and extent of storm water management facilities

### **104.1.1 Noise and Perimeter Walls**

See **FDM 264.4** for Public Involvement requirements for noise and perimeter walls.

### **104.2 Community Awareness Plan (CAP)**

FDOT Community Awareness Plan Guidelines for all design and construction projects identify four levels of public involvement based on the type of project:

- Level 1:** Project is noncontroversial, causes negligible accessibility impacts, and causes minimal traffic disruption.
- Level 2:** Project has general public acceptance, little impact on accessibility or traffic, and a moderate degree of traffic disruption. Examples include urban resurfacing, bridge repair projects, 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 (temporary or permanent). Examples are parking removal, median openings or closures, access management issues, traffic signal removal, roadway widening, major reconstruction, and projects including detours.
- Level 4:** Project involves road widening or major reconstruction, bridge widening or replacement, new interchange, or closures (temporary or permanent) of the roadway, ramps, bridges, or railroad crossings.

Modification for Non-Conventional Projects:

See RFP for commitments and special CAP requirements.

### 104.3 Public Information and Outreach

Start developing and implementing a public information and outreach campaign when the design phase begins. Ongoing monitoring throughout the life of the project will be necessary. The following steps should be used when planning and implementing a public information and outreach campaign.

- (1) **Determine appropriate size and nature.** The size and nature of a public information and outreach effort is determined by the characteristics of a project, its location, and the anticipated impacts. Address the size and duration of the project, the amount of delay anticipated, special traffic and safety conditions such as heavy truck traffic, changes to bicycle and pedestrian routes and facilities, and disruptions to other modes and key facilities such as airports, stadiums, and hospitals.
- (2) **Identify resources.** Typically, public information and outreach spending is included in the project budget. In addition, the Department may need to tap existing resources, such as an operating 511 system and the Lane Closure Information System (LCIS), and leverage external resources such as free media coverage.
- (3) **Identify partners.** Working with a range of partners to design and implement an information and outreach campaign will strengthen the strategies employed and may reduce the costs and resources. Partners may include state and local agencies, major employers, and business and neighborhood associations, local clubs and advocacy groups.
- (4) **Identify target audiences.** Identifying target audiences is a key in developing an effective communication strategy. This determine the types of messages that should be conveyed and the best method of communicating those messages.
- (5) **Develop the message(s).** The messages communicated should provide project information to maintain safety and minimize delay, and should indicate that the agency cares about the traveling public, including transit riders, pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists. More specific messages might include details of the work zone, travel times through the work zone, alerts regarding the need for cyclists to share or control a travel lane, and alternate routes and modes of transportation.
- (6) **Determine communication strategies.** How information is communicated will depend on the audiences, the messages to be conveyed, and the campaign budget. The [Public Involvement Handbook](#) discusses a wide range of strategies for communicating information about a project.
- (7) **Determine communication timing.** Begin public information and outreach before work commences to develop partnerships and inform the public about the project, its anticipated impacts, and additional sources of ongoing project information. Early

contact and coordination with bicycle groups (such as Metropolitan Planning Organization Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committees or bike clubs) helps mitigate friction.

## **104.4 Recommended Activities**

A public information and outreach campaign involves communicating with road users, the general public, area residences and businesses, and appropriate public entities about a road project and its implications for safety and mobility.

### **104.4.1 Design Activities**

The District PIO should also have final approval of informational documents intended for public distribution.

Typical activities corresponding to the level type are provided as follows:

#### CAP Level 1

- (1) Provide Phase II plans to city, county officials, and staff to solicit comments and concurrence. Minimal activities involved in Plan.

#### CAP Level 2,3,4

- (1) When requested, provide presentation(s) to city, MPO, County Commission, legislators and community groups regarding design, impact and construction status.
- (2) Provide plans for all phase reviews to city, county officials, and staff to solicit comments and concurrence.
- (3) Provide plans for all phase reviews to maintenance, construction, and appropriate Operations Center.
- (4) Following Phase II review:
  - (a) Send Notice of Access Impact (driveway closures/modifications) to affected property owners. If done by mass mailing, all proposed access revisions must be clearly stated in the mailing.
  - (b) Project Information Workshop(s) with city and county staff, elected officials, property owners, and interested public to solicit comments. Mass mailing of invitation or project flyers are typically coordinated by the Department Project Manager and the District Public Information Officer (PIO).

## **104.4.2 Construction Activities**

Typical activities corresponding to the level type are provided as follows:

### CAP Level 1,2,3,4

- (1) 2-4 weeks prior to beginning construction activities, conduct a mass mailing of project information with construction dates and specific traffic impact information. Project flyers are typically coordinated by the Construction Project Manager and the District Public Information Officer (PIO).
- (2) 1 week prior to beginning construction activities, Include information regarding the project start date, pertinent project information and specific traffic impacts in the District PIO's Weekly Traffic Report (news release).
- (3) Throughout the construction phase, include specific traffic impacts in the District PIO's Weekly Traffic Report (news release). It is the Construction Project Manager's responsibility to provide the District PIO with this information in a timely manner to meet media deadlines.

### CAP Level 2,3,4

- (1) After Letting, conduct a 'Hand Off' meeting including representatives from Design, Construction, Utilities, Traffic Operations and Maintenance. This meeting is typically scheduled by the Design Project Manager.
- (2) When requested, provide presentations to city and county officials, legislators, community groups and property owners regarding project status, as needed or requested.

### CAP Level 3,4

- (1) During the development of Scope of Services for C.E.I., determine if a consultant Public Information Officer is required for the project. This decision will be made by the Design Project Manager, Construction Project Manager and the District Public Information Officer (PIO). The District PIO should be involved in writing Requests for Proposals and Scopes of Services language that pertain to contracting with community involvement and public information consultants.
- (2) For project websites, Construction staff typically maintains the website in accordance with the Project Website Guidelines.