



# Connecticut

Department of Transportation

A photograph showing a public involvement meeting. Several people are gathered around a table, looking at a large map or document. One person is pointing at the map. The scene is indoors, possibly a community center or a meeting room.

## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT GUIDANCE MANUAL

REVISION OF 2009

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# Preface



# Preface

This Public Involvement Guidance Manual is an update of “A Guide for Public Outreach” prepared and distributed by the Connecticut Department of Transportation in November, 1995. The primary intent of this manual is to provide general guidance and specific tips to Connecticut Department of Transportation Project Managers and other Department staff as well as regional and municipal planning officials as they interact with the public on Department Projects.

This update of the 1995 guide was necessitated by a number of factors:

- Since the previous manual, many new requirements have become part of the project development process. Three specific examples of this are **context sensitive solutions** (CSS), described in Department Administrative Memo 24 which requires project development to carefully consider and be sensitive to the context into which the project is proposed, **work zone safety**, which requires the Department to develop a work zone safety and mobility policy, a process for implementing that policy, and project-level procedures to assess and manage work zone related traffic disruptions, and **environmental justice**, which requires that the Department not propose a solution which results in disproportional adverse impact to protected population groups and neighborhoods and further requires outreach efforts specifically directed toward those groups and neighborhoods.
- Federal FHWA/FTA and USDOT public outreach mandates have been strengthened and expanded since the previous manual, making it imperative that Department project managers be aware of new requirements and how to carry them out. In general, the mandates require:
  - **Early and continuing public involvement** opportunities throughout the planning and programming process;
  - **Timely information** about transportation issues and **processes to the community affected** by transportation plans, programs and projects;
  - **Reasonable public access to information** used in the development of the plans and projects;
  - **Adequate public notice** of public involvement activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points;

- A process for demonstrating explicit **consideration and response to public input**;
- A process for **seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved** by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households;
- **Periodic review** of the effectiveness of the public involvement process.

In addition to the development of this Guidance Manual, the Department has also developed a public involvement policy in response to this strengthened federal mandate.

The development of this manual was guided by a Steering Committee of Department staff and was developed with the vision of improving the Department's outreach efforts and the effectiveness of those efforts. It is also intended to increase the comfort level of Department staff in this interaction, thus, also making that interaction more effective for the benefit of the people and transportation systems of the State of Connecticut. The purpose of this effort is consistent with the mission statement adopted and approved by the Steering Committee:

*“With regard to public involvement, it is the mission of the Connecticut Department of Transportation to be an acknowledged leader among state Departments of Transportation in the development, communication and implementation of successful public outreach procedures”.*

The chapters of this guidance manual are briefly described, as follows:

Chapter 1: ***Why Is Public Involvement Important?*** explains why public outreach is carried out along with the benefits of doing so.

Chapter 2: ***When Is Public Involvement Required?*** gives a broad overview of the regulatory requirements for public outreach.

Chapter 3: ***Getting People Involved*** explores various ways to encourage participation by reaching out in a variety of ways and to a variety of audiences.

Chapter 4: ***Successful Public Meetings*** offers specifics to help the Project Manager plan and carry out public meetings that are effective and useful.

Chapter 5: ***Working with Groups*** provides a summary of types of groups and the most frequently used group techniques.

Chapter 6: ***Working with the Media*** explains how to build a relationship with the media that is mutually supportive.

Chapter 7: ***Building Trust and Rapport: Creating a Win-Win Atmosphere*** explores attitudes and approaches that create positive interaction with the public.

Chapter 8: ***How Do I Know It's Working: Evaluating the Program*** proposes techniques to help the project manager understand which outreach methods are most effective so that this information can be shared within the Department.

As noted above, this Guidance Manual has been prepared to help the Department's project managers and others to understand more about the tools and techniques of public outreach so that they can be more effective and more comfortable dealing with the public. The overall goal is that by doing so, the Department's public outreach will be improved to the benefit of both the Department and its mission and the people of the State of Connecticut.

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# Acronyms





# Acronyms

ADA:	Americans with Disabilities Act
CEPA:	Connecticut Environmental Policy Act
CFR:	Code of Federal Regulations
ConnDOT:	Connecticut Department of Transportation
CSS:	Context Sensitive Solutions
DEP:	Department of Environmental Protection
EA:	Environmental Assessment
EIE:	Environmental Impact Evaluation
EIS:	Environmental Impact Statement
EJ:	Environmental Justice
FHWA:	Federal Highway Administration
FOI:	Freedom of Information
FRA:	Federal Rail Administration
FTA:	Federal Transit Administration
HAR:	Highway Advisory Radio
LEP:	Limited English Proficiency
LRP:	Long-Range Transportation Plan
MPO:	Metropolitan Planning Organization
NEPA:	National Environmental Policy Act
NOI:	Notice of Intent
PS&E:	Plans, Specifications and Estimates
ROW:	Right of Way
RPO:	Regional Planning Organization
SAFETEA-LU:	Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users
SHPO:	State Historic Preservation Office
STIP:	Statewide Transportation Improvement Program
TMP:	Transportation Management Plan
TIP:	Transportation Improvement Program





# Chapter 1



# Chapter 1:

## Why Is Public Involvement Important?

### WHO IS “THE PUBLIC”?

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And just who do we mean by “the public”? Virtually every project the Department undertakes has a wide-range of interested parties or “**stakeholders**”. Some of these parties may also be co-sponsors of a project with the Department (e.g., a regional agency or municipality) while in other cases, those same parties may be outside the sponsorship of the project and have concerns regarding impact or consequences, such as the concerns of a nearby property owner.

Virtually every project the Department undertakes has a wide range of interested parties or “stakeholders”. Stakeholders may include officials at the federal, state or local level of government, abutting property owners, special interest groups such as developers, environmental groups, transit supporters, disability advocates, citizens and many others.

In “**Chapter 3: Getting People Involved**” this manual focuses on the identification of interested parties and how to reach out to them.

### WHY INVOLVE THE PUBLIC?

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Times have changed. In days gone by, transportation professionals may not have had to deal so frequently with members of the public. There was a perception that decision-making was likely to happen “behind closed doors,” and the public may have been less likely to question decisions that were made by governmental agencies, trusting that those decisions were made for the public good.

Clearly, we live in a different world today. Decisions made by governmental agencies are more of an open book—as they should be if they are being made for the right reasons—and the public is more likely to become involved. Skepticism of government, particularly by competing interest groups, is more the norm today, so a government agency often needs to overcome suspicion. This makes an open decision-making process, and transparency, even more critical.

Solving Connecticut’s transportation needs should be a collaborative process. Public involvement is a means to bring about that collaboration.

The public needs to be involved in projects for a variety of reasons:

- Because state facilities are owned in the public trust.
- Because transportation projects should fit into the context of the community.
- Because it leads to better decisions. Collaboration and consultation are aids, not detriments, to improved planning and project development.
- Because it is required by various laws and regulations.
- Because it WORKS!!! When carried out correctly, public involvement can save time, money and effort in the long run.

### **Because State Facilities Are Owned In The Public Trust**

State facilities are financed with public funds and belong to the public, and it is the obligation of the Department to manage and improve these facilities in the public interest. Clearly, this is a difficult and complex responsibility. While the Department has general policies and guidelines and a long-range plan, the implementation of each individual project has many alternatives. When it comes to project development, the expression “the devil is in the details” is applicable.

Quality of life is a highly subjective issue. Many of Connecticut’s roadways serve a dual function—as a state highway to move people and goods from one region to another, and also as a local main street, serving not only to carry local traffic and provide access to local land use, but also reflecting the character of the area. While the state of Connecticut owns these roads, the local community often cares a great deal about what happens there, since changes in the roadway can affect the quality of life as well as safety and local ambience.

Similarly, the State’s airports and public transportation services (buses, trains and ferries) also serve local and regional needs. Such facilities are meant to be assets to the communities they serve, therefore similar concerns with respect to quality of life and local ambience are appropriate.

Solutions for travel needs in Connecticut’s corridors should be a collaborative effort between the Department, acting for the State, and the regional and local community. Public involvement is the means to bring about that collaboration.

### **Because A Project Needs To Fit Into The Community**

In most cities and towns, people are increasingly aware of how natural and cultural features define their community. Any project that may diminish open space, remove old or architecturally significant buildings, or create new or wider roads, or new transportation facilities and corridors, may be seen as a threat to the fabric of the community or its sense of place. The Department’s context sensitive solutions approach recognizes that building roads is not just about transportation but also considers how a proposed project impacts a community and its values.

### **Because It Leads To Better Decisions**

Early and continuing outreach can lead to better solutions on difficult issues by bringing more minds to the table and increasing synergy. The Department has embraced the concept of context sensitive solutions, which seeks to deliver transportation services and facilities that are integrated with and compatible with the community they serve, including natural, human and visual environments. Public outreach is key to deciphering local context and issues. When these issues are better understood, and the Department and the local community can work as partners in meeting a transportation need while considering local desires, everyone wins.

**Public outreach is key to identifying and understanding local context and issues. This is what Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) is all about.**

### **Because It’s The Law**

One reason to involve the public is because it’s the law—built into the regulations and requirements that the Department must follow on virtually every project. Decision-making is a much more complex process than it was in the past. There are many more rules, regulations, policies and procedures that apply—and they are changing all the time. A very short

**sampling** of regulatory considerations which the Department must integrate into project development might include:

- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- ADA requirements
- Clean Air Act
- Title VI
- Wetlands and floodplain regulations
- Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA)
- SAFETEA-LU
- ...and many more.

Some of these are federal requirements, some are Connecticut laws or regulations, and some are promulgated by the Department itself in the interest of quality and service to the public.

Every project is subject to a wide range of regulations which dictate how things need to happen.  
Some of these requirements call for public outreach.  
*Stay alert: these regulations are subject to change at any time!*

We may consider this long list of requirements to be the “regulatory framework” for any given project. It is an on-going challenge to understand the regulatory framework for every project and to ensure that all of the “i’s” are dotted and all of the “t’s” crossed from a regulatory point of view on any given project. **The Department’s project manager needs to be able to navigate all of the pertinent requirements in order to complete a project successfully.** Many of the regulations require some form of public outreach or public involvement.

### Because It Works!!!

When carried out through the application of good techniques and an openness to what the public has to say, public involvement can actually **shorten** a project time frame and **lower** overall project cost, by identifying “fatal flaws” in a project approach, plan, or design early in the process.



...public involvement can actually *shorten* a project time frame and lower overall project cost, by identifying “fatal flaws”...

Early outreach can help alleviate a broad range of project delays, additional expense, frustration and other unforeseen problems. Consensus cannot be reached unless people (a) have an opportunity to voice their concerns/opinions and (b) feel that they have been heard. Consensus does not mean that everyone agrees with a project decision (full agreement by everyone is just not possible in most cases), but it **does** mean that people have had a chance to voice their opinions and feel that they have been heard. Better decisions are in the best interests of both the Department and the people of the State of Connecticut.

What is “consensus” anyway? Consensus does not mean that everyone agrees with a project decision–this is *just not possible*–but it *does* mean that people have had a chance to voice their opinions and feel that they have been heard.

## HOW DO I REACH OUT?

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For many, the concept of public involvement conjures up images of large public meetings or hearings, frequently either under-attended or filled with angry project opponents. This need not be the case. Public involvement can take many different forms. Interactive public meetings, roundtable discussions with key stakeholders, project websites, newsletters, and participation with advisory committees are among the many techniques that can be used very effectively to inform, educate, and obtain input.

Technology has made it possible to provide project information to interested parties over the internet. Computer imaging and renderings can help people visualize a proposed project design. The Department’s Bureau of Engineering and Highway Operations has staff who can provide assistance with visualization. Many graphic techniques are available to help the public understand the impacts of a proposed plan on land use, the transportation system, and the environment. Newsletters, flyers, and other publications offer methods for providing a lot of detail about the status of a project.

...effective public involvement starts with an open mind...

The techniques listed above and many others are discussed in greater detail in later chapters of this manual. The Department project manager's goal is to identify the appropriate tools that will yield a constructive dialogue with project stakeholders. Most important is the understanding that effective public involvement starts with an open mind: a desire to reach out and a willingness to entertain the possibility that there may be ideas yet to explore that will enhance the project and make it more implementable. This can happen by creating a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach to project development and involving stakeholders at the earliest phase, to ensure that transportation projects are in harmony with communities and can preserve environmental, scenic, aesthetic, and historic resources while maintaining safety and mobility.



# Chapter 2



# Chapter 2:

## When Is Public Involvement Required?

### OVERVIEW

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The Department's emphasis on the importance of public involvement is evident in its commitment to achieving context sensitive solutions through community collaboration. The Department also prepares a "Project Commitment" letter that remains with the project file from initial planning into preliminary design and through to the completion of construction. Beyond the Department's commitment, there are many state and federal directives that require public involvement. While it is not possible to provide a comprehensive list of all of these requirements in this manual, it is important to understand that there is a common theme or common ethic which underpins these requirements. Legal requirements may vary depending on the nature or phase of the project, but understanding the key principles behind these regulations is both helpful and imperative.

The core principles for public involvement that have been adopted by transportation agencies and which are reflected in a variety of regulations are contained in the 23 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 450. This code requires:

- **Early and continuing public involvement** opportunities throughout the transportation planning and programming process;
- **Timely information** about transportation issues and processes **to the community** affected by transportation plans, programs, and projects;
- **Reasonable public access to information** used in the development of the plans (and projects);
- **Adequate public notice** of public involvement activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points;
- A process for demonstrating explicit **consideration and response to public input**;
- A process for **seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved** by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households;

- **Periodic review** of the effectiveness of the public involvement process.

This chapter provides an overview of public involvement legal requirements for project planning, design, construction, and operations and maintenance. It also gives guidance for the documentation of the public involvement activities during all stages of a project. Legal requirements for public outreach are an important factor in the Department's mission to serve the people of the State of Connecticut. ***Conscientious public involvement efforts are essential to all projects as a requirement of federal and state funding, and to fulfill the Department's commitment to planning and implementing context sensitive solutions.***

The Department is committed to the integration of Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) into all of its operations. Therefore, under Administrative Memorandum No. 24 on November 20, 2002, the Department required the application of the CSS principles to all projects. The Department understands the relationships between transportation facilities and communities, and is committed to working with the public to integrate transportation projects into communities. Through the CSS process, the Department will form partnerships with identified community stakeholders to develop transportation improvement projects that meet the State's transportation needs while giving appropriate consideration to community issues and impacts.

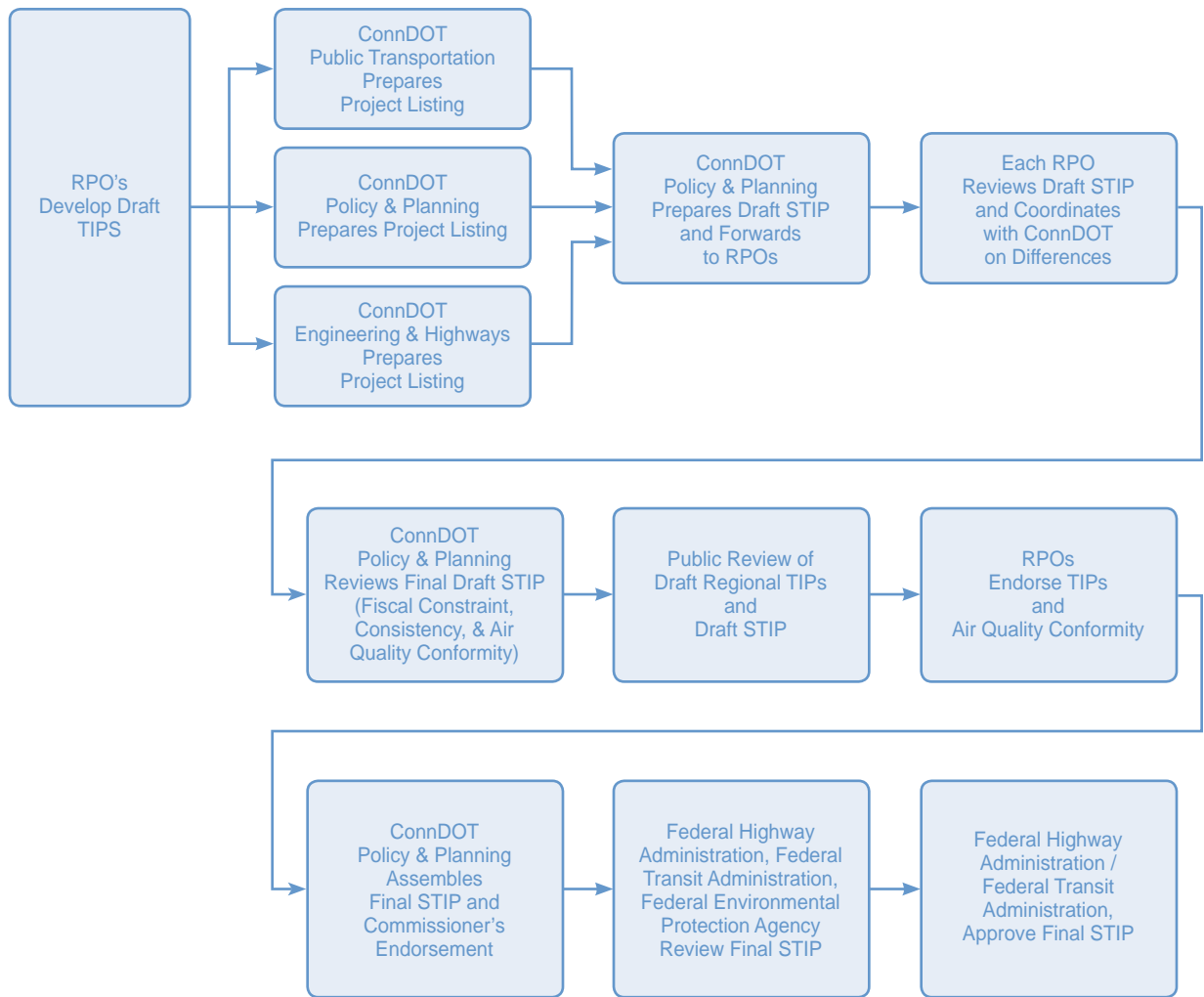
## **PLANNING AND DESIGN**

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Public outreach during the planning process may occur at many different milestones. Before a project can enter the project planning phase, it needs to be part of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and a region's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). After a project enters the project planning phase and proceeds from feasibility planning to the environmental process and on into design, there are a variety of regulations that apply. While this chapter does not describe the Department's project development process in detail, it does attempt to point out several of the most critical public outreach requirements and regulations, such as those contained in the Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations. It is the project manager's responsibility to be familiar with and to understand the regulatory framework for his or her projects during all phases of the planning and design process.

**It is the project manager's responsibility to be familiar with and to understand the regulatory framework for his or her projects, during all phases of the planning and design process.**

**FIGURE 2.1: THE PLANNING PROCESS**

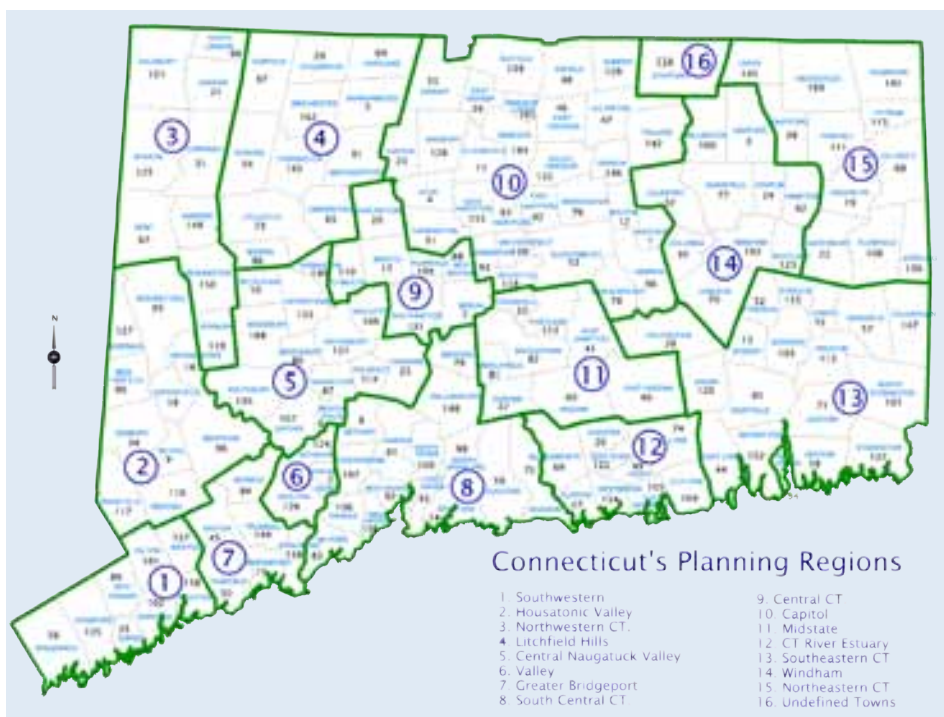


### Statewide Planning

The Department's procedure for development of the STIP and TIP is outlined in the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation's "Transportation in Connecticut: The Planning Process" (Nov. 2007) as depicted in Figure 2.1. The Department relies on the Regional Planning Organizations (RPOs) and

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to provide coordination and public involvement for the development of the individual TIPs for use in the Department's STIP. In addition, the Department carries out its own extensive outreach for the development of the statewide plan.

**FIGURE 2.2: STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
REGIONAL & MUNICIPAL PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS**



Public involvement in both the statewide transportation and metropolitan planning processes is required by federal mandate. Formal regulatory information regarding SAFETEA-LU has not been issued at this writing, but the new provisions are applicable per FHWA/FTA Interim Guidance established in September 2005. ***It is important to note that SAFETEA-LU has introduced new language and specific requirements for public involvement policy and procedures in the transportation planning process.***

**SAFETEA-LU recognizes the importance of public involvement and has introduced new language and guidance to support that recognition.**



As discussed in "Transportation in Connecticut: The Planning Process," a STIP and a State Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRP) are prepared by the Department. The LRP is the federally recognized transportation plan for the State of Connecticut. It is a policy document that presents a long-term, intermodal vision of the state's transportation system; it covers at least a 20-year period and serves as a framework for preparing future, more project-specific documents such as the Department's STIP. The statewide LRP and the STIP are closely coordinated with the MPOs and RPOs as required by 23 CFR 450.

### SAFETEA-LU

SAFETEA-LU (Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users) Interim Guidance requires, for all Notices of Intent (NOI) for EIS projects published after August 11, 2005, that a public comment process be developed for project "Purpose and Need" and "Alternatives" stages of a project. A coordination plan and schedule is also required and must be provided to the public. These new requirements are specified in the joint FHWA/FTA September 2, 2005 "Interim Guidance for Implementing Key SAFETEA-LU Provisions on Planning, Environment and Air Quality for Joint FHWA/FTA Authorities". The new Section 139 Efficient Environmental Reviews for Project Decision-Making (23USC139), added by SAFETEA-LU, emphasizes and requires public and participating agency reviews during the Project Initiation, Purpose and Need and Alternative Analysis stages of a project's environmental review.

#### SAFETEA-LU says:

**"As early as practicable during the environmental review process, the lead agency (FHWA/FTA) and project sponsor (ConnDOT) shall provide an opportunity for involvement by participating agencies and the public in determining...**

- **...project Purpose and Need**
- **...the range of Alternatives to be considered for a project..."**

In addition, 23USC139 calls for the lead agency to ". . . establish a plan for coordinating public and agency participation in and comment on the environmental review process for a project or category of projects. The coordination plan may be incorporated into a memorandum of understanding." In short, a participation plan and schedule are required.

To develop a public involvement/agency coordination plan and schedule:

- Know the regulations/requirements
- Know the project
- Know the audience
- Know the tools

SAFETEA-LU does not substantially modify the previous federal requirements but does expand the stakeholder list to specifically include representative users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities and the disabled. Regulations also specifically state that public meetings shall be held at convenient and accessible locations and times, and that visualization techniques be used to describe plans.

### National Environmental Policy Act

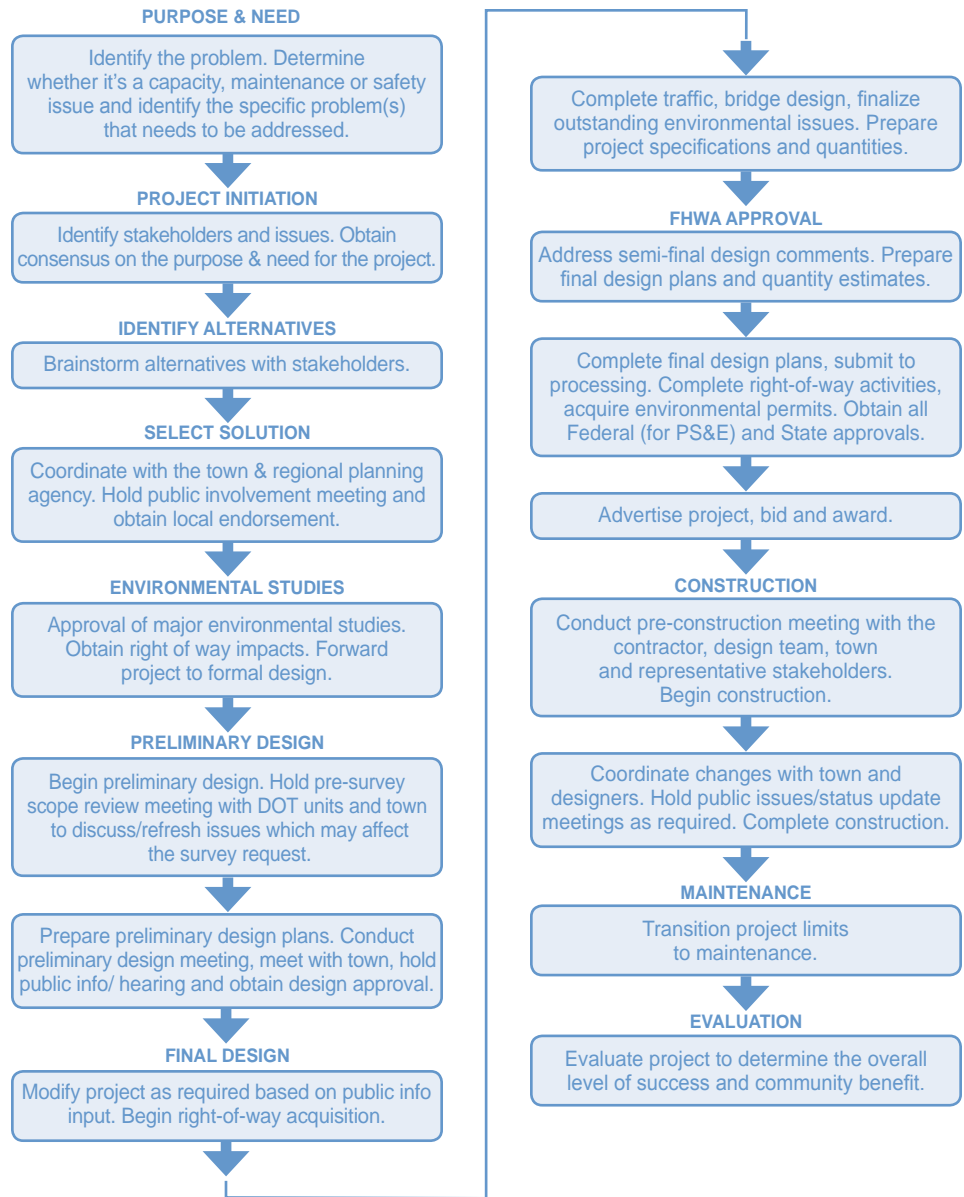
The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 is the governing law for all Federal agencies regarding environmental review.

Based on these requirements, each federal agency has developed guidelines and regulations to satisfy NEPA requirements for the development and design of all projects involving federal funding. Each federal agency regulation has some level of required public involvement. The legislation, regulations, and Executive Orders each have ramifications that require public involvement and a systematic approach to all proposed Federal actions (23CFR771.105(c)). The specifics of fulfilling public involvement requirements are generally left up to the agency and sponsor (i.e., the Connecticut Department of Transportation) and are based on:

- Type of NEPA document (Categorical Exclusion, Environmental Assessment, or Environmental Impact Statement);
- Scope of the document; and
- Related environmental impacts (cultural resources, wetlands, environmental justice, flood plains, etc.).

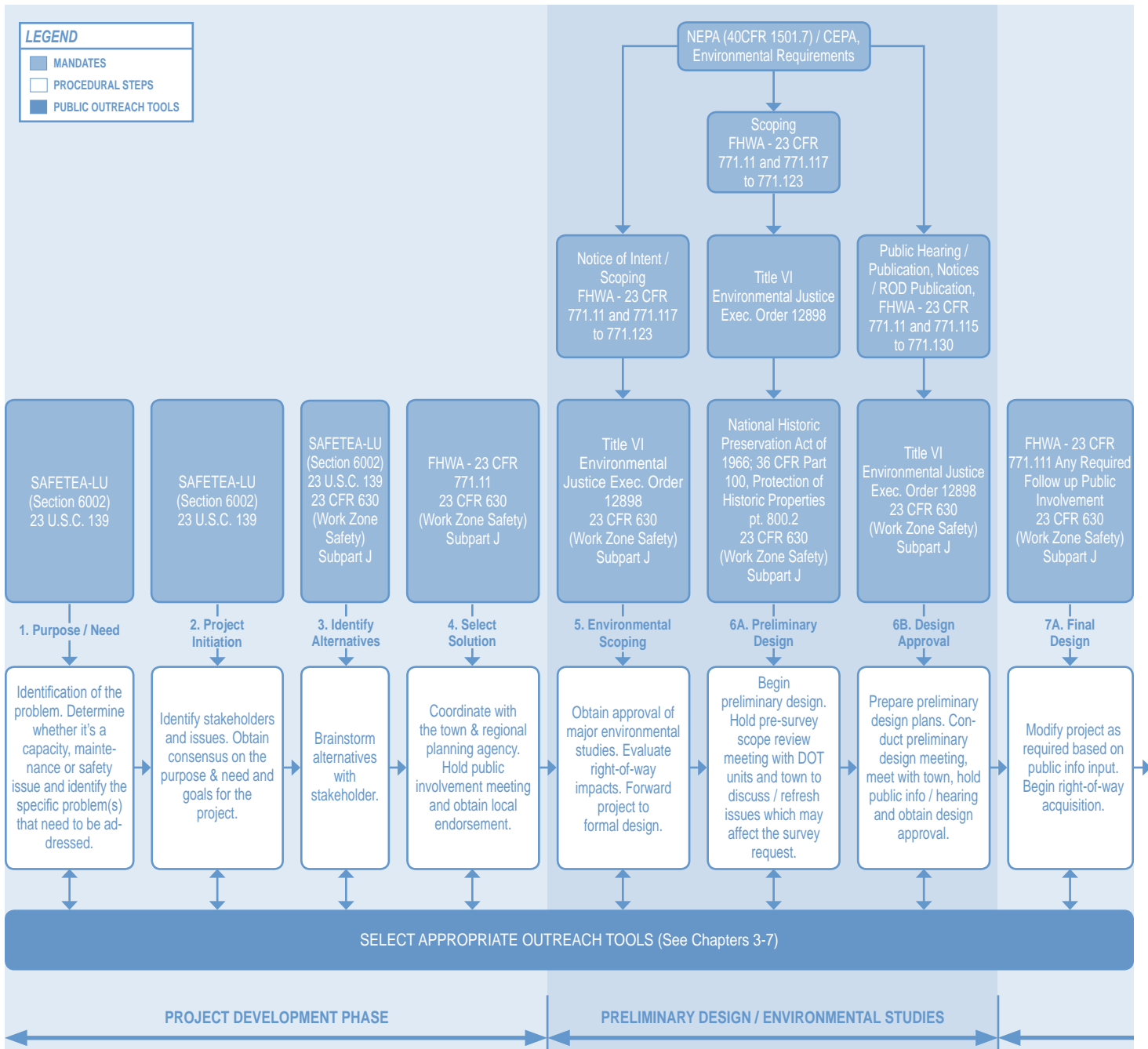
Public involvement is always required by NEPA and other regulations.  
Public hearings are specifically required for certain actions.

**FIGURE 2.3: PROJECT FLOW CHART - STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**



In order to better view the project process, an expanded flow chart is provided in Figure 2.4, “State of Connecticut Department of Transportation Project Processing: Public Involvement Regulations, Requirements and Tools.”

**FIGURE 2.4: PROJECT PROCESSING, PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND RELATED REQUIREMENTS**





### Applicable Federal Regulations for Reference:

**23 CFR 450.212** (Public involvement) - FHWA regulations for Statewide Transportation Planning.

**23 CFR 450.316** (Public involvement processes) - FHWA regulations for Metropolitan Transportation Planning and Programming.

**23 CFR 771.111** (Early coordination, public involvement, and project development) - FHWA regulations for Environmental Impact and Related Procedures. Subparagraph (h) (1) states “Each State must have procedures approved by the FHWA to carry out a public involvement/public hearing program pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 128 and CFR parts 1500 through 1508.”

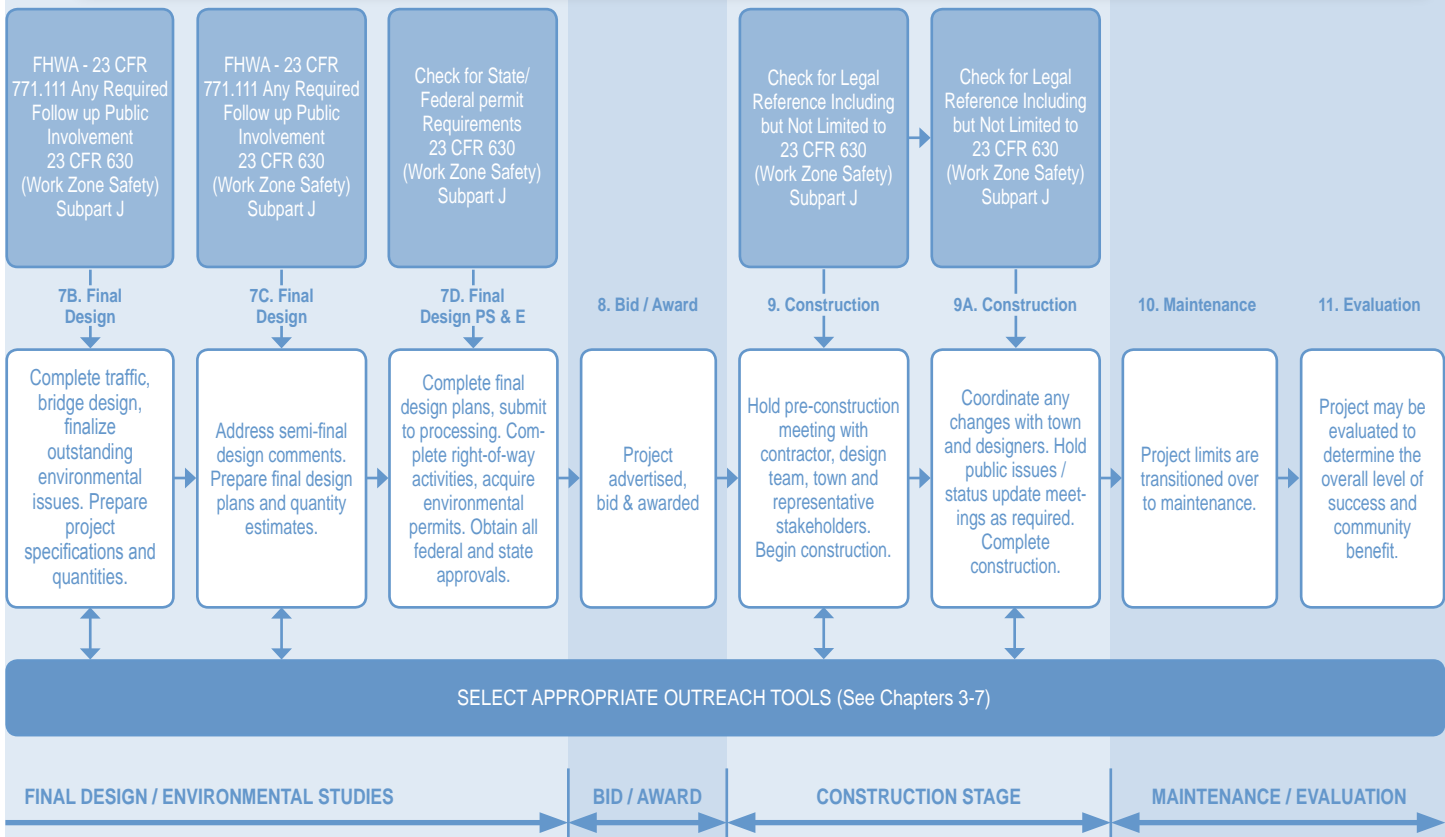
**40 CFR 93.105** (Consultation) - EPA regulations concerning transportation conformity under the Clean Air Act. Paragraph (e) covers “Public consultation procedures.”

**40 CFR 1506.6** (Public involvement) - CEQ regulations implementing NEPA.

### Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

**Executive Order 12898** - Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low Income Populations.

**Executive Order 13166** - Limited English Proficiency.



***It is essential to remember that all projects that are federally funded or defined by NEPA require some level of public involvement.*** The special circumstances and complexities involved with each project (cultural resources, wetlands, etc.) will help define the level and type of public participation.

## Integration of Public Involvement

To better understand the importance and integration of public involvement into the project development, design and NEPA process, it is necessary to be familiar with the many Federal mandates pertaining to NEPA and the specific agency (FHWA, FTA, FRA, etc.) regulations. Conformance with the requirements of federal mandates, specifically timing, may be achieved through application of the Department's project delivery process, as shown in Figure 2.3.

## Title VI and Environmental Justice

Title VI and Environmental Justice Executive Order emphasize and require the integration of public involvement in planning and design when minority, low-income, and tribal communities may be affected by a federally funded action. A systematic and consistent approach to engaging those impacted (representing diverse cultural and economic backgrounds) is required by the tenets of environmental justice.

Figure 2.4 depicts the relationship of the Department's project development process to the various Federal public involvement requirements. Selecting the proper public involvement "tool" throughout the project delivery process is a decision that should be made on a project-by-project basis using the information and guidance provided in this Manual. The selected tools should then be included in the Public Participation Plan and Schedule now required by SAFETEA-LU for applicable projects (NOI after 08/11/05).

The following comprehensive overview was provided by an FHWA California Division representative during a 2005 Peer Roundtable concerning Environmental Justice and Title VI: "Federal requirements for meeting Title VI and Environmental Justice standards obligate recipients of federal funds to collect data about beneficiaries, to analyze that data, eliminate discrimination when it is found, and to take affirmative measures to ensure nondiscrimination (see 49CFR 21.5 (b) (7), 21.9(b) and 23CFR 200.9(b) (4) and 200.9(b) (14). Limited English Proficiency (LEP) requirements also mandate that recipients provide "meaningful access" to the population relative to what is provided to proficient populations".

## Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA)

Besides the public involvement requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the State of Connecticut has additional provisions for public involvement in all state-funded projects through its Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA). The purpose of CEPA is to identify and evaluate the impacts of proposed state actions that may significantly affect land, water, air, cultural, economic and other resources through the development of an Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE). CEPA requires public involvement at the initiation of the project during the scoping phase to identify potential environmental issues and seek input on alternatives. Public review of the EIE document and a public hearing may also be required. Notice of meetings and the availability of the EIE must be placed in the Environmental Monitor. For details on CEPA, refer to CT State Statutes, Chapter 439, Sections 22a-1b and 1d.

## CONSTRUCTION, OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

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### Construction

Once construction starts, the responsibility for continued project involvement and commitment to implementing context sensitive solutions is transferred to the Connecticut Department of Transportation Project Construction Unit. It is important to accomplish the final transfer of documented public involvement information from the Project Design Unit to the Project Construction Unit as soon as the plans, specifications and estimate for the contract are approved for a project letting. Informal and early coordination between design and construction is also encouraged and necessary, especially for significant and/or controversial projects.

It is important to maintain some level of public outreach and involvement during the project construction phase. In addition to the public involvement that was established during the project planning and design stage, it now becomes important to also reach out to the traveling public that will be affected during project construction.

**Measures must be taken to provide the necessary continued public involvement with the community and with the traveling public.**

Two critical stakeholders during the construction stage include:

- **The Community** – The continuation of outreach should involve those persons, groups, officials, agencies, etc. that were involved in the planning and design stages of the project. They have an extended interest in the project through the construction period, and after, to ensure that promises are kept. It is important to continue to keep the community informed using appropriate outreach tools.
- **The Traveling Public** – This new group consists of those persons, groups, etc. that were not necessarily involved with the project in the planning, design and/or environmental phases of the project. However, the construction of the project will now affect them through direct and/or indirect disruption to the transportation network. It is very important to keep this group informed and seek their input to avoid poor public relations for the Department, help achieve desired traffic flow and re-routing, maintain work zone safety, and generally reduce the impacts of the construction.

The new FHWA Work Zone Safety and Mobility Rule initiates very specific requirements for public involvement in the planning, design and construction phases of a project, as well as during the subsequent operation of the facility. Compliance with all of the provisions of this Rule is required as of October 12, 2007. The Work Zone Safety and Mobility Rule, as codified in 23CFR630, Subpart J, requires the sponsor agency (Connecticut Department of Transportation) to develop a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) for “significant” projects. An important key element of the TMP is development and implementation of an effective public information and outreach campaign to mitigate negative construction zone impacts related to congestion and safety for workers and the traveling public.

A significant project is defined as a project that, alone or in combination with other concurrent projects nearby, is anticipated to cause sustained work zone impacts (i.e., mobility or congestion and worker/traveling public safety) that are greater than what is considered tolerable in engineering judgment. For those significant projects there must be a Transportation Management Plan and corresponding public involvement element. The public involvement component must include communication strategies that inform affected road users, the general public, area residents and businesses and public entities



about the proposed and ongoing project, anticipated work zone impacts and changing project conditions.

Though federal regulations only specifically require a transportation management plan and a public involvement component for “significant” projects, states are encouraged to consider transportation operations and public involvement issues for all projects.

It is important during construction to keep the Department of Transportation’s Office of Communications advised regularly on project conditions that will affect the traveling public. The information provided will be used for updating the Travel Information Gateway section of the Department’s website, issuing press releases, and keeping the media and public informed about on-going construction projects.

To assist in facilitating public information during project development and implementation, as well as during subsequent maintenance, the FHWA has developed the [“Work Zone Public Information and Outreach Strategies Guide”](#). The informative guide is aimed at assisting transportation agencies in the planning and implementation of effective public involvement and outreach plans for all projects. The comprehensive Guide covers all aspects of public outreach from determining the scope of the plan through evaluating the effectiveness.

Effective methods and strategies on how to communicate with the targeted audience during construction are identified and explained in the Guide. These strategies include:

- Branding – Establishing a trademark for the project work zone campaign
- Mass Media – Radio, TV and newspapers
- Websites – Project information site – (can be continued from Design/NEPA phase)
- E-mail Alert – Direct contact with subscribers
- Printed Materials – Project brochures for distribution
- Project Information Phone Line/Highway Advisory Radio – Free calls to get updates
- Changeable Message Signs – On-site resources for drivers
- Public Meetings, Workshops, Community Events – Opportunities for project and work zone information for the public

- Project Information Center – On- or near-site accessible locations, possibly the project field office
- Videos – Readily available for widespread use
- Highway Operations Center

The importance of good public involvement and outreach in the construction phase cannot be over-emphasized. Not only does it ensure regulatory compliance, but it will provide for a safer and, potentially less congested work zone. It will also promote goodwill for the Department by keeping the public informed and involved during the critical, highly-visible construction stage of a project.

### Highway Operations and Operations Support

The operation and operation support for Connecticut's transportation system is a critical link between the Department and the public. These functions are evident on a daily basis with a direct link that the public, local officials, community groups, highway users, law enforcement personnel, and others can benefit from.

After project construction is completed, the operation and operation support phase begins. For nearly completed projects, there should be assurance that all environmental commitments and mitigation measures are in place. Information on those measures should be transferred to the Department's Highway Operations staff from the Project Construction Unit. No legal public involvement requirements are applicable during the operation and operational support phases, but methods for ongoing communication with the public and procedures for Department project follow-up should be established between highway operations and Project Construction Unit personnel.

Most of the public involvement in these phases will likely be in the form of written questions and/or complaints from the public-at-large. The best way to respond to these issues is to assure that the public is adequately and pro actively informed about a specific project or projects and that all communications are responded to promptly and effectively.



**Documentation addressing the following may be useful in the operations phase:**

- What were the public concerns during design?
- How were the concerns addressed in the project design?
- What permits and environmental considerations/mitigation were required and included in the project?
- What continued operations support might be required to ensure effective mitigation from the measures provided?

All of these questions can be answered by having access to the project documents and having discussions with the previously involved project design and construction unit personnel. Having accurate and thorough project information, along with continued sensitivity to public concerns throughout the operations and operational support phase will allow the Department to respond to public inquiries in a timely and efficient manner. Following these guidelines should minimize miscommunication or confusion by the public that may be impacted by a transportation project.

**The most important role of Highway Operations personnel is to maintain:**

- **Community involvement (i.e., events, participation with local civic groups)**
- **Community contacts (i.e., local officials, community groups, law enforcement agencies)**
- **Knowledge of local transportation projects and issues**

## **DOCUMENTATION**

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In order to ensure effective use of public involvement techniques and input, it is important to document all activity, participants, agreements and discussion points and make this information available to the public. The documentation must be complete and take place at the time of the public involvement activity (i.e., public hearing, transcript and sign-in) or shortly thereafter in an official file document. **It is critical to provide this documentation to indicate that the letter, intent and spirit of the referenced regulations are being followed.** Response to comments and other information received through the public involvement process should also be maintained in this record file. The public should be informed as to where to access documentation on a project-by-project basis.

Section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) discusses the need to document and disseminate all actions including public involvement.

**Documentation of public involvement is important. Documentation may include:**

- **Commitment Letter**
- **Sign-in sheets**
- **Hand-outs**
- **Comments**
- **Follow-up correspondence**
- **Acknowledgement of all correspondence**
- **Meeting minutes**
- **Fact sheets**
- **Environmental reports**

General guidelines for documenting public input include the following:

- Documentation of public involvement plans and/or tools/techniques.
- Sign-in documentation for all forums.
- Copies of handouts/information that was presented.
- Records/documentation of displays and/or exhibits used.
- Follow-up system for all public input/issues.
- Documentation of all comments received - discussion points, questions and oral and/or written responses.
- Acknowledgment and reply to all correspondence.
- Maintenance of project file for public involvement documentation.
- Summarization of major issues raised by the public, as collected from public involvement - this is especially important for larger complex and/or controversial projects.
- Indication of how issues raised were addressed and/or resolved.
- Documentation of distribution lists, public notices, and announcements, and media reports.

**Documentation of public involvement plans, techniques, results and resolution is essential for all projects and it is particularly critical if the project manager should change during the course of project development, or if a project becomes inactive and is re-started after a significant period of time.**

The timely and accurate documentation of public involvement efforts and results is essential. The documentation will confirm that the project advanced in accordance with legal requirements. It also provides a record of the response and/or resolution of public concerns. The documentation should clearly state the Department's response to major issues raised by the public so that the Department can be consistent in that response.

The public involvement documentation file should be established and kept up-to-date and should contain all the information noted above. The development and transfer of this project history will be critical to effectively utilizing public input during all aspects of project development, as well as during the subsequent construction, operation and operation support phases.

Should a project become inactive and is re-started after a significant period of time it is critical to review the specific outreach measures that were completed previously and determines whether steps should be repeated. This may be the case if political support has shifted, project purpose and need may differ, or simply a lengthy period of time has elapsed since the public last had the opportunity to learn about the project.

## **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION**

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Public Meetings conducted by the Department qualify as "special meetings". The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act states that a special meeting may be called up to 24 hours (excluding weekends, holidays, and days on which the Office of the Secretary of the State is closed) before the time set for the meeting. A special meeting is called by filing a notice stating the time, place and business to be transacted. Notification of meetings must be provided to the Secretary of the State including specific language pertaining to the availability of meeting minutes, attendance lists, and reports of meeting.

Freedom of Information provisions effect distribution of meeting agenda, agency minutes, record of votes and inspection of public records. Project managers are advised to consult statutes and designated FOI representatives within the Department.





# Chapter 3





# Chapter 3:

## Getting People Involved

### WHO ARE THE STAKEHOLDERS?

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Just who **IS** “the public” anyway? When we talk about “the public” we mean a very broad range of people who have an interest in the project. These people are often referred to as “**stakeholders**”.

Stakeholders may include:

- Federal officials
- Other state officials (e.g., DEP or SHPO)
- Local elected officials
- Town engineers/planners
- Regional officials
- Pre-existing special interest groups or advocacy groups (e.g., Sierra Club, Commuter Rail Council, etc.)
- Ad hoc groups created for a specific project
- Abutting or nearby property owners
- Civic associations
- Business or economic development interests
- ...and any other interested parties
- State Legislators and Congressional Delegation

“The public” is just another term for the project’s “stakeholders”—those having an interest (a stake) in a project’s outcome. Examples of stakeholders may include officials at all levels of government, special interest groups, local residents and local business interests, among others.

### WHY INPUT SHOULD BE ACTIVELY SOUGHT

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The level of interest in a project will sometimes be a function of how much impact the project will have. Some types of projects are clearly going to be controversial because they are complex and can affect many people. At other times, a project can have a history or “touch a nerve” among some members of a community, making it more controversial than it might otherwise have been. No matter what the project is, the public has a right to know about it and the opportunity to provide input and opinions. It is the responsibility of the Department’s project manager to ensure that this happens.

**It is the responsibility of the Department's project manager to ensure that the public has an opportunity to learn about the project and provide input.**

As noted in Chapter 1, public input is a legal requirement. More important, it is in the Department's best interests to identify the stakeholders and their concerns about a project so that those concerns can be addressed as early as possible in the project development process. If concerns are not adequately addressed early, they may later involve more extensive and costly efforts that would have been better undertaken during an earlier phase of the project. A brief legal notice about an upcoming meeting may cover the letter of the law for public notification but may not be sufficient to reach all stakeholders and invite them to participate.

**It is especially important to bring project opponents to the table.  
A range of input will only benefit the process and the project.**

It is especially important to bring project opponents to the table. The Department has nothing to fear from dissent and contrary opinions. A range of input will only benefit the process and the project. Eliminating input from opponents will only entrench opposition and cause more problems. It is better to be open to other opinions, even if you strongly disagree with them.

## **DIVERSITY IS IMPORTANT**

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Reaching out within affected communities is important for many reasons. The concept of "environmental justice" is intended to ensure that outreach includes communities that have been traditionally underserved (those who traditionally have had less of a voice in decision-making) and to ensure that a preponderance of impact does not accrue to minority population groups and low income communities or neighborhoods. Often, it is necessary to use different methods of outreach because of cultural differences or economic or physical hardship.

**Engaging in public involvement poorly is as bad, or worse, than not doing it at all.  
Neither approach serves the Department well and opens the door to criticism and controversy.**

Traditional methods of working with the public (e.g. evening meetings at public buildings, websites and newsletters) may not be effective for all groups. Many elderly people prefer meeting during the day because they don't feel safe leaving their homes after dark. Single parents may be faced with finding child care in order to attend a public meeting. Low income population groups often juggle two or more jobs and work evening shifts to make ends meet. To reach these populations consider the following outreach techniques and tips:

#### **TIPS for reaching out to traditionally underserved populations:**



- Go to where people are already meeting. Arrange to speak at senior citizen and community centers, school PTA meetings or community gatherings.
- When possible, hold public meetings on a public transit corridor so people who don't drive can have access.
- Consider having a community member assist at the sign-in table. They will be familiar with people and can help write the names and addresses of people with limited English language skills.
- Provide refreshments. It facilitates socializing.
- Ask schools' permission to have students bring home flyers to their parents.
- When requested, have sign language interpreters at meetings for the hearing impaired
- Make sure all printed material can be understood. This may mean printing in large type for the elderly population, translating into a second language and, as always, using simple language (avoiding technical jargon).

#### **Listening and Responding**

**Listening to the public does not necessarily mean that you need to do everything that various participants ask you to do. But you DO have a public obligation to listen and to consider the input and to make decisions based on the information presented and available to you. People don't mind so much if you don't take their advice, but they DO mind if you don't appear to hear, understand and consider their comments.**

## HOW DO I GO ABOUT DESIGNING AN OUTREACH PROGRAM?

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If you have been assigned as project manager for a project within the Department, public outreach is one of many details to address in the development of your work plan and project approach. The extent of your outreach program will depend on many factors. Below is a series of questions you may want to ask yourself in order to get started:

***What are my legal and regulatory requirements?***

This is key, of course. The funding and/or regulatory guidelines you are operating under for this project may have requirements for public hearings, public scoping meetings, etc. **It is your job as project manager to know the regulations.** It is important to note that the outreach spelled out in the guidelines may not be sufficient to satisfy the project's outreach needs. A public hearing may be specified, but your project may require much more in order to meet the informational and participation needs of the project's stakeholders. The project may be greatly improved by the input of other stakeholders, and some "down-the-road" controversy may be avoided by making sure that stakeholders are a) kept informed, b) given opportunities for input and c) listened to.

...the outreach spelled out in the guidelines may not be sufficient to really satisfy the projects's outreach needs...

***What type of project is it?***

Is your project small or large? Is it controversial? Does it affect protected resources (an historic bridge, a wetland, etc.)? Will property takings be required or can the project all happen within existing ROW?

***At what stage is the project?***

Is this a feasibility study where you're still trying to define the project? Or is it a final design where there will only be minor "tweaks" in the project design and you know exactly whose property will be impacted. Or is it somewhere in-between?

☑ ***What is the project history?***

Has this project been studied before? Was there a previous outcome that is being restudied? Does it have a controversial history? Are there stakeholders who were involved in the previous phase? Have there been previous commitments which the public may perceive as having been broken?

☑ ***What are you trying to accomplish at this phase of the project?***

- Project buy-in?
- Scoping of issues?
- Clarification about project purpose and need?
- Education about project impacts?
- Solicitation of local opinions and input?
- Exploration of possible alternatives?
- Dissemination of information?
- Advise public of decisions that have been made?
- Identification of additional stakeholders?
- All of the above?

☑ ***Was there a previous advisory committee or list of interested parties?***

Don't forget to include these parties when you're compiling a contact list for your project.

☑ ***What kind of information will the public need to see to enable them to provide meaningful input into the project?***

Make sure the material you prepare is clear and easy to read and that it gives adequate background and context.

☑ ***Is there a population with special communication needs?***

Will your project affect people who speak little or no English? Do you anticipate a need for interpreters for the hearing impaired?

☑ ***What are the anticipated project issues?***

- Environmental?
- Land use?
- Historic features?
- Ambience/quality of life?
- Access?
- Congestion?
- Economic development issues?
- Political pressures/issues?
- Alternative modes?
- Consistency with local plans?
- Property takings?

☑ ***How controversial is the project?***

While any project should be subject to public scrutiny, it is especially important to reach out to stakeholders when there is a significant amount of controversy. The opposition needs to be heard and understood. Perhaps there is more of a win-win solution than the one currently on the table.

☑ ***What are the political pressures or issues?***

Be aware of the political climate that surrounds your project. A project does not have to be controversial to be on the political radar screen. When public money is being spent, elected officials can be expected to keep a careful watch on what's happening in their district. Be certain to keep elected officials and their staff informed on key developments as well as invited to and recognized at public meetings. A project may become a lightning rod for a political campaign or special interest group. A transportation deficiency may be identified as a need to be addressed by elected officials. Regardless of the political climate, the Department's role is to carry out its duty as the state's transportation overseer in a professional way, while being sensitive to community context and values.

***What is my budget?***

This all important question will have a great effect on the program you design. But, a more important question is “What do I need to do to best serve the Department and best serve the public?” and the ***MOST*** important question is “How can I use the resources I have at my disposal to best serve the public and the Department?” Clearly, you will want to use the techniques that are most effective and efficient so that you can accomplish your objectives for the lowest possible cost. Should you have an Advisory Committee? Will you need to develop a project website? Informing and involving stakeholders early and continuously could save the Department considerable time, money and resources by avoiding having to back-track later on its efforts.

## **DECIDING WHO TO REACH OUT TO—A CHECKLIST OF POSSIBILITIES**

Many things (including all of the questions listed above) will affect who the stakeholders are and who you should reach out to on your project. The following check list may be used to help identify the list of possibilities:

- Federal representative(s) (FHWA, FTA, etc.)
- Other Department representatives (environmental planning, traffic, rights-of-way, etc.)
- Other State agencies (DEP, SHPO, etc.)
- Regional planning agencies/MPOs
- Local representatives (first selectmen, town planners, town engineers, etc)
- Local business groups/chambers of commerce
- Abutting residents and businesses
- Environmental groups
- Other advocacy groups (for alternative modes, etc.)
- Established local groups
- The general public
- Media representatives

## **DECIDING HOW TO REACH OUT - AN OUTREACH “TOOLBOX”**

This section explores communication tools including many that are summarized in Figure 3.1.

**FIGURE 3.1: COMMUNICATION/EDUCATION TOOLS  
(WAYS OF GIVING & RECEIVING INFORMATION)**

Tool	What it is	What it does	When it is used
Advertising	Placing a paid notice (legal or display ad) in a newspaper, magazine or billboard	Meets legal requirements for public notice	Ads are used to publish notices of public meetings and to control the content of the message
Hotlines	A toll free telephone number (this should always be answered by a "real person" if possible (not voicemail)	Allow the public to contact project staff, ask questions and make comments	This tool is generally used for long-term projects that may be controversial or cover a large geographical area
Kiosks, Interactive Displays	Computer-based information display	Engages attention of computer savvy people to learn about provide information on issues	Most effective at public venues such as malls, community fairs or public buildings, especially if an exhibit does not need staffing
Mailing Lists	Names of people interested in or affected by a project	Keeps a record of stakeholders so they can be informed or invited to meetings	Organizes communications about project status and notification of upcoming meetings
Media Strategies (See Chapter 6)	Informs stakeholders about a project - includes radio, TV, newspapers	Gets information out using existing channels of communication that are read, heard or seen by a wide population	Coverage in the media is best when it is timed around key project milestones and public meetings
Newsletters	A publication that gives information about the project and as well as status updates on a regular basis	Provides a reliable source of information for people to learn the latest news of a project	Used when projects extend at least 9 months or more, when a particular population is highly impacted or to communicate to a wide audience
Public Information Materials (brochures, fact sheets, etc.)	Printed information that educates people about a project or issue (may include brochures, posters, fact sheets, direct mailings, newspaper inserts, seat drops [rail/bus], etc.)	Describes a project, concern or process in understandable language, often using graphics	A popular communication tool for public meetings and community distribution
Public Opinion Surveys	A questionnaire distributed in person, by phone or electronically	Uncovers community attitudes and preferences	An effective method of gathering data especially during project development but can be used to understand community views at any time



Tool	What it is	What it does	When it is used
Simulations	Electronic, photographic or 3-dimensional display of information that shows a "before and after" representation or constructed project	Allows the public to view a rendering of a project (in context) before it is constructed	Especially useful in showing physical and operational impacts (before and after) of a project, particularly when project is controversial
Video	A recorded visual and oral message	Provides consistent message with visual images	These tools can enliven a public meeting and may be distributed to reach people who usually don't participate in meetings
Website	A location on the Internet with a unique address that provides information on a subject, person or organization, and can also be used effectively to obtain comments from the public and to post project results and reports	Provides 24-hour electronic access to information and a 24-hour opportunity to comment	Though becoming an increasingly common tool, websites are most effective in complex or controversial projects with large documents and citizen interest

It is important to use a variety of tools when reaching out so that you can feel confident that you have given stakeholders adequate opportunity to hear about the project and become involved. Deciding which tools to use for greatest effectiveness is a function of the needs of each project, community and context. This is often a collaborative process involving the Department's project manager, his or her supervisor, the consulting team, and perhaps a larger group within the Department, such as a steering committee.

**Use many tools!!**  
**Different people communicate in different ways.**

The important thing to remember is that many tools exist and that a variety of different tools should be used even if your budget is relatively small. The reason for using multiple tools is that different people process information in different ways. Some respond best to the spoken word, for example, while others prefer the written word. Some are happy to give their comments via a website, while others prefer to speak at a public meeting. An effective outreach program uses a variety of approaches.

When thinking about how to involve the public in your project, you will be

faced with a menu of many choices. How do you decide what tools to use? The remainder of this chapter and the next several chapters will explore the various types of tools and how to use them effectively, focusing on those which are used more frequently. Remember to consider the following when deciding which tools to use:

- Project scope, stage, budget and level of controversy
- Community composition, especially under-represented populations
- The need for variety and use of multiple tools
- The need for continuous opportunities for involvement as “once is not enough” for you to hear what people are saying or for you to communicate your message

The following subsections provide more detail about some of the most common and frequently used communication tools, such as: websites, newsletters, flyers, mailing lists, meeting handouts and advertisements.

## Websites

With the growth of the Internet, project websites are increasingly used in transportation projects. The internet has extraordinary advantages. It's a communication tool that is available both for disseminating information and receiving input every hour of every day, reaching people whenever they seek information. A website can store vast amounts of data – project reports, maps and graphics – that would be too impractical and expensive to copy. Websites can generate electronic mailing lists that are used to send notices of upcoming meetings, project updates or announcements. This kind of communication is instant and saves time and the cost of postage. Websites can also be interactive. People may write in comments and ask questions. Many projects use a website to gather comments for the public record. Samples of website home pages are included on page 41.

Project websites must be kept current with new information as it develops.

While a significant number of households in this country had computer access to the internet by the end of 2005, computer use among low income and elderly populations lags significantly. Therefore, other communication tools must

**Methuen Rotary Study**  
Route 119 - Route 112

Overview  
History  
Meetings  
Documents  
Contact Us

**EOT**  
MASSACHUSETTS EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF TRANSPORTATION

**MASS HIGHWAY**

**TRANSYSTEMS CORPORATION**

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation, in conducting a transportation parking study at Exit 46 on I-93 to Rotary and surrounding area in the City of Methuen. Transport development along Route 113 in Concord, which uses the rotary system, is also included as part of the study. The project includes short-term and long-term improvements for the study area.

Street below are three views - looking East, South and the Route 113/112 Rotary. Clicking a thumbnail image will open...

**VTrans**  
an Environmental Impact Study

Williston • Essex • Essex Junction

**NEW!** Review the presentation given at the March 8 Workshop "Future Population, Employment & Land Use"

**Welcome!**

The Vermont Agency of Transportation, in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration, is preparing an environmental impact statement on transportation improvements from Interstate I-89 to Williston, Essex and Essex Junction. The study will take a fresh look at all issues and options, including the southern portion of the previously proposed Chittenden County Circumferential Highway.

This website provides information about the study and ways for the public to get involved and submit comments.

About the Study | What is an EIS? | Public Involvement | Documents/Links | Latest Developments | Contacts | Submit Comments

**Connecticut Statewide Rest Area and Service Plaza Study**  
a Connecticut Department of Transportation Website

Name  
What's New  
Public Involvement  
Photo Gallery  
Documents  
FAQs  
Contact Us  
Related Links

**WELCOME!**

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is undertaking a study on Connecticut's rest areas and service plazas. The study, which started Summer 2005 and is expected to wrap up near the end of 2006, will evaluate the state's overall needs, requirements, and options for rest areas and service plazas and will also evaluate the needs of each individual existing and will also evaluate the needs of each individual existing and will also recommend specific facility.

This website will provide information about the study, including learning more or by submitting comments throughout the opportunities for public comment on the study.

For more information about the Purpose and Need (POP) see other pages of this website.

NOTE: This site contains PDF files, which can be opened from Adobe Systems.

**New York State**  
Lower Manhattan Redevelopment

**Route 9A Project**  
Lower Manhattan Redevelopment

What's New | About | Plans | Documents | Contact Us | Home

**WELCOME.** Since September 11, 2001, Lower Manhattan Redevelopment has become an important system representing the vitality, administration, and hope of the City of New York. Route 9A is part of an overall plan that would provide a dignified setting for the World Trade Center Memorial and enhance and reinvigorate Lower Manhattan. Expect this Web site to learn about plans to reconstruct these life and current construction, the project background, goals, and opportunities for staying informed. Thank you for visiting.

**View the Displays of the Route 9A OPEN HOUSE**  
of November 29th, 2005

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Last Update: 10/27/05 10:10:00

supplement a project website, especially in communities where computer use is less prevalent.

Websites are particularly useful in geographically large or complex projects, controversial projects, and projects that extend 12 months or longer.

In projects where a website is used, the project manager should take an active role in identifying the kinds of information that should be available on the website. While each project website will have its own “look” depending on what and where the project is, most websites should have:

- ☑ Description of the project and issues
- ☑ Project schedule
- ☑ Information on public meetings
- ☑ Contact information
- ☑ Related documents and project deliverables
- ☑ A way to submit comments

Photos of people from public meetings, scenes from the project area, maps and other graphics make a site visually rich. However, no amount of artistry can entice repeat visits to the website if people cannot get the information they are seeking because the site is not kept up to date. And, if questions or comments are encouraged, they must be responded to.

#### **TIPS for creating a website people will visit:**



- Strive for an easy to use site, with good navigation.
- Use a simple website address.
- Avoid clutter on the home page.
- Write simply. Technical jargon and long paragraphs will put off your audience.
- Make the site visually interesting. A picture is worth a thousand hits!

## Newsletters

Newsletters are an effective communication tool for disseminating information on projects because they are generally written for and distributed to a targeted audience – the audience you most want to reach (see sample, page 44).

**Newsletters are a great way to reach a targeted audience and provide targeted information.**

A newsletter has other advantages.

- A newsletter will prioritize and synthesize information.
- It highlights key messages you want to get across to the public in a single document that can be easily scanned by the reader. In contrast, it would take several clicks navigating to the correct areas of a website to find the same information that is presented in an orderly fashion in a newsletter.
- A newsletter communicates project updates at regular intervals, bi-monthly, quarterly or tied to key project milestones.
- It provides visible, on-going communication with the public throughout the life of a project. With each successive publication its banner and layout become recognized, creating an identity (or “brand”) for the project.
- Newsletters are responsive to people’s schedules and reading habits. Often they are set aside to be read when time permits.
- Newsletters “travel” well. They can be passed on to others or placed in a file for reference at a later date.
- Newsletters can be handed out at public meetings, providing some ready-made information to attendees.

### **TIPS on developing a newsletter people will read:**

- Write in short sentences and paragraphs so stories can be easily scanned by the reader.
- Avoid technical words or acronyms commonly used by planners and engineers.
- Make maximum use of photos and graphics.
- Text boxes and pull-out quotes should be used to break up blocks of dense text.
- Use color and shading to add visual interest.





# Connecticut & Statewide Rest Area & Service Plaza Study

Volume 1, Number 2  
December 2007

## Creating a Vision for Connecticut's Rest Areas and Service Plazas

**I**F WE COULD WAVE OUR MAGIC WAND and look into the future, what would the ideal rest area or service plaza look like? What services would it provide?

These questions were posed to the members of the study's Steering and Advisory Committees in brainstorming sessions to help create a vision of the state's future traveler facilities.

### Draft Vision Statement

*To become a leader in the provision of services to travelers at our highway service plazas and rest areas by improving quality and image, enhancing tourist offerings, increasing safety, ensuring adequate coverage and capacity on all corridors, and providing improved and additional services and amenities, which will benefit the state's economy and minimize community and environmental impacts.*

The brainstorming sessions resulted in ideas ranging from design and image improvements to very specific technology suggestions. The following is just a **very small sample** of ideas that the committees will assess and rank in the coming months to identify which objectives are **most important** to the Steering and Advisory Committees:

- Improved quality and image,
- Design that reflects local character,
- Welcome Centers staffed by knowledgeable representatives,
- More tourism emphasis,
- Better food variety,
- Cleaner, safer facilities,
- Picnic areas,
- Wireless internet connections, and
- Truck "plug-ins" to reduce idling.

The draft vision will be refined in the coming months to incorporate further

input from committee members. The final vision statement will provide the framework for the study team's work and for the State's decisions regarding the future of Connecticut's traveler facilities.

## Many Working Toward Study Success

### Steering Committee in Place

A Steering Committee, comprised of ConnDOT staff, is working closely with the project team on this study of Connecticut's rest areas and service plazas. The Steering Committee provides input and reviews findings. Steering Committee meetings will be held monthly throughout the study.

### AC Meeting Held in November

The study's Advisory Committee (AC), representing regional agencies, municipalities, and stakeholder groups, met for the second time in November. The AC meeting agenda included the traffic count program, user survey, and a visioning exercise (see related stories in this newsletter).

The AC was formed to provide input and guidance to the study team from a broad range of stakeholder groups.

Five more Advisory Committee meetings will be held during the course of the study.

### Focus Groups Meeting Soon!

Focus group meetings will be held during the winter to provide specific and targeted input to the study. The topics that these focus groups will tackle will include trucking interests and tourism opportunities. Trucking and tourism industry representatives will be invited to participate. Three focus groups are planned.



Visioning Session at November Advisory Committee Meeting

A newsletter format can vary greatly. It can be a simple one-page, two-sided edition or expand in multiples of two to up to eight pages or more.

Stories tend to be short in length and text boxes are commonly used for emphasis or graphical interest. But longer articles and interviews can fit in well, particularly if the newsletter has multiple pages. Graphics, such as photos and charts, the use of color shading and concise headlines that convey the meaning of a story are features that will make the newsletter much more interesting to read.

With the rise of the internet, many agencies offer newsletters in electronic format either as a stand-alone tool or additionally to a printed newsletter. This is a cost-effective method of communicating project news, as e-newsletters save both time and postage. A sample newsletter is included on page 44.

## Flyers

Flyers are inexpensive to print as they typically use letter size (8 ½ x 11 inch) paper. Whether or not you print copy on two sides depends on how you plan to distribute the flyer. If you expect many of the flyers will be posted on bulletin boards, then all the text has to be on one side. If the flyer is going to be mailed in an envelope or tri-fold mailed, handed out at schools or libraries, or delivered door-to-door, then there may be printing on both sides of the page. Sample flyers are included on pages 46 through 47.

**Flyers are a good way to get information to a target population group such as affected property owners, seniors or families with school-age children. Generally flyers are used to communicate a simple message like the notification of an upcoming public meeting.**

Every flyer should use graphics (logos, clip art, symbols) and multiple size fonts to grab attention and highlight the most important information. For example, the date and time of a meeting should be featured in large, bold letters, while the name of a contact person for more information can be in a much smaller font.

The low cost of producing flyers encourages wide distribution. Stacks can be left at community and senior centers, city halls and libraries or sent home in students' backpacks. However, leaving flyers at a public place

**COMMUNITY WORKSHOP**

**SATURDAY, MARCH 27**  
*9:30 a.m. to 12 noon*

**HELP SHAPE THE  
 FUTURE OF YOUR  
 NEIGHBORHOOD!**

The Route 72 Corridor Study Advisory Committee and the City of Bristol invite you to a community workshop to share your ideas. What kind of development should be built along the "old" and "new" Bristol/Plainville line and how should it be built? Don't miss this opportunity to plan the future!

**Manross Room, Manross  
 260 Central Street**

Refreshments will be available.

For more information on the workshop call Alan L. Wei at 860-389-2222.  
 For more information about the study, [www.ci.bristol.ct.us](http://www.ci.bristol.ct.us)

**You are invited!**

**Circ-Williston Public Design Workshops**

**WHAT:** Three Public Design Workshops to be held February 7, 8, and 9, 2006.

**WHY:** To provide input needed to develop the Circ-Williston Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) short-listed alternatives.

*The workshops are not intended to compare alternatives but rather to help make the design of each alternative as good as it can be.*

**HOW:** These are hands-on workshops with people working in groups to explore issues and provide specific input into the design of the alternatives to be analyzed in the EIS.

For example:

- ☞ How can each alternative be designed for the best fit with its surroundings - to homes, businesses, neighborhood access, emergency services, historic buildings, schools, parks, wildlife habitat, etc.?
- ☞ How can each alternative best integrate with existing and planned pedestrian and bicycle facilities?
- ☞ What are the opportunities and constraints for travel demand management and public transportation in the project area, relative to each alternative?

**WHEN and WHERE:**

Each workshop covers a separate part of the project area (i.e., each area will be covered at only one workshop):

Topic	Date	Meeting Location
Route 2A in Williston	Tuesday, February 7 6:30 PM to 9:00 PM	Williston Town Hall 7900 Williston Rd.
Five Corners and Route 2A (Park Street) in Essex Junction	Wednesday, February 8 6:30 PM to 9:00 PM	Essex High School Cafeteria 21 Lincolnwood Dr.
Circ A/B corridor (from I-89 to Route 289, on an alignment between Bennett Woods and Southridge)	Thursday, February 9 6:30 PM to 9:00 PM	Williston Town Hall 7900 Williston Rd.

*Note: Because the workshops will look at each area in detail, there will not be much overlap between what is covered on each night.*

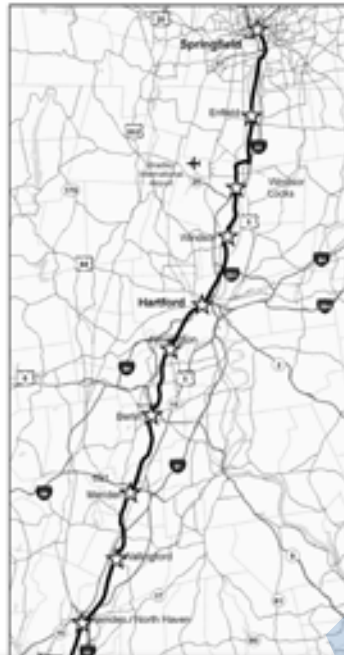
The facilities are ADA accessible. Call Jim Pardy at 800-735-8999 x.335 for assistance. We hope to see you there!







# New Haven - Hartford - Springfield Commuter Rail Implementation Plan



**Would you like to be able to take the train along the I-91 corridor to work?**

The Connecticut Department of Transportation is evaluating the possible implementation of commuter rail service between New Haven, Hartford and Springfield. Please come to give your comments on the recommended action and station plans being considered.

**Your Ideas are Important!  
Attend a Public Open House Session!**

- **November 3, 2004** - North Haven Recreation Center, 7 Linsley Street
- **November 9, 2004** - Windsor Locks Town Offices, 50 Church Street
- **November 10, 2004** - Berlin Town Hall, 240 Kensington Road
- **November 16, 2004** - Wallingford Town Hall, 45 South Main Street
- **November 17, 2004** - Enfield Town Hall, 820 Enfield Street

**7:00 to 9:00 P.M.**  
Open House with informal discussion

### Second Avenue Subway

The Second Avenue Subway would reduce overcrowding and delays on the Lexington Avenue Line and improve subway access for residents and workers of the far East Side of Manhattan. The railway would include:

- 8.5 miles of new tunnel running generally under Second Avenue from 125<sup>th</sup> Street to the Financial District
- 18 new stations, fully compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- A track connection to the existing 63<sup>rd</sup> Street and Broadway Lines, providing direct service from the Upper East Side to West Midtown via the Broadway express tracks
- Transfers to existing subway lines
- An intermodal terminal at 125<sup>th</sup> Street with transfers to the Lexington Avenue Line and Metro-North Railroad

### Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), in cooperation with MTA New York City Transit, recently completed a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) for the full-length Second Avenue Subway. The SDEIS describes the need, route, and proposed construction methods and activities for the full-length Second Avenue Subway. The SDEIS also analyzes potential impacts associated with the construction and operation of the Second Avenue Line, and identifies mitigation measures to reduce impacts. Issues discussed include:

- Transit Service and Ridership
- Vehicular Traffic
- Parking
- Pedestrian Access
- Social and Economic Conditions
- Displacement and Relocation
- Public Open Space
- Historic Resources
- Archaeological Resources

### Second Avenue Subway

Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Public Hearings  
February XX, 2003 and February XX, 2003

Spanish Text Here  
Environmental Impact Statement

Public Hearings  
February XX, 2003 and February XX, 2003

For a Chinese Version of this Brochure:  
Call 718-695-6164

New York City Transit

does not mean that people will pick them up. If you have a targeted population you need to reach such as nearby property owners, the flyer should be either mailed or arrangements made for door-to-door delivery through a distribution service.

Flyers are an attractive option when a project manager wants to notify people informally, rather than by letter on official agency stationary. They are also a way to reach members of the public who are not currently on the mailing list.

### TIPS on flyer design:



- Use brightly colored paper
- Graphics and varying the size of letters make the flyer more attractive and eye catching
- Use as few words as possible to get your point across
- Make sure you cover the five W's at a minimum - who, what, when, where and why

## Mailing Lists

It is critical to develop a mailing list at the outset of a project and update it continuously as the project progresses. The list may be used for mailings to announce project developments to affected groups, notify people about meetings, or report on project results or recommendations.

While there may be different sources of names for a mailing list, keeping the information together in one location by category will save you headaches later on. You will want to be able to distinguish who is an elected official, who is an affected property owner, or who is a community activist. It's beneficial to store names and addresses electronically so mailing labels can be easily generated.

When developing a mailing list the first thing you should ask is:  
Who needs to know about the project?

Generally the people on a mailing list are those who have a special interest or responsibility in the area where you will be conducting a study or project. There are many resources available to help you develop a list. If you are unfamiliar with the area or community, you may want to begin with the

Connecticut State Register and Manual, popularly known as the “Blue Book”. This directory is published by the Secretary of State’s Office and is available on-line. In it you will find the names of all state and local elected officials, associations of local officials, information on regional planning agencies, councils of governments, school districts, transit districts and water authorities, historical societies, public libraries, and media contact information.

To obtain the names and address of property owners in a local municipality, check with the assessor’s office. Property records are increasingly available on-line, easily allowing transfer of data onto mailing labels. Purchasing mailing lists from companies who maintain lists can be expensive and often the addresses are several years out-of-date. This is especially true in cities where people are more likely to be transient, moving often among apartments.

A more expensive option for direct mailings to individuals in a geographical area is to contract with a mailing house to send a mailing for you. Also, most daily newspapers will deliver a circular to all homes within a geographical area even if a household does not subscribe to the paper.

If you want to identify people with a special interest or need, there are many social and civic groups that can help. Senior citizen centers, chambers of commerce, charitable organizations, parent-teacher associations and neighborhood and homeowners associations are examples of groups that may have membership lists they would be willing to share.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, be sure to add the names of interested people to the mailing list as they become known. This would include people who call in on a hot-line, people who attend public meetings, or people who ask to be added to the mailing list through project website comment forms.

#### **TIPS for maintaining an accurate mailing list:**

- Be careful about misspellings; use correct titles and salutations.
- Check for duplicate addresses.
- Update the list regularly; removing names when mail is returned (after first investigating to ensure information was correct) and adding people who have shown interest in the project.
- Categorize the names for ease in selecting for various purposes (e.g. elected officials).



## Fact Sheets, Brochures, FAQs

A fact sheet that simply explains the purpose of a project in layperson language is an effective communication aide, especially at public meetings or on a project website. Having a fact sheet available at a public meeting has several advantages:

- If people can read about a project or plan at the beginning of a meeting they are likely to process more of the information given in a presentation and perhaps need to ask fewer questions.
- For late arrivals, a fact sheet will allow them to better understand the purpose of a project.
- Some people are better able to process information by reading than by listening. A fact sheet better accommodates people who learn this way.
- Because a fact sheet is taken home from a public meeting, it both reinforces what was said and can be passed on to someone who was unable to attend.

Generally, a fact sheet should be no more than one letter-size page, double sided. But it can be longer if the scope or complexity of a project simply can't fit. Creating a fact sheet does not require artistic skills, specialized software or costly printing for it to be effective. All that's needed is clear writing of the facts that people can understand and an office copy machine. Sample fact sheets, meeting handouts and brochures are included on pages 51 through 54.

Like most communication tools, a fact sheet should answer the five W's – who, what, where, when and why. Information should be presented in visually distinct sections headed by a bold title such as “**why the study is needed,**” “**study area,**” “**when will the study be completed,**” etc. If available, it is good to use a map to show a project area. It is often effective to present these areas in question form (e.g., Why is this study needed? What is the study area? etc.)

Like most communication tools, a fact sheet should answer the five W's— who, what, when, where and why.

Some fact sheets are best presented as “Frequently Asked Questions” (FAQs). This allows the Department to answer some of the most common questions

### I-87 MULTIMODAL CORRIDOR STUDY FACT SHEET # 1

#### Scope of Work Flow Chart

```

graph TD
    A[Confirm Study Goals and Objectives] --> B[Establish existing conditions]
    B --> C[Identify and screen alternatives]
    C --> D[Analyze selected alternatives]
    D --> E[Recommend actions]
    
```

#### STUDY APPROACH

The Study is divided into two phases. The first involves an inventory of existing transportation system conditions, migration of the findings from the "New York in the New World Economy" report, and identification of key corridor issues and emerging opportunities. The second phase will involve the prioritization of initiatives based on global economic potential, feasibility, and the ability to meet the goals and objectives. Project scoping will also be performed during the second phase to develop a list of improvements that will facilitate the implementation of initiatives.

Goals and Objectives have been developed at the outset of this study to guide the development and assessment of corridor initiatives. Performance measures are being developed to objectively measure the extent to which each proposed initiative satisfies these goals and objectives. This helps analyze the strengths and weaknesses of each initiative and identify the most appropriate ones to recommend for further analysis.

Public outreach will be a very important element of the study and will be approached on two levels. A Study Advisory Group (SAG) comprised of State, Quebec and local agencies, U.S. and Canadian inspection agencies, representatives from various trade groups and local chambers of commerce and economic development agencies and other key groups was formed. The SAG will meet with the consultant and the Department of Transportation throughout the course of the study to comment on the findings of the study, assist in obtaining information and suggest transportation improvements in the corridor. The general public will be able to follow the study and offer comments through the interactive website.

Visit <http://www.i87multimodalstudy.org>

#### Study Schedule

The study is on a fast-track schedule. There will be a preliminary list of study issues held at key stages of the study.

	Jan-03	Apr-03	Jun-03	Aug-03
Goals & Objectives	★			
Existing Conditions		★		
Issues/Opportunities			★	
Identify Alternatives				★
Screen Alternatives				
Detailed Evaluation				
Recommendations				

Public Meeting Study Advisory Group

### I-87 MULTIMODAL CORRIDOR STUDY FACT SHEET # 1

www.i87multimodalstudy.org March 2003

#### Important Dates:

Study Advisory Group Meetings  
March 28th @ 10:00 am

#### Study Goals:

- Improve mobility and goods movement.
- Promote economic development.
- Ensure safety and security.
- Coordinate with other studies.
- Promote opportunities for Federal funding.

#### Current Study Activities:

Initial study activities have included creation of a public outreach plan, Geographic Information System (GIS) database, data collection plan, a draft set of goals and objectives, and screening criteria. A broader meeting list of stakeholders is also being developed.

#### For more information contact:

Flowers Rashad, P.E.  
New York State Department of Transportation  
Planning Management Section

NEW YORK STATE  
DEPARTMENT OF  
TRANSPORTATION  
NY 10013-0011122

#### STUDY PURPOSE

The I-87/Autoroute 55 corridor provides a direct international connection between the largest metropolitan area in the United States (New York City) and the second largest metropolitan area in Canada (Montreal) through the LaCrosse/Champlain border crossing. The corridor, through its connections to crossing highways and to other modes, serves a broad area that includes the Mid-Atlantic coast, New England and Eastern Canada representing a total population of approximately 85 million people.

Growth in trade and tourism has placed increased demands on this vital corridor. Between 1996 and 1999, truck traffic at the US-Canada border crossing increased 40%. In 1999, the I-87/Champlain border crossing handled over 800,000 trucks carrying \$14 billion worth of goods, making it the 8th busiest US-Canada border crossing. In addition, nearby rail border crossings carried nearly \$2 billion value of freight in 2000. The growth in traffic during this period and new security concerns have led to slower processing of vehicles at the border, resulting in extended delays which have presented problems for continued economic growth and security.

In order to address the growth and realize the potential of the corridor and region, a comprehensive study has been initiated by the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) to identify and assess issues and opportunities to improve transportation services for all users of the corridor. The I-87 Multimodal Corridor Study ("the Study") will integrate with the findings of the recently completed "New York in the New World Economy" report. This NYSDOT-sponsored report prepared by the University Transportation Research Center, examines the impact that urbanization, economic activity, geography, and transportation constraints have had on the I-87 corridor. The report discusses transportation issues and opportunities, and examines connections the corridor provides, both locally and globally. The Study will

analyze recommended transportation initiatives and rank them in terms of their ability to enable New York State to respond to changing economic forces and trends.

NYS DOT is designing a landscaped promenade ("Promenade South") in the southern portion of Route 9A (West Street) between West Thames Street and Battery Place. The Promenade South will increase green space & help to make nearby park and neighborhood destinations more accessible to pedestrians. By incorporating urban design features and pedestrian amenities, the Promenade will strengthen east-west and north-south connections and will "enliven" the pedestrian experience.



## promenade south project features

- The sidewalks along the eastern side of Route 9A will be widened where possible to improve accessibility, accommodate street trees, and add other aesthetic enhancements.
- On the western side of Route 9A, adjacent to Battery Park City, a series of unique urban spaces are envisioned and are being developed for varied uses by community members and visitors alike.
- Newly detailed aesthetic pavement will be installed along both sides of Route 9A.
- The edge of the Battery Park Underpass will be extended about 60 feet northward, improving pedestrian access across Route 9A at Battery Place.
- A new street facade will enhance the Battery Park Underpass approach walk.
- Aesthetic stone barriers will be installed along the roadway.
- Battery Place will be reconfigured to improve the fringe of Battery Park.
- The bikeway will be continued into Battery Park.
- A new plaza will be constructed at the corner of Battery Place and Route 9A.
- A new U-turn at Battery Place would improve safety and vehicular access.

The Promenade South is consistent with the 1994 EIS preferred alternative and is compatible with all project alternatives being considered and analyzed in the Route 9A Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement. For more information, please visit the project web site at [www.route9a.info](http://www.route9a.info).

Address: Route 9A Lower Manhattan Redevelopment Project  
21 South End Avenue, New York, NY 10226  
Telephone: 212-312-8917  
E-mail: [route9a@dot.state.ny.us](mailto:route9a@dot.state.ny.us)



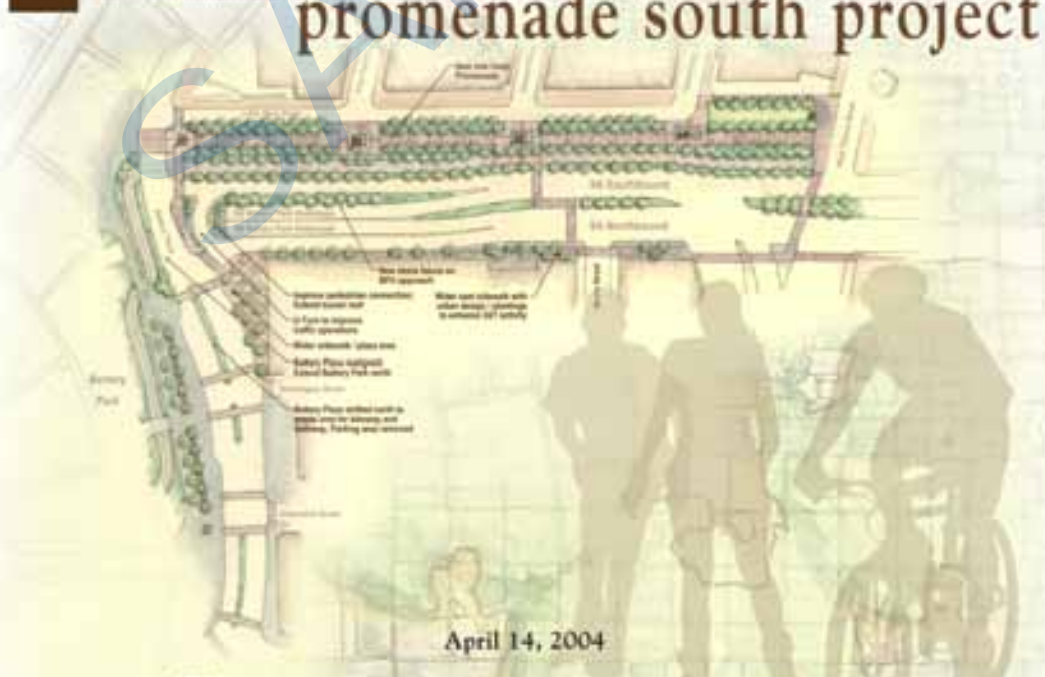
STATE OF NEW YORK  
George E. Pataki  
Governor

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
Joseph W. Roustan  
Deputy Commissioner




**Route 9A Project**  
Lower Manhattan Redevelopment

# promenade south project




April 14, 2004



STATE OF NEW YORK  
George E. Pataki  
Governor

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
Joseph W. Roustan  
Deputy Commissioner



### Meet the Staff

Welcomes	Jill Barrett
Orientation	Jan Purdy
	Laura Stegmaier
	Ruth Pennington, VTtrans
	Laura Dwyer, FHWA
Transportation Issues	Mika Skordoulis
	Tony Pender
	Bill Knight, CCMPD
	Paul Clavin, CCMPD
	Susan Broderick, CCMPD
Transportation Alternatives	John Gaudin, VTtrans
	Jim McManus
	Karl Fyke
	Karl Rotta, VTtrans
Land Use	Larry Pousady
	Ryan Proulx
	Al Riccardi
	Peter Keating, CCMPD
	Nelson Mulligan, VTtrans
Communities and Environment	Jeffie Watson
	Greg Wood
	Steve Simpson, VTtrans
Public Comment and Project Website	Ma Dhu
	Christina Reed
Also Participating	Christina Parola, CCMPD
	Greg Swann, CCMPD
	Julie Porter, CCMPD
	Mark Petros, FHWA
	Ruth Stearns, FHWA
	Barbara Eyles, VTtrans
	Paul McMurry, VTtrans

### Map of Public Meeting Information Tables

### Welcome to the OPEN HOUSE

**We Are Listening**

The Circumvention Project is in the Scoping Phase. Scoping is an open process involving the public, communities, concerned organizations, and state and federal agencies. Its purpose is to identify the major and important issues that should be considered in a project's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), including current and future transportation problems. Scoping also identifies possible options for addressing transportation problems, which should be studied.

All input received at the information tables will be received and considered in the scoping phase. We also invite you to submit your written comments on the Scope for the EIS.

- Formal Comments should be about the EIS, what it should study, and how.
- Comments may be of any length.
- You must identify yourself and state of residence.
- Comments must be received by April 7 to be included and responded to in the Scoping Memorandum.

You may submit your comments in three ways:

1. By hand at the Open House.
2. Through the project website [www.vttrans.org](http://www.vttrans.org)
3. By mail to the VTtrans Project Manager:

Richard J. Renallo, P.E.  
Project Manager  
30 Kinkaid Avenue, Suite 300N  
South Burlington, VT 05403-8800

After Scoping, there will be continuing opportunities for public involvement throughout the EIS process.

### Welcome!

We are pleased you are here. The Open House has been organized to explain how an Environmental Impact Statement is being done for the Circumvention area, listen for your concerns and ideas and answer your questions.

The purpose of the Circumvention project is to provide transportation improvements between US9 and Station, Essex, and Essex Junction. The project is not linked to the previous design for the Circumvention Highway in this area.

Tonight's Open House has five information tables where you can learn about the project and share your ideas. Each table has a different topic and you can visit tables in any order. We suggest you begin at the table with the least amount of people.

Each table will be staffed by the Vermont Agency of Transportation and the consultant team. The Federal Highway Administration, Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization, and Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission will also be represented.

Open House hours are 8:30 to 9 P.M. A guest presentation is scheduled for 7 and 9 P.M.

### PROMENADE & URBAN DESIGN

Introduction: This plan shows a series of urban design concepts for the project area. The plan includes a grid of streets and a series of promenade spaces that will provide a high-quality pedestrian environment. The plan also shows a series of public spaces and a series of public art installations.

#### Grid

The grid is a series of streets that will provide a high-quality pedestrian environment. The grid includes a series of streets that will provide a high-quality pedestrian environment.

#### Public Spaces

The public spaces are a series of public spaces that will provide a high-quality pedestrian environment. The public spaces include a series of public spaces that will provide a high-quality pedestrian environment.

### ROUTE 9A PROJECT LOWER MANHATTAN REDEVELOPMENT

#### Project Information

##### Introduction

The purpose of the Route 9A Project is to provide a high-quality pedestrian environment. The project includes a series of public spaces and a series of public art installations.

#### Public Involvement

The purpose of the public involvement process is to provide a high-quality pedestrian environment. The public involvement process includes a series of public spaces and a series of public art installations.

#### How to Contact Us

The purpose of the contact information is to provide a high-quality pedestrian environment. The contact information includes a series of public spaces and a series of public art installations.

**www.newhallinfo.org**

Getting access to the web is easier than ever. Almost public libraries offer free computer use to surf the web. The only hardware needed is a computer and modem, an Internet Service Provider (such as AOL, ISP, or Earthlink) provides the communication away from the computer to other computers, and some software, such as a browser. The image shown below is the main page for main page of the Newhall Information website. The image was captured on Internet Explorer, probably the world's most widespread browser. However, the site can be opened in all browsers, including Netscape, AOL, Opera, Firefox, and Internet Explorer, and many others. The HTML code which generated the page will adjust correctly on other versions of these browsers to fit back at a print size.

**Address**  
Type the address into the address bar area. Generally you do not have to type "www" first. The complete address for the Newhall site is www.newhallinfo.org.

**Navigation**  
Navigating to other pages is easily accomplished by a single click of your mouse on the buttons positioned here, or by clicking the underlined links here.

**Link to different site**  
Documents were converted into an electronic format called PDF - "Portable Document File". The program needed to view the documents is **Free**, and can be downloaded from Adobe.com. Clicking the link opens a page on the Adobe website.

**Printing a Web Page**  
A web page may be printed by clicking on the "File" menu in your browser, and then clicking the "Print" button. Other options will follow, depending upon your printer, but generally you simply want the "OK" and "Print" buttons.

**FlashPeek Environment**  
FlashPeek Environment is a method of displaying text and images within Internet Explorer. And it's free!

**Let your eyes**  
Don't squint, even in using the ZOOM tool.

**Use the ZOOM tool**  
Don't squint, even in using the ZOOM tool. If the map has been zoomed in, it will be a bit blurry. Zooming out will help you see the larger map. The larger the file size, and the longer it takes to download onto your computer. With a default system control, it's better to let it...

**how to access and use**  
**www.newhallinfo.org**

► a brief overview of how to access the website, how to navigate the website, and how to print a document from the website.

**The "Vision" for Scenic Route 154**

**What makes Route 154 Scenic?**

**What is a Corridor Management Plan?**

**Make Haddam Happen**

**Get Involved!**

Thursday, May 30, 2002  
7:00 - 9:00 PM  
Haddam Firehouse  
439 Saybrook Road, Higganum

**Scenic Roads**  
A Corridor Management Plan

**Route 154, Haddam**

**Come to a public workshop on May 30<sup>th</sup> for this project!**  
(See back for details.)



in a way that is easy to understand and helps the reader to learn more about the project and the process that was used to develop the project.

A brochure requires more attention to design than a fact sheet. Brochures generally use graphics and limited text to convey a message. Today, brochure templates are available and can be created relatively easily.

### Advertisements

There are two types of paid advertisements that can be used to notify the public of a meeting or make an announcement to the public: legal ads and display ads. Legal ads are required in certain situations, such as prior to public hearings. Failure to give adequate notice could put a project in jeopardy! Display ads are discretionary. It's up to the Department to decide if it wants to purchase advertising in local newspapers.

It is **imperative** that all project managers check the public notice requirements at the beginning of their project. Notice requirements will vary according to funding sources and federal or state policy.

**Legal ad:** Careful attention must be paid to what should be in the ad and at what point(s) during this project it should be run. Many situations require a minimum of 15 days public notice. Some projects require notice at multiple points in the process. **As the Department's project manager, you will need to know the requirements for legal notification for the particular stages of your project.** For example, federal or state policy may require a legal ad to be placed in the paper of record for an area. The paper of record is generally the largest daily newspaper in the region. For Environmental Impact Statements, legal notice must also be placed in the *Environmental Monitor*. Legal notice may also need to appear in the *Federal Register* at the outset of a project.

Failure to give adequate notice in a legal ad could put a project in jeopardy.

A legal ad will have to contain certain information. Typically a legal ad will announce who is sponsoring a meeting, its purpose, time and location, where information on a project can be obtained and the name, address

and phone number of a contact person. Unlike a display ad, the legal ad text explaining a project can be lengthy.

While placing a legal ad in the newspaper satisfies public notice requirements, they are not widely read. The type is extremely small, the language is often technical, and the ad is often buried on the page. A display ad will provide better exposure. It can be sized as big as your budget will allow and can be designed to catch readers' attention.

**Display ad:** A display ad should have the “who, what, where, when and why” elements of a program in type that is larger than the remainder of the ad. But the ad should have more than words. Use a project logo if you have one as well as the Department logo, if permitted. Sometimes a project map can be used effectively to both grab attention and visually identify the project location. Every ad should have a contact name and phone number for more information. Text in a display ad should be just enough to give the vital information yet leave “white space” or blank areas to make the ad easier to read. A display ad in itself is not adequate for public notice of meetings. Unlike other areas of “free” advertisement in newspaper such as news stories and listing in community calendars, you are guaranteed placement in the paper at the time of your choice. But you should always strive to get coverage through the news desk or get into the calendar or event listing.

The cost of advertising may determine what newspapers should carry your ad and how large an ad you should buy. The rates charged by the larger, daily papers are vastly more than the smaller weekly papers. In some parts of Connecticut, circulation of daily newspapers is weak, especially in urban areas. There are also areas of Connecticut that aren't oriented towards any one particular city, so residents subscribe to different daily newspapers.

Sample legal and display ads are shown on page 57.

# Circ-Williston



## Public Forums

The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) will hold three public forums to discuss Alternatives Screening for the Circ-Williston Environmental Impact Statement. The study team is seeking public comment on the process of screening a long list of alternatives to choose a short list for further study. *All members of the public are encouraged to attend.*

June 28 Essex Junction	June 29 South Burlington	June 30 Richmond
Champlain Valley Expo, Gate B, 105 Pearl Street	South Burlington High School, 550 Dorset Street	

**6:30 pm – 8:30 pm, with presentation at 6:30 pm and group discussion at 6:50, and**

*Facilities are ADA accessible. Call Jim Purdy at 1-800-735-8999. For more information: [www.vtrans.gov](http://www.vtrans.gov)*

**LEGAL NOTICE**  
Interstate 84 Corridor TIA  
Public Informational Meeting

**Who** → The Interstate 84 Transportation Investment Area (I-84 TIA) will be holding a public informational meeting September 10, 2002, to present the I-84 TIA's draft twenty-year strategic plan. The meeting will be held in the Community Room of the Maione School located at 233 South Elm St., Waterbury. The meeting will begin with a brief presentation at 6:30 P.M., followed by an opportunity for public comment & questions. The plan identifies strategies to enhance transportation, economic development, & quality of life in the I-84 TIA, which extends as far south as Shelton and north to the Connecticut and Massachusetts state line. The I-84 TIA extends east to west from the New York state line to the Greater Hartford region. The Central Naugatuck Valley region, comprised of thirteen municipalities (Beacon Falls, Bathstien, Cheshire, Middlebury, Naugatuck, Oxford, Prospect, Southbury, Thomaston, Waterbury, Water-town, Wolcott and Woodbury) is at the core of the I-84 TIA.

**When** →

**Where** →

**Affected Area** →

**Where to Send Comments** → For a copy of the draft twenty-year I-84 TIA plan & to submit comments, please contact Laurel Stegiga, Senior Planner, Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley, 20 East Main St., Suite 303, Waterbury, CT 06702; by e-mail at [lstegiga@copcnv.org](mailto:lstegiga@copcnv.org), or telephone at 203-757-0535. To be considered for inclusion in the plan, written comments should be submitted by Sep. 18, 2002.

R-A AUGUST 28, 2002

**What** ←

**Why** ←

**Purpose of Meeting** →

**Availability of Draft for Review** →

**Deadline for Comments** →

## COMMUNICATING WITH HEARING IMPAIRED AND NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING POPULATIONS

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The Department has a responsibility to meet special needs for public meetings. At times public access to transportation decision-making may require that special efforts be made to reach people who are hearing impaired, deaf or do not speak English. Translation and interpretation services will have to be arranged for public meetings and to develop printed materials. Reaching out to these populations will require advance planning and coordination. The Department maintains a list of employees proficient in languages other than English.

For every project you must follow a process to determine if you are dealing with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) populations. The LEP section of the Department's Title VI Plan has a map of LEP populations for each Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in the state. If you have primary or secondary impacted group(s), you will need to identify how you will provide information to those individuals.

The Department has a responsibility to meet special needs for public meetings.

As a resource in obtaining translation services you may contact the MPO in the project area and/or contact the Department's Office of Equal Opportunity Assurance and Diversity. Social services agencies in the project area may have staff or know a community member that can provide translation. Translation services may also be listed on the Internet and in the Yellow Pages. Acquiring these types of services may be difficult at times, so it is important to allow plenty of time to find suitable translation services.

The State of Connecticut Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired (telephone (860) 231-1690) is the best source to contact when trying to communicate with persons who are deaf or hearing impaired. This agency maintains a list of qualified interpreters but will need 7-10 working days to arrange for an interpreter(s). For a fixed fee, the Commission will provide certified interpreters who use American Sign Language for public meetings.

If interpreters are not available, another option that can be used is real-time captioning services that transcribe voice into text as the words are spoken.

However, a television (and possibly an internet connection) will be required to utilize this service.

If you need to communicate by telephone, Relay Connecticut is a free service that provides telephone access to people who are deaf, hard-of-hearing and speech-disabled. This service enables text-telephone users to communicate through specially trained relay operators. Dial 7-1-1 for an operator who will facilitate your conversation by translating your message into text and relaying back the communication from the hearing impaired person with whom you are speaking.

**TIPS for communicating with special populations:**

- Plan for translation services well in advance of a meeting
- When advertising a meeting, give a cut-off date for the people with special needs to ask for assistance
- Call the CT Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired for assistance







# Chapter 4





# Chapter 4:

## Successful Public Meetings

This chapter is devoted specifically to public meetings, since public meetings and public hearings are some of the most frequently used and critical pieces of many outreach efforts. Public meetings can be dull and perfunctory or they can be interesting, effective and useful. Careful attention to detail will make the difference between a public meeting that is “just going through the motions” and one that is effective.

**A successful public meeting requires careful attention to detail.  
The little things DO mean a lot.**

So, what are the things that will make a public meeting successful? First, let's explore some basic meeting formats. Public information meetings can be “presentation” style, “open house” style or a combination of both. Most public meetings sponsored by The Connecticut Department of Transportation are a combination of these two formats, providing for the greatest flexibility and the greatest level of outreach and input.

Public hearings are more formal than public informational meetings, as they must respond to legal requirements. Public hearings are primarily either presentation or combination style meetings and are usually recorded and transcribed. For each project, the Project Manager must seek Department approval when wishing to hold a public information meeting and not a formal public hearing.

### Types of public meetings:

- **Public informational meeting**
  - open house format
  - presentation format
  - combination open house/presentation
- **Public hearing**

## **PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETINGS**

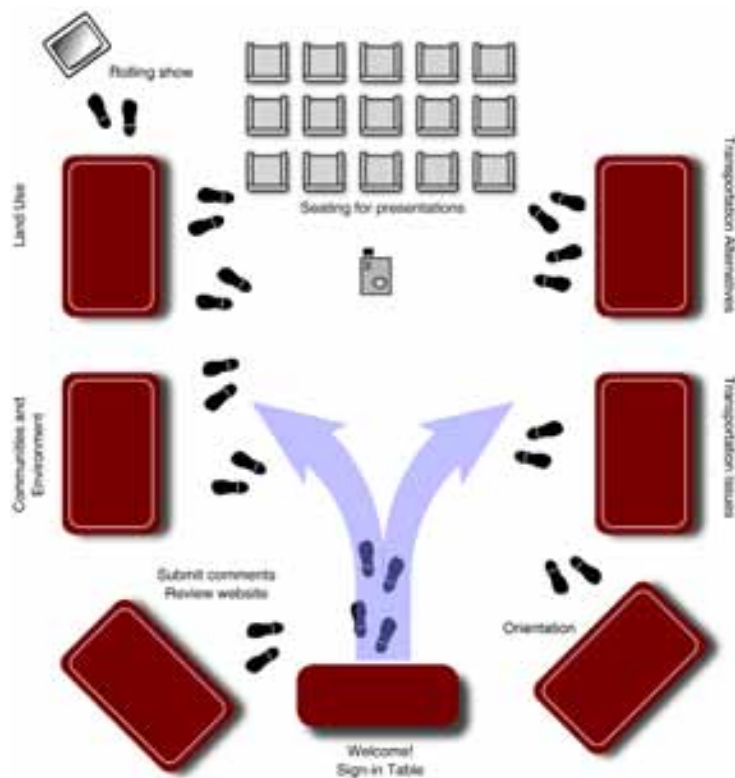
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A public meeting with open house format is intended to exchange information with the public in a relatively informal setting. People come and go according to their own needs and schedule, unless a formal presentation is included

in the program. This meeting format is preferred by people who want to be able to talk directly with project staff one-on-one, especially if they are reluctant to speak up in a large group. The open house meeting also gives the public a chance to carefully examine maps and exhibits. The project team may also convey concepts and obtain feedback from meeting attendees.

Open house meetings require careful planning to be successful.

Typically the layout of the meeting room for an open house has tables or stations that cover specific topics or geographical areas. Examples of topics could be: environmental resources, community and historic resources, traffic issues, etc. Alternatively in large projects, each information table may cover a geographical sub area.



Open house meetings require careful planning to be successful. Important considerations are:

- **Building and room location:** Will it be large enough to accommodate the people you expect to attend but not too big to lose a sense of community?
- **Staffing:** Each table or information station should be staffed with the number of people needed to comfortably talk with people without a long delay. Generally tables need 1-3 people to adequately respond to the public.
- **Orientation:** Orientation signs and banners listing the topic of tables are needed to help guide people through the room. Orientation should begin at the sign-in table. Here staff greeters should hand each attendee a map of the room that indicates what kind of information is available at the open house and where it is located. If heavy attendance is expected, a separate area next to the sign-in table and staffed with greeters is recommended.
- **Visualization:** Good graphics are a ***must*** for an open house meeting. Check with the Department Bureau of Engineering and Highway Operations about visualization aides such as three-dimensional figures, video streaming, etc. that they may be able to create for your project. Aerial maps are the best graphic to use when demonstrating a project area. These maps help people visualize the location of a project. Business owners and homeowners like to be able to locate their property, or (later in the process) see how it might be impacted by a project. GIS maps with multiple layers also provide useful information to the public if they are easy to interpret. Sometimes, later in a project, location maps showing alternative project concepts can be laid on a table with marking pens, and attendees can be invited to comment. If this is done, it is ***imperative*** that the table be staffed so that the concepts can be explained.
- **Displays:** Each information table should use well thought out displays to attract attention and convey key messages. These displays could be maps or charts on foam core boards set on easels, signs attached to the table top or on a wall directly behind the table. Using upright displays are another effective technique for visually “closing in” a large room such as a gymnasium or cafeteria to create a more intimate setting.
- **Handouts:** Sometimes handouts such as fact sheets and brochures are passed out at information tables at an open house. Not every person who attends an open house will stop at each information table. Therefore,

handouts that explain the project purpose, potential impact and other vital data should be given to people as they enter the room at the sign-in table.

If your public meeting is going to have a presentation component (and, again, most public meetings DO include a presentation) it can be AFTER the public has had a chance to “wander” through the open house exhibits or BEFORE this happens. There are advantages to either approach. If the presentation is after the open house, people have had a chance to familiarize themselves with the project. However, the disadvantage is that some people get tired of waiting for the presentation and just leave, thus possibly missing some key information.

**TIPS for managing people at an open house meeting:**



- Orient people as they enter the room;
- Avoid table congestion by asking people to move along to another table;
- Use a large writing pad on a easel to record comments.

Presentations at public meetings need to be concise, interesting, informative, clear and include visualization. Most importantly, the public needs to be given adequate ***background*** and ***context*** for the meeting so that they can orient themselves to the project and this particular stage of the project. A very common error in public meeting presentation is that of failing to provide an adequate orientation of the background, context, and process within which the project is occurring.

**Do not fail to provide adequate background and context for the project (i.e. what is the history, purpose and need for this project).**

If the public does not understand the purpose and need for the project or the reason why a proposed alternative is selected, that failure of understanding may be one of communication.

**People may disagree with the Department's proposal or conclusions, but failure to understand may signal poor communication or ineffective public outreach.**

## PUBLIC HEARINGS

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Unlike an informational or open house meeting where there is great flexibility in format, a public hearing is a scripted meeting designed to notify the public and to allow public comment prior to decision-making. The Department's Communications Office is responsible for providing assistance to conduct the hearing. See Chapter 3 for direction and tips on advertising for public meetings and hearings.

According to Federal regulations (23 USC 711.111(h)(2)), one or more public hearings, or the opportunity of public hearings, must be provided if a project meets one or more of the following tests:

- requires significant amounts of right-of-way;
- substantially changes the layout or functions of connecting roadways or of the facility being improved;
- has a substantial adverse impact on abutting property;
- otherwise has a significant social, economic, environmental or other effect; or
- the FHWA determines that a public hearing is in the public interest.

An appropriate explanation of the following information should be provided:

- the project's purpose, need, and consistency with the goals and objectives of any local urban planning initiatives;
- the project's alternatives and major design features;
- the social, economic, environmental, and other impacts of the project;
- the relocation assistance program and the right-of-way acquisition process; and
- the Department's procedures for receiving both oral and written statements from the public.

Typically the meeting will be run by an assigned Department moderator who will make introductions, explain the format of the meeting and oversee the gathering of public comments. The project manager or consultant will be expected to make a presentation about the project at the beginning of the hearing. Once completed, the moderator will begin taking comments from the public.

### TIPS on public hearing manners:



- Pay attention to the speakers;
- Be careful not to communicate negative messages (yawning, slouching in seats, etc.);
- Do not speak out, or shake head in disapproval; and
- Avoid laughing, even at a speaker's joke, as your reaction may be misinterpreted.

People who want to speak at a public hearing are generally asked to put their names on a sign-in sheet, and they will be called upon in order by the moderator. Elected officials are often given the honor of speaking first, prior to the general public. Each speaker is given a time limit for their remarks, generally 3 minutes, but may be allowed to speak a second time after everyone else has been given an opportunity to be heard once. People may bring written testimony and have it included in the public record even though it may not be read out loud.

**A public hearing does not end until all members of the public who wish to have a say have had the chance to voice their opinions or concerns.**

Public hearings are recorded and transcribed for the official record. A transcription service must be hired to record and produce a written transcript of remarks. The names and addresses of people who speak are also noted in the transcript. The Communications Office has recording and sound equipment and supplies items such as sign-in sheets, blank tapes for hearings, etc. Usually the meeting transcript will be ready for review within two weeks of the hearing. Comments can then be distributed and addressed by project staff.

## STAGING A SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC MEETING

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While each public meeting will have a unique purpose, location and players, there are common elements that set the stage for success. Meeting organizers must be careful to:

- Plan an agenda that supports the purpose of the meeting
- Provide notification for the meeting
- Select a good location with hospitable facilities
- Develop an effective presentation (with visualization) that engages attendees

- Develop effective handout materials
- Get people to attend (see Chapter 3)!!!

### Planning The Agenda

Before setting the agenda for a meeting a project manager should be able to answer these questions:

- What is the purpose (message) of the meeting?
- What is the best way (meeting format) to convey the message?
- What types of material need to be prepared (maps, PowerPoint presentation, etc.)?
- Who (ConnDOT staff, consultant) should present to or communicate with the public?
- What do we want to find out? What type of feedback are we seeking?

The nature of a project and the stage it is in will often determine the agenda for a public meeting. There is a lot more flexibility in planning public meeting agendas in the early project development stages. Clearly the agenda for a project kick-off meeting will be vastly different from a meeting at the close of a planning project where alternatives have been identified for further study. A public hearing, unlike a public meeting, is generally a scripted meeting with legal requirements that must be met.

The Department's project manager should do a dry run of an agenda with the people who will be presenting at a public meeting. This allows the project team to fine-tune the materials and rehearse and time the presentation so that it may be revised as necessary.

#### TIPS for setting a meeting agenda:

- Public meetings usually do not start on time, so count on having 10 minutes less than scheduled;
- Keep the number of agenda items to a minimum. No more than three complex items or activities are recommended for a two-hour meeting;
- The maximum length of a Power Point presentation should be 15-20 minutes;
- Be sure to give adequate background and context - even at meetings later in the project time frame; and
- Be prepared to answer questions from the public, but do not let questions sidetrack getting through the agenda .



### TIPS for keeping the agenda on track:



- Distribute agenda to people as they enter the meeting so they know how the meeting will be organized;
- Have a display board with the agenda prominently displayed to reinforce the message that there is a scripted order to the meeting that will be followed; and
- The meeting moderator should ask for people's help in focusing on agenda times and schedule.

## CHOOSING A LOCATION

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When selecting a site for a meeting, it's a good idea to ask people who live or work locally for a list of good meeting locations. Choose a well-known location with adequate parking. Confirm that handicapped accessibility is available but take a look at building-access specifics. Some buildings, especially older ones, offer handicapped access through a side door or long ramps, which can be less than ideal.

Access within a building should also be checked out in advance. A room that is close to the entry doors is preferred. Rooms in the interior of building that are accessed through a number of long corridors or turns are less desirable and will have to be adequately marked with signs.

Deciding if a room is the right size gets easier with experience. You want to make sure the room fits both the meeting's purpose and the image you want to project, (i.e., a cavernous room will not convey warmth or be conducive to a sense of community, but a room that is too small may indicate to participants that you are not aware of how important the project is to them).

When making arrangements for a room, be sure to consult a Meeting Room Checklist to ensure that nothing falls between the cracks. A sample checklist is included below. Also, remember to ask for a contact person who may be reached during the day or off-hours if you need assistance.



**FIGURE 4.1: MEETING ROOM CHECKLIST**

	yes	no	comments
Located along a transit (rail/bus) line			
Adequate parking (any competing events)			
Noise interference (from other activities)			
Rest room (how close to meeting room, always open, handicapped accessible)			
Room acoustics			
Projection screen			
Sound system			
Electrical outlets (location & adequacy)			
Lighting (right level for slide projection)			
Building access points (how many and where)			
Signs (how many needed, inside and outside building)			
Tables & chairs (count them)			
Podium			
<b>Equipment</b>			
Projector		Tacks	
Laptop		Pens/Pencils	
Screen		Name Tags	
Tape Recorder		Sign-in Sheets	
Extension cord		Agenda	
Powerstrip/3-way plug adapter		Handouts	
Easels		Duct Tape	
Easel Pad		Scotch Tape and/or Masking Tape	
Large Markers		Maps, Boards, Display Materials	
<b>Refreshments</b>			
Coffee urn		Spoons/stirring sticks	
Coffee/tea		Serving Plates	
Sugar/sweeteners		Serving Baskets, bowls	
Milk		Serving utensils	
Cold beverages		Tablecloth	
Ice		Paper napkins	
Cups		Cooler	
Plates (for individuals)		Food	
<b>Other Items:</b>			

## Setting Up The Room

How the room should be set up depends on the meeting format, the number of people you are expecting, and what you want to achieve. Do you want people to be comfortable milling around information tables? Do you want attendees to be seated around a table (e.g. an Advisory Committee)? Or are you having a more formal meeting (like a public hearing) where attention will be focused towards one area of the room, so people need to be seated facing one direction? Whatever your desires, the following are some room basics to keep in mind.

- The entrance to the meeting room is where the sign-in table should be placed. People entering the room should be able to scan it and quickly decide where they need to go. Make sure the meeting activity is away from the entrance so that late-comers and people leaving early aren't a distraction.
- Use tables and chairs to define where you want people to go within the room. If a room is on the large side, such as a large gymnasium, it's important to cluster activity in a section of the room. If attention needs to be focused on a presentation, then auditorium style is the best.
- If your meeting agenda calls for break-out groups, where attendees divide into sections for smaller group sessions, you will need to be able to provide separate spaces within one room where discussion can take place. If this is not possible because of noise interference, then it's best to arrange for smaller, separate rooms.

### TIPS on directional signs:



- Identify all the areas of access to your meeting room so you can provide directional signs at every possible entry point – doors, parking lots, elevators, hallways.
- Use regular (8 1/2 x 11) size paper that identifies the name of the meeting and have arrows that point in the direction you want people to walk. This means you will need to have multiple copies of signs with arrows pointing left, right or straight ahead.
- It's good to print the signs on colored paper because they are easy to see on walls that are typically beige or glass, and people begin to "read" the color as well as the words on the sign.



## Sign-In Table

The names and addresses (and e-mail addresses) of people attending all public meetings should be recorded. Sometimes documenting meeting attendance is required for the public record. Regardless of requirements, it is good practice to record names and add them to the project mailing list, especially if the project is on-going, so that you can compile contact information, and attendees can receive direct notice for future meetings.

The sign-in table is always placed at the main entrance to the room. If people can enter from more than one entrance, then plan for staffing additional entrances, each with sign-in sheets and handout materials. If it is not practical to have duplicate sign-in tables, especially if there are multiple entrances and space is limited, then direct people to the main sign-in area either with staff or signs that show where handout material is available.

Greeters who work the sign-in table should understand the meeting agenda and be able to answer questions about the meeting format. A minimum of two people should staff the sign-in table during the 20-minute period when most people arrive, beginning 10-20 minutes before the scheduled meeting time. Two people are needed because often one of the greeters has to leave the sign-in table to assist people who arrive at the door who need to be connected to someone on the project staff in another area of the room. For example, a member of the press or the public may ask to speak to a specific person or have a question to ask the project team.

**The first impression people will have of a meeting will be at the entrance door, so it's important to be welcoming and efficient and to give people a clear idea where they should go or what will happen at the meeting.**

To avoid having a back-up of people at the door, use 3-4 sign-in sheets at the same time. If the sign-in process is slow, people get irritated and starting the meeting will need to be delayed. Consolidating the names from several sign-in sheets can occur after the meeting. Handouts should be pre-assembled and ready to distribute when people arrive.

## Refreshments

Whenever possible, provide refreshments for public meetings. It is a low cost item that yields big benefits. Food encourages mingling among people - the public and project team - that may not occur otherwise. There is a friendliness

implied by sharing food with others. Also, people appreciate a drink or snack if they have rushed to get to the meeting.

Establish the location of the food serving area when planning the meeting – look for access to electrical outlets, water, and appropriate tables. Try to place refreshments close enough to the entrance area to attract people, but not too close to be cramped. And remember to plan time into the agenda for people to get refreshments before the formal part of the meeting starts.

**Whenever possible serve refreshments at meetings.  
There is a friendliness implied when sharing food with others.**

The menu needs to be appropriate for the group, occasion and time of day. If an Advisory Committee is meeting through the lunch hour, then sandwiches are appropriate. But public meetings generally are in the evening, when light refreshments such as a drink (preferably a choice of hot or cold) and a snack is all that's needed.

Once you decide what refreshments you will serve, be sure to make a list of all the items you think you'll need to set up an attractive food service area.

#### **TIPS on serving food:**



- Meet the custodian or building manager before setting up. Custodians generally have the keys to all doors and will direct you to the facilities you need for room set up (deep sinks for filling up coffee pots with water, spare extension cords, etc.);
- Bring an extension cord for the coffee pot because there may not be an electrical outlet close by;
- Have a table cloth to cover table surfaces that are not in good condition; and
- Be sure to clean up at the close of the meeting!!!



# Chapter 5



# Chapter 5:

## Working With Groups

When thinking about how to involve the public in your project, you will be faced with many choices. How do you decide what tools to use? One of the most important tools is your involvement with groups such as Advisory Committees, local representatives, or other key stakeholder groups. There is a wide range of meeting types and group techniques to choose from. Most public involvement processes will call for a variety of meetings throughout the course of the project, ranging from one-on-one meetings with key individuals to a formal public hearing. This chapter explores the various types of meeting and group tools, focusing on those which are used most frequently.

### **TYPES OF GROUPS & MEETING TECHNIQUES**

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Some of the types of groups or meeting techniques are used more often than others for reaching consensus on a transportation project. Several of the most frequently used types of groups or meeting techniques are explored in more detail, below.

Figure 5.1 identifies both the types of groups a project manager may work with and techniques that may be used to develop a collaborative relationship.

FIGURE 5.1: GROUP AND MEETING TECHNIQUES

Group/Technique	What it is	What it does	When it is used
Advisory Committee	A group of stakeholders that meets regularly to provide information and guidance, discuss issues of concern	Provides forum for an exchange of ideas and feedback on project development	Most effective in large or controversial projects. Provides project manager with local knowledge, opportunities for collaboration and public outreach support.
Brainstorming	A meeting with free-flowing discussions to generate ideas	Creates open atmosphere where a range of ideas can be discussed without prejudice	Useful at the beginning of projects to develop new ideas and get consensus on priorities
Charrette	An interactive workshop focused on creating design concepts or problem solving	Engages stakeholders in identifying their vision and values and gives an opportunity to voice ideas on solutions	An effective tool when trying to understand community vision and build consensus
Visioning/ Roundtable Discussions	A structured exercise that engages people in thinking about what they want their community to be	Clarifies what a community values and what it wants for the future	Best used early in the project development phase when the project and goals are being defined
Key Person Interview	Conversation with an individual who usually is vested in a project	Allows dialogue and information exchange in an informal setting	An effective means to get background information on a project and understand community values and sentiments. Also can build trust in a controversial project process
Collaborative Task Force	A group that works on a specific task with a deadline to complete its assignment	Brings together key stakeholders to resolve a problem or issue	Most effective when the group is dealing with an issue that can be resolved through dialogue and cooperative effort
Focus Groups	A small group meeting facilitated to gauge opinions from a representative sample of constituents	Allows in-depth discussion and exploration of views on issues	Helpful tool when seeking feedback on people's perceptions of problems and alternatives especially when holding a public meeting is impractical or intent is to understand opinions of a targeted group



Group/Technique	What it is	What it does	When it is used
Briefing	A meeting with a limited agenda aimed at giving information	Provides focused communication on a particular topic	A good forum to transmit technical data and comprehensive data while avoiding getting sidetracked on other topics
Games & Contests	A device used to engage people	Gets people that might normally be "invisible" to think about issues and offer opinions	Effective at gatherings where people have time to "play", such as at community fairs and open house meetings or at meetings where this activity is a core part of the agenda
Facilitated Discussion	A facilitated discussion with a group of 10-15 people focused on a topic	Creates atmosphere where people are more likely to participate in discussion, ask questions	Most effective in engaging the public in solving problems, receiving feedback on issues
Mediation	A method of resolving disputes using a person trained in helping settle disagreements	Enables people or agencies to work together to solve problems and end disagreements	Most effective when parties with differences want to end a dispute to save time and money or to move a project forward
Role Playing	An activity in which participants play the role of a person in a prescribed situation	Expands awareness of different points of view	A technique used to develop understanding and build consensus where there are diverse viewpoints
Site Visits	Visit by officials and community members to a project area	Familiarizes officials with local perceptions, concerns, physical and social elements of project area	A good way to build relationships with the community by meeting on their turf and trying to understand their concerns in context of place
Walking Audit	A written assessment or description of a site or corridor area	Describes or rates an area using specific criteria and observations	Helps people become more aware of their surroundings and provides measured qualitative feedback about a place
Conference or Issue Forum	A program, usually with keynote speakers, organized to educate and to seek input from the public on a specific topic	Provides widespread publicity for and public input on an issue or project	Most useful when seeking to draw public attention to a project or issue with a large public impact

## MOST FREQUENTLY USED TECHNIQUES

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### Advisory Committee

An Advisory Committee (AC) is one of the most frequently used group techniques in transportation projects. It provides an opportunity for a project manager to have public discussion and guidance on transportation needs and solutions in a working group setting. An effective Advisory Committee may be made up of people interested in working on transportation issues, representatives of key stakeholder agencies, those knowledgeable about the community or tied into community networks, those affected by the plan or project, and/or those representing diverse elements within the community.



Who should serve on an Advisory Committee? Its members could be planners, government officials, civic and neighborhood groups, historic and environmental preservation groups, key community leaders, project neighbors and business leaders. People who represent low-income or special needs groups, including the elderly and persons with disabilities, must not be overlooked.

Most Advisory Committees have the following as members:

- ✓ Federal agency representatives;
- ✓ State representatives;
- ✓ Local elected officials;
- ✓ Local technical representatives (town engineer, town planner);
- ✓ Regional representatives;
- ✓ Local citizen representatives;
- ✓ Business groups; and
- ✓ Neighborhood groups.

**The role of an Advisory Committee is to review and discuss project goals, identify local or regional issues, explore and advise on solutions to transportation needs and assist with public outreach. It is not a decision-making body.**

At the initial meeting of the Advisory Committee it is important to clarify the role of members, how many meetings will be held, when and where the group will meet, the issues the committee will review and what kind of feedback is expected. It is also good to establish ground rules for behavior



and to set expectations for committee involvement (e.g., attend meetings, be prepared, support the views of the committee as a whole, etc.)

Advisory Committees provide the most value when information is shared openly and in a timely manner. This means that documents, especially if they are voluminous, must be received in advance to be read before meetings. A facilitator is generally used to moderate the meetings, to keep the discussion on track and to allow members to comfortably discuss issues. Advisory Committee meetings **may** be open to the public but are generally not publicly advertised. Project staff should welcome questions or comments from the audience once the committee's agenda has been accomplished. Members of the press **may** drop in on these meetings.

The key for Advisory Committee success is to develop agendas and techniques that will engage the AC in the study process.

When a project manager decides an Advisory Committee will be an asset to a project, selection of membership should be carefully considered. Local and regional planning officials, as well as other ConnDOT staff familiar with the project area should be asked to recommend people who will positively contribute, being sure to include members of opposition groups, if any.

Sometimes a project spans numerous municipalities or several regions. The makeup of an Advisory Committee will depend on the type and the scope of the project. An Advisory Committee should be large enough to have broad representation, but should not be too large that it is unwieldy. An ideal Advisory Committee might be about 15 people and is best when it does not exceed 25 participants.

#### TIPS for encouraging dialogue:

- Choose a meeting location where committee members can comfortably sit around a table;
- Leave ample time for discussion of issues by members; and
- Engage members in active discussions where information is shown on maps or graphics and members are encouraged to give their own ideas.



## Brainstorming

Brainstorming is an effective technique used to generate ideas and prioritize solutions to a problem. Led by a facilitator, a group of people (ideally 6-10, but could be much larger) is encouraged to bring their ideas on a specific topic to the table where they are received without judgment. Each idea is recorded on large sheets of paper until all views have been recorded.

Once all ideas have been presented, people may prioritize them by placing colored dots on the ideas they like the best. At the end of the brainstorming exercise, the group can see which ideas are most preferred. Brainstorming is an effective way to:



- **Identify new ideas.** This technique provides a free-thinking atmosphere and encourages creativity. Each idea is noted and accepted no matter how far fetched.
- **Equalize participation.** Each participant is viewed on the same level within the group. Persons with greater technical expertise or strong personalities are not allowed to dominate. As a result, every person may become engaged in problem-solving.
- **Reduce conflict.** Civility and listening to others is required. The exercise may help participants see other points of view.
- **Lay groundwork for consensus.** Although building consensus is usually not the purpose of brainstorming, it can be a by-product if there are particular viewpoints or solutions that are shared by the majority of participants.

### TIPS for facilitating an effective brainstorming session:



- Be clear about the topic;
- Keep the group small (6-10 people) if possible;
- Explain the purpose of the exercise;
- Begin with a brief introduction by every participant;
- Have participants share their ideas and record them without comment;
- Ask clarifying questions if needed;
- Review and re-group ideas; and
- Present results to larger group.



## Visioning

Visioning is a process of focused discussion and information gathering that leads to a goals or mission statement. The process can be used at an Advisory Committee meeting to clarify and define the purpose of a project. Or visioning may involve a series of community meetings and workshops that focus on long-range issues, such as developing a 20-year transportation plan. A comprehensive visioning process may include holding symposia, seeking public opinion through newspapers with mail-back inserts, surveys, open houses and public hearings.

No matter what public involvement tools and techniques are used, visioning should involve a broad spectrum of stakeholders with different views and needs. If the purpose of visioning is to develop a long-term policy agenda for public investment in transportation, then a cross-section of participants for all parts of the region is needed, especially populations that are typically under-represented, such as the poor and elderly. The visioning process looks for common ground. The end product of visioning may be a broad view statement of what a community or agency wants the future to look like, with a road map of goals and objectives as to how to achieve it.

## Meeting Local Officials

At the outset of any planning process or project, it is a good idea to meet with local officials to introduce the project team and the purpose of the project and to learn who the key players and concerns are in a region or municipality. Initial contact should be made to the chief administrator, elected official or both. These officials may want to include staff members such as their Director of Public Works, Town Engineer, Director of Planning and Development or representatives from other key departments, such as the Chief of Police.

**The purpose of meeting with people is to listen and learn. It will be time well spent.**

Taking the time to meet with representatives from each region and local government, even in a project involving multiple communities, will be time well spent. Problems and needs are most closely experienced or understood by people who live or work in a community. Gathering input from people with

local knowledge will be very helpful in developing solutions to problems. Local officials will also appreciate the respect and courtesy shown.

Local officials can also help identify community and human resources. They know civic leaders, community assets and sensitive topics in their town. If your project will have an Advisory Committee (often an excellent tool for getting local input), ask local officials who they would recommend to serve on it.

## WHEN YOU ARE THE FACILITATOR

A facilitator plays an important role in focussing discussion, keeping a meeting on track, affirming participants, listening and restating discussion points so that resolution and consensus is reached. Ideally the facilitator will guide discussion and will appoint a recorder (or ask for a volunteer) to write down comments made by the participants. The role of the facilitator is to get people to feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and not have one or two people dominate. The recorder's job, which must be explained by the facilitator, is to write down the main points of what is said in a few words as possible. Usually the recorder will use a flip chart and magic markers so that participants can read what is being noted.



**The facilitator should help the recorder by restating key points so that nothing important is missed.**

A meeting recorder should:

- ✓ Keep focused on what's being said;
- ✓ Be brief;
- ✓ Check in with the person making the comment to be sure the meaning of their comment has been captured; and
- ✓ Make a check mark(s) next to repeat comments, showing more than one person shares a view.

If you find yourself acting as the facilitator of the group, there are some helpful remarks you may use to guide the discussion:

To get opinions:

- “How do you feel about...?”
- “What do you think about...?”

To summarize what’s been said:

- “What I am hearing is...Did I get that right?”
- “Let me see if I understand your comment. Are you saying that...?”

To encourage participation when one person is dominating discussion:

- “We haven’t heard from others yet, let’s see if someone else wants to add something...?” - If no one immediately volunteers, pick someone from the crowd, “How about the man in the plaid shirt, would you like to tell us ...?”

To clarify a comment:

- “I’m not sure I’m clear about what you mean, are you thinking...”

To explore an idea in more detail:

- “Does anyone want to add to what we’ve just heard?”
- “Are there other ideas on how to approach this problem?”

To gauge if other people in the group share a viewpoint:

- “Could we see by a show of hands how many others agree with this?”

#### **TIPS for listening:**

- Make eye contact and keep your attention on the person;
- Stop talking;
- Really concentrate on what the person is saying;
- Ask questions to make sure you understand what the person is saying;
- Do not interject comments or your own opinion;
- Do not argue;
- Smile and nod appropriately; and
- Repeat the main points.









# Chapter 6



# Chapter 6:

## Working With The Media

It is likely that the Department's project manager will have to deal with the media at some point in the development of a project. People are interested in transportation because it affects every resident of the state. Reporters also like to write about government. Interacting with the media does not have to create anxiety if you understand how the media works and how you can use it in a positive way to inform the public about your project.

### MEDIA TOOLS

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There are many opportunities for a project manager to utilize media resources to help get the public informed and involved. Pro-active action can be taken by a project manager to prepare press kits and to list project events on a community calendar, for example. Figure 6.1 lists some media tools and how they might be used.

### UNDERSTANDING THE MEDIA

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As the media (newspapers, radio and television) continues a trend of consolidating ownership and cutting back on local reporting, it becomes increasingly important to know how the media business works. You will be successful in getting the coverage you seek if you take the following steps:

- **Learn who's in charge.** Every newspaper, television or radio station will have a news editor or producer who makes decisions about what stories should be pursued. If you want to get news about your project aired, then this person needs to be contacted directly either by telephone or press release. At larger daily newspapers there may be a specific reporter who covers transportation stories for the geographic area where your project is located. This person should be identified and contacted when you have news to report.
- **Learn about deadlines.** All publications work under fixed deadlines. If you miss it, you won't get your story out. It is especially important to know the deadlines for the weekly or monthly newspapers because they require more lead time than the daily newspapers or television. Some reporters will refer to deadlines as "putting the issue to bed."

FIGURE 6.1: MEDIA TOOLS

Tool	What it is	What it does	When it is used
Community Calendar	Listing of current community events	Free listing that gives notice of meetings and activities	Used to advertise upcoming public meetings
Interactive Radio	Live interview show where the public can call in questions	Allows two-way communication and educates viewing audience on an issue	A good method to increase public awareness on issues, especially among those who rely on radio and TV for getting news
Media Contact List	A list of key media personnel	A ready source of who and how to contact when seeking media coverage	Getting media coverage is more likely when material is sent to the right people in the press at the right time for publication (within deadline)
Press Kit	Package of materials prepared for the press	Provides key information to media to assist with reporting on a story	Prepared at key project milestones or events when media coverage is desired or expected
Press Release	Brief written description about a project for radio, TV, or newspapers	Gets information out using existing channels of communication	Coverage in the media is best around key project milestones and public meetings
Public Access Television	Locally controlled television stations mostly run by volunteers that focus on local government and public service programming	Often records public meetings and proceedings	May provide recording of public meetings; can produce its own program on a transportation project such as a panel discussion about the project

- **Make your project newsworthy.** Why does your story deserve to be printed? This is what every reporter and editor will ask themselves when presented with information, so you should be prepared to make a pitch they cannot resist. Be sure to explain the importance of a project and its impact on people or a region up front in a news release or when you speak with the media. This information may seem second nature to you, but it's necessary to spell it out if you want people to receive and understand

your message. The media will not continue to write about your project unless there are significant new developments. Therefore, it's important to approach the media strategically so you generate news when it's to your best advantage.

- ***Make it easy to report.*** Reporters want to get the story right. Corrections are embarrassing and not good for career advancement. Sometimes it is hard for reporters to fully understand a complex project without assistance. Television reporters may walk into a public meeting and have as little as ten minutes to identify the key players and develop the story line for a 30-second story on the evening news. You will increase the likelihood the reporter will get the facts right if you have materials (press kit) prepared in advance and if you are accessible for follow-up questions. Being helpful may also leave a favorable impression with the reporter that may well be a consideration when the story is written.
- ***What's in a press kit?*** This will depend on the project, but here are a few items to consider:
  - Press release
  - Disk with graphics
  - Fact sheet on project or list of FAQ for background information
  - Project map
  - Schedule
  - Copy of Powerpoint presentation
  - Contact information

## DEVELOPING A MEDIA STRATEGY

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Thinking about how and when you want your project to appear in the media, is an integral part of developing your public outreach plan. Questions you should ask are:

- Is this a high profile or controversial project?
- What is the message the Department wants to convey?
- How do people get their news in the project area? Is there a daily newspaper with strong circulation or do people rely on weekly newspapers?
- What are the key project milestones?

- When is publicity desired?
- Who will be the media spokesperson?

The Department has a Director of Communications who oversees media outreach. All media outreach should be coordinated with this office. However, to effectively manage media relations, the project manager should identify what kind of media coverage is desired and should provide information on project scope, purpose, schedule, impact, etc. to the media coordinator.

## **CREATING A MEDIA CONTACT LIST**

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A media contact list should be created at the outset of a project. Sources to consult are:

- Connecticut Blue Book
- An internet search engine to obtain a list of Connecticut media
- Personal inspection – check out supermarkets, restaurants, community gathering places to see what circulars, or newspapers are available
- Ask local contacts how people get news

Information in the media contact list should include:

- Name and address of media outlet
- Name, telephone and fax numbers, e-mail address of key contact person(s)– news editor, beat reporter, producer
- News deadline information
- Information on how media outlet likes to receive information – fax, e-mail or by mailed in press releases
- Circulation area (geographic location and household penetration or how many people are reached by the media outlet)

## **WRITING A PRESS RELEASE**

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To place a public notice in a newspaper, on radio or television, a project manager should draft a press release and submit it to the Department's Communications Office. While this office will take responsibility for sending

out the release, it is helpful if the project manager provides the following information in the draft:

- The five W's – who, what, when, where and why
- The date the information should be released
- Name and contact information of the Department's representation

**A press release has a much greater chance of publication if you have made personal contact with the media representative and generated some interest in the project.**

Press releases should be brief and to the point. If your project is complex, then consider including a fact sheet with more detailed information with the press release.

## **BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MEDIA**

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The phone rings, and it's a reporter on the line who wants to ask you a few questions about your project. Does your heart skip a beat? Here are some strategies you should use when talking with the media:

- Respond promptly.
- Ask what the reporter is looking for. If you don't fully understand, then ask for clarification.
- Don't say anything you would not want to read in print.
- Answer the questions you are asked. You do not have to volunteer information.
- You don't have to fill silences in the conversation. Wait for the next question.

**For many people, a call from a reporter produces anxiety. It doesn't have to if you follow a few basic rules.**

In summary, if you follow a few simple rules, dealing with the media can be productive and beneficial to your project as well as stress-free. Identify the key contact and develop a relationship with this individual, so that they know you when you call. Know what it is that you want to gain publicity for, and prepare the appropriate material, so you are prepared when you call

or write. Don't get discouraged -- reporters won't always do what you ask or conform to your schedule. Accept this gracefully. Seek advice from your contacts; they often are willing to help you maximize the opportunity for publicity. And relax; the press needs you as much as you need them.

#### **TIPS for building good relations:**



- Be honest.
- Return phone calls from the press. Avoidance is not a good strategy.
- It's okay to say you cannot comment.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, say so. But tell the reporter you will find out and get back when you do.
- Be accessible. Give a reporter your cell phone number if you know they are working on deadline after your workday is over.
- Compliment a story well done.





# Chapter 7



# Chapter 7:

## Building Trust and Rapport: Creating a Win-Win Atmosphere

### **BUILDING RAPPORT WITH THE PUBLIC**

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Every day Department staff work with the public in many different ways and under many different conditions. It would be ideal if we could operate at all times in a relationship of mutual respect and understanding, but there are going to be times when a hostile public must be faced. How did that happen? Can it be avoided?

One of the best ways to minimize conflict is to plan ahead. The Department's project manager should meet with local leaders and affected citizens to identify concerns and build relationships early in the project.

Proper planning, good communication and showing respect are the keys to building rapport with the public.

Before holding the first public meeting on a project, a project manager should:

- Have a plan. Know **what message** you want to get out, **who** the public should contact about the project and **how** the Department plans to communicate with the public.
- Familiarize yourself with the project location and context, and, later in the project, make sure you understand the potential physical impact of the project on the community, as well as the community's concerns.
- Anticipate community issues and concerns and understand how the project may or may not address them or exacerbate them.
- Learn how to pronounce the name of a town or street and refer to a road as the locals do. (Referring to a road by its state number when people know it as Main Street will undermine your efforts to establish rapport with the community).
- Meet with seriously affected parties in a small group setting or one-on-one, rather than having them learn about the project in a large, public setting.
- Listen to recommendations from the public and incorporate them into your project plan when possible.

Once contact has been made with the public, all the goodwill established at earlier meetings will be lost if you do not follow through on your commitments.

Trust is earned. It is your job to earn that trust from the public. A person can be hostile toward the project or the Department, but can still build a relationship, and build trust, with you. Relationships are with people, not organizations.

### Communication Is A Two-Way Street

The best communication happens in two directions. The Department should provide the kind of information people need to know, when they need to know it. At the same time, Department staff should also be prepared to listen and respond to public concerns.

The following are a series of techniques to employ effective listening:

- If you want people to listen to you, you should **begin by first listening carefully** to them. Give them your complete attention. Do not interrupt unless you need to ask a clarifying question to make sure you understand what is being said.
- **Listen to what is *not* being said.** That could be just as important. Try to understand the meaning behind the question being asked. For example, if a person asks, “Why didn’t I know about this meeting until a friend told me this afternoon?” what they may really be thinking is, “you did a lousy job letting people know about the meeting.” A good response would be, “Well we’re glad you are here with us tonight. We advertised in the local paper and sent out flyers. But we’d like your ideas on how we could do a better job getting the word out next time.”
- **Watch for body language**, both yours and the people you are meeting with. You know things aren’t going well when you see pointed fingers, rolled eyes, and shaking heads. You may want to acknowledge that you sense people are upset and focus discussion on the reasons people are unhappy. Similarly, your clenched fist, slouched position or lack of eye contact might send a message you would rather not communicate.

- Be sure to **speak in a way people can understand**. Avoid jargon and technical language. If the subject is complex, concentrate on explaining the major points and skip the more technical details.

Avoid jargon, technical language and acronyms.

- **Be personable**. Mingle with people before and after the meeting. Show an interest in getting to know people and an interest in understanding their concerns. The public is more likely to heap criticism on a transportation official who seems aloof and uncaring than someone whose approach is more personal and easier to connect with.

#### TIPS for listening:



##### DO:

- Stop talking.
- Make eye contact and be friendly.
- Ask questions when you're not sure you fully understand a point.
- Repeat the main points so the speaker knows you have his ideas right.
- Be aware of body language, voice tone and emphasis.
- Know your own feelings but set them aside.
- React to ideas, not to the person.

##### DON'T

- Think about your response while the person is still talking.
- Be distracted.
- Assume anything.

### Perception Is Reality

Public perception is one of the most powerful forces you will encounter. If people believe a proposed road is wider than needed or that noise will increase to an intolerable level, do not assume people will let go of their perception just because you say that the road needs to be widened to accommodate expected increases in traffic volume and that noise increase will be “minimal”. Simply presenting your assumptions and your technical data will not sway people to your point of view.

### Why are People Hostile?

If you encounter hostility, it might be because:

- People understand the project and have concerns about how the project will affect them or their environment.
- They are not familiar with the project or have misunderstandings about the project and/or fear the impact of the project.
- They distrust the Department or government in general either because of past breaches of trust or because of natural suspicion.

Public perceptions can be both rational and emotional. Rational content can be addressed by examining data, undertaking technical study and doing a collaborative review of the problem. Changing the rational basis for perceptions is possible by involving the community through information sharing and discussion. These steps will help you work through changing public perceptions:

- **Listen carefully** so you thoroughly understand what people are thinking.
- **Let the community know** you have heard their concerns.
- **Have a dialogue** with the community about the project's purpose and need and see how it aligns with the community's vision for itself.
- **Develop strategies** (information sharing, modeling, field walks, etc.) to discuss the technical elements of a proposal.
- **Be flexible** and modify the plan or design if it will respond to community concerns while also meeting transportation needs. Can the cross section be reduced or fewer takings required? Are there other ways to mitigate impact while still satisfying the purpose and need for the project?

It is more difficult to address the emotional content of perceptions. People usually are unwilling to let go of strong feeling or beliefs. Most of us resist change unless we can clearly see a benefit. You may be managing a project with unavoidable negative impacts on people. If this is the case, the best thing you can do is be empathetic. Discover what the person thinks would be the best solution for them. There may be

some flexibility to accommodate their interests. If possible, talk with the person about why a decision was made to go forward with a project. They may not like the result of the decision but understanding the reasons behind it may make it easier for them to accept.

Understand that listening to input and trying to find win-win solutions is NOT the same as jumping through every hoop, following every suggestion, collecting every piece of suggested data, or considering every alternative. What it DOES mean is making a conscientious effort to help the public understand the Department's position, the purpose and need of your project, and the transportation planning and design process.

### When Emotions Run High...

Facing an angry audience is not easy. Dealing with upset people sometimes cannot be avoided, despite your best efforts at planning ahead, reaching out to local officials and affected people, and using excellent communication skills.

People will get emotional when they feel a loss of control, believe their quality of life will be negatively affected by a project, fear economic impact, or think they are being treated in an unfair or condescending manner.

If you find yourself in front of an angry group, here are some things to keep in mind:

- **Be respectful at all times.** If rude behavior surfaces, immediately ask people to be polite and respectful. Do not engage in an argument, behave defensively, or raise your voice.
- Using a quiet voice, **ask people to speak one at a time.** Having people shouting out or interrupting may lead to a breakdown of civility.
- **Acknowledge people's feelings.** They are real. Dismissing them (even in your manner or gestures or attitude) will make things worse.
- **Answer questions honestly.** Resist the temptation to make points with an audience by telling them what they want to hear. The public respects honesty, even when they are angry.

- **Keep your answers brief.** This will be easy if in advance of the meeting you have prepared answers for the kinds of questions you expect. Remember the public is more likely to have a greater urge to speak to you than to listen (especially if they have already been given a formal presentation).
- **Respond to the questions that are asked.** If you do not know the answer, say so. Tell the person you will get back to them later (be sure to get contact information after the meeting so you can keep your word).
- **Speak in plain language** so that people can more readily understand you. If you need to use a technical term ask if people know what you mean.
- **Look for ways to involve people** in constructive participation. For example, if someone suggests that you don't know how local drivers behave, you might suggest that the community organize a field trip for you so they can show you the problem first hand.

#### More TIPS for responding to emotions:



- Listen to what's being said.
- Acknowledge that you've heard what was said.
- Don't downplay people's concerns.
- Don't be defensive. Don't argue or use data to try to convince them their views are "wrong" or your views are "right".
- Be open to looking at new approaches.
- Understand that community values and desires are as legitimate as the Department's values and desires—your job is to try to find a win-win solution that will allow the Department to meet the transportation need that has been identified.

### Earning Trust and Building Credibility

You, as the Department's representative, will earn trust by being honest, caring and consistently competent. If you communicate honestly and deal with people fairly, the public will usually respond in kind. However, even if you involve the community in your project's decision-making process, there is no guarantee that people will agree with the Department's approach and be



happy with you. Some members (thankfully not the majority) of the public will not trust you, regardless of how trustworthy you are.

**Be genuine.**  
It is not enough to just go through the motions. People will see through an approach that is insincere and not real. Holding meetings and not listening to input can be worse than not holding the meetings in the first place.

### Guidelines For Building Trust:

There are several guidelines to follow that will help you build trust and earn credibility. Remember always to keep these in mind:

- ✓ **Share information early and openly:** Early involvement of the public can lead to a cooperative effort. Conversely, failure to reach out to the public at the beginning may undermine the Department's credibility. This is **not** in the Department's best interests. Once trust is lost and the situation has deteriorated, it is very difficult to get back.
- ✓ **Provide information that people can understand:** Speak in plain English and provide for translation if the audience communicates in another language. Do not use technical jargon or terms that people can't understand.

Failure to reach out to the public and the resulting loss of credibility in **NOT** in the Department's best interests.

- ✓ **Provide accurate information in a timely manner:** Timeliness is important, and the quality of the information also matters. Give people adequate time and notice to review materials, especially if there are complex issues involved.
- ✓ **Get the facts right:** Make sure you present correct information and that all members of the Department are communicating the same message. If an error is made, acknowledge it, and correct it right away. Do not assume people won't notice. If an error is made and discovered later on, people will feel misled, undermining trust.

- ☑ **Only make promises that you can keep:** It is so tempting, especially if you are being pressured by the public, to make a commitment you know will be hard to deliver. Resist making a commitment you will need to break later on. A better strategy would be to promise things that you know you can provide (e.g. interim reports on progress or commit to looking into a particular course of action).
- ☑ **Follow up:** Do what you say you're going to do and get back to people when you have done it. Don't ask for input and then neglect to close the loop by failing to get back to people about what you heard. If you find it difficult to keep notes about commitments you make during a public meeting, have someone else keep minutes so commitments aren't forgotten. Lack of follow-through, even on items that may seem insignificant to you, will undermine trust.
- ☑ **Process is important:** How the Department makes a decision can be as important as what the decision is. If the public feels powerless to express its feelings in a meaningful way or that the Department is not listening, opposition and mistrust is likely to occur.
- ☑ **Hear all groups and points of view:** Views from all groups, including special interest and opposition groups, should be welcomed, otherwise the public participation effort will be seen as less than credible. Good public outreach efforts will be diminished if the Department has selective hearing.
- ☑ **Don't hide:** It is not a good strategy to avoid talking about bad news. You should be in the position of releasing bad news, not responding to it. Face it honestly and promptly. The public respects honesty even if the news is not good. Similarly, respond promptly to people who seek information.
- ☑ **Learn the local customs:** Try to learn as much about a project area as you can. The locals will appreciate your interest.

#### TIPS on what to do when trust is low:

- Identify the reasons for mistrust.
- Acknowledge that trust is low.
- Ask what you can do to restore trust.
- Say what you'll do to prevent mistrust and then do it.
- Be patient. Restoring trust will take time.





# Chapter 8



# Chapter 8:

## How Do I Know It's Working: Evaluating the Program

### INTRODUCTION

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Evaluation of public involvement effectiveness is required by various federal regulations. If public involvement strategies for a particular project are not effective, the desired outcome will not be realized. By assessing and evaluating past efforts, improvements to future public outreach plans can be made. Evaluation requirements are discussed in this Chapter, and sample techniques are presented to evaluate your public involvement program. The public involvement evaluation process should:

- Evaluate techniques used;
- Employ measures that will quantify success; and
- Provide new insight and ideas to improve the process.

### REGULATIONS & REQUIREMENTS

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Transportation projects are carried out in four phases:

- Phase 1 – Planning
- Phase 2 – Project Development/Design/NEPA
- Phase 3 – Construction
- Phase 4 – Operations and Operations Support

There are specific federal requirements for evaluating the effectiveness of public outreach during each of the first three phases. The following is a summary of these requirements:

**Phase 1 – Planning:** The FHWA/FTA regulations for evaluating the effectiveness of the MPO and RPO public involvement program is contained in 23CFR450. This regulation requires a periodic review by the MPO/RPO in conjunction with FHWA/FTA to ensure that full and open access is provided to the MPO decision making processes. The same applies to the Department's state-wide planning efforts. The intent is to determine:

- Which techniques are deemed ineffective; and
- Which innovative and new techniques can provide a better response and more feedback.

**Phase 2 – Project Development, Design and NEPA:** The joint FHWA/FTA “Interim Policy on Public Involvement,” specifically requires FHWA/FTA evaluation of public involvement processes and procedures to assess their success at meeting the performance requirements specified in the regulations. The provision states that it is the policy of FHWA and FTA to aggressively support proactive public involvement at all stages of planning and project development. State Departments of Transportation, MPO’s and transportation providers are required to develop effective involvement processes which are tailored to local conditions.

NEPA requires an effective and continuing public involvement process for all projects developed, designed and constructed with Federal funds. The process must ensure proactive public involvement with **early and continuous involvement**; public accessibility to project technical information; collaborative input for alternatives, evaluation criteria and mitigation needs; and full and open public access and meetings during the decision-making process prior to making final project determinations. In order to fulfill these objectives, the effectiveness of the public involvement must be evaluated.

**Phase 3 – Construction:** Regulation 23CFR630, Subpart J, “Traffic Safety in Highway and Street Work Zones” addresses the need for a transportation management plan which includes public information components. FHWA’s “Work Zone Public Information and Outreach Strategies Guide” (November 2005) discusses the need to evaluate the effectiveness of public information and outreach campaigns to ultimately improve work zone safety and mobility. The Guide calls for periodic evaluation during significant, long-duration construction projects so that strategies and resources can be redirected if existing ones are not effective.

## EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

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At a recent joint FHWA/FTA conference, the question was asked “*What are the indicators of an effective public involvement process?*” The answer provides insight into the evaluation process: “*A good indicator of an effective public involvement process is a well informed public which feels it has opportunities to contribute input into transportation decision-making processes through a broad array of involvement opportunities at all stages*”

*of decision making. In contrast, an ineffective process is one that relies on one or two public meetings or hearings to obtain input immediately prior to decision-making on developed draft plans and programs. Public meetings that are well attended, frequent news coverage on transportation issues, public forums where a broad representation of diverse interests is in attendance, and plans, TIPs, alternatives, and designs which reflect an understanding and consideration of public input are all indicators that the public involvement process is effective.”*

In order to effectively evaluate, monitor and improve public involvement strategies, an evaluation methodology is required. Four steps that may be considered in developing an evaluation methodology are:

- Develop performance measures for each public involvement technique used (eg., public hearing attendance, web-site use);
- Develop performance indicators or goals (evaluation measures) for each technique;
- Evaluate effectiveness of public involvement plans and tools through surveys and/or quantitative statistical analysis; and
- Analyze information collected and compare to performance parameters established in order to perform a quantitative and qualitative evaluation.

## **PERFORMANCE MEASURES & PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

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Each project may utilize a different set of public involvement tools to achieve an optimum level of public input. For large, significant and long-duration projects, it is desirable to establish performance measures and indicators for evaluation before project completion. The measures and indicators should be based on prior experiences and satisfy the following criteria:

- Are they measurable? – Quantitative information should be specified but qualitative performance measures such as level of response, level of understanding, and development or status of relationships, should also be included for staff analysis;
- Are they verifiable? – The results obtained should be agreed upon by multiple, independent observers; and

- Are they cost effective? – The benefits of measuring and verifying an indicator should outweigh the cost to obtain the data. Simple data collection methods are best.

Figure 8.1, Performance Measures and Indicators, provides examples of public involvement tools, performance measures and indicators.

**FIGURE 8.1: PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND INDICATORS**

Public Information Tool	Performance Measure	Performance Indicator
Web Sites	Number of hits	Minimum (based on project size, completion, etc.) X number of hits/month with % increase each month
Public Hearings/ Information Meetings	Attendance, calls, letters	3-5% of affected population (study area) attending. Survey form at hearing to assess effectiveness
Direct Mailings	Number of people reached via calls and letters.	10-20% of meeting attendees received mailing. 85% (minimum) of affected persons reached
Surveys (released at Meetings, or by Mailings)	Number of responses, calls, letters, etc.	60% attendees submit form; 20% of mailed forms returned
Legal Notices	Calls, letters from public and/or media	None - Required by regulations

## EVALUATION METHODS & ANALYSIS

Several methods can be used to collect the information needed to determine if the established performance measures are being met. These methods may include:



**Surveys** – Surveys can include in-person (at meetings, etc.), telephone, mail, or e-mail contacts using a standard survey form or questionnaire. The form and/or questionnaire should be specifically developed for the project and the particular tool being evaluated.

**Quantitative Analysis** – Actual data analysis can be used for many public involvement tools where statistics (number of attendees vs. those notified) are used as performance indicators. Quantitative analysis can indicate if the public involvement tools are reaching the affected audience and which tools provide a greater targeted response rate. Statistical analysis may also be used to compare survey results to evaluation criteria.

Quantitative criteria, for public hearings, for example, may include:

- Attendance rates; and
- Productivity rates (based on hearing survey hand-out responsiveness) and percentage of questions answered by hearing participants who completed survey.
- Perception of effectiveness by survey respondents

**Qualitative Evaluation** – In addition to quantitative methods for evaluation, a qualitative evaluation of the overall public involvement process should be done in-house by Department staff. Department staff familiar with the project, joined by others familiar with the public involvement process, can provide an objective evaluation of the public involvement effort. The staff review and evaluation can focus on the public involvement tools used, such as websites, public hearings, and informational meetings. They may objectively evaluate the process by considering the following:

- ☑ Participation Level of the Project Community – Are all segments represented?
- ☑ Participant Continuity – Are interested parties understanding the process and following through on their concerns?
- ☑ Communication Techniques – Are the public's concerns being listened to?
- ☑ Public Comments are Relevant, Realistic and Appropriate – Does the affected public understand the project?
- ☑ Issues are being resolved – Is project opposition based on unresolved issues or unanswered questions that can be addressed?

Using this qualitative approach, the tools being used and their effectiveness can be self-evaluated by the Department. The results of the qualitative analysis can be summarized quantitatively, if desired, by assigning an agreed-upon score to the public involvement tools reviewed and to each of the major issues described above. The scale could be from 1 to 5, with 5 indicating the most effective tool utilized for the public involvement effort. A sample Qualitative Evaluation Form is shown in Figure 8.2. The form may be used by Department staff to present an overall qualitative evaluation of the tools and public involvement program for the project (design or construction) or planning process. Evaluation will identify those areas where changes and/or improvements should be considered. Generally, if the evaluation is scored at 3 or below, some changes and/or improvement strategies should be considered. The ranking scale should reflect the following as a guide for qualitative evaluation:

- 1 – Not effective, severely lacking
- 2 – Not effective
- 3 – Somewhat effective, neutral
- 4 – Effective, consider some changes
- 5 – Highly effective, changes not required

The self-evaluation can then lead to the next important step of improving the public involvement effort.

After evaluations are conducted, areas in need of improvement should be highlighted and new, and perhaps more active techniques should be considered to replace those determined to be less effective. By capitalizing on lessons learned, the public involvement evaluation process may be just as valuable and informative as the actual public involvement program itself.

FIGURE 8.2: QUALITATIVE EVALUATION FORM

<b>ConnDOT Public Outreach Qualitative Evaluation Form</b>			
<b>Evaluation of</b> _____ <span style="display: block; text-align: center; font-size: small;">(project description)</span>			
Planning <input type="checkbox"/>	NEPA <input type="checkbox"/>	Design <input type="checkbox"/>	Construction <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Time of Evaluation:</b> Study/Project Start _____ Expected Study Completion _____ Evaluation Date _____			
<b>Qualitative Evaluation (by Department Staff)</b>  Use guide below to determine Qualitative Evaluation Ranking (1-5) 1 – Not effective, severely lacking                      4 – Effective, consider some changes 2 – Not effective    5 – Highly effective, changes not required 3 – Somewhat effective, neutral			
<b>Evaluate Public Involvement Tools</b>			
	Yes	Used No	Qualitative Evaluation (1-5)
Web Site	_____	_____	_____
Newsletter	_____	_____	_____
Public Information Meeting	_____	_____	_____
Public Hearing	_____	_____	_____
Direct Mailing	_____	_____	_____
List all others:	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
<b>Evaluate Public Response</b>			
			Qualitative Evaluation (1-5)
a. Participation Level			_____
b. Participant Continuity			_____
c. Communication Techniques			_____
d. Public Comments			_____
e. Issue Resolution			_____
<b>Comments:</b>  _____ _____			
Evaluation prepared by: _____			
	Name (Print)	Title	Date

## IMPROVING THE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

Public involvement program evaluations may be conducted at various stages of a project. Based on the evaluations completed, both quantitative and qualitative, the public outreach or plan may be reviewed to determine what improvements need to be made, if any. If the evaluations are completed at an early stage of project development, improvements and strategy changes may be made. Evaluations carried out later in the project can be useful for documenting pitfalls. That information should be passed on to others within the Department for consideration on future public involvement strategies.

It is recommended that public involvement plans be evaluated at early stages of the process, particularly after major milestones are achieved (i.e., public scoping meeting). If possible, continuing evaluations should be performed. Figure 8.3, “Evaluation Timing”, provides some examples and guidance for performing evaluations at critical project milestones.

**FIGURE 8.3: EVALUATION TIMING**

Process/ Project Type	Project Task	Evaluation Frequency
Planning (TIP/STIP)	TIP development	As time, resources and need dictate
	Ongoing activities (i.e., web site, newsletter)	Semi-annually or as time, resources and need dictate
Project Development/Design/NEPA (significant, large projects)	Scoping Meeting	As time, resources and need dictate
	Ongoing activities (i.e., web site, newsletter)	As time, resources and need dictate
	Project completion	Once at completion, if no previous evaluations
Construction (significant, large projects/long duration)	Shortly after construction has started	Each construction season, if more than one year
	Ongoing activities (i.e., web site, PI office, media information)	As time, resources and need dictate