

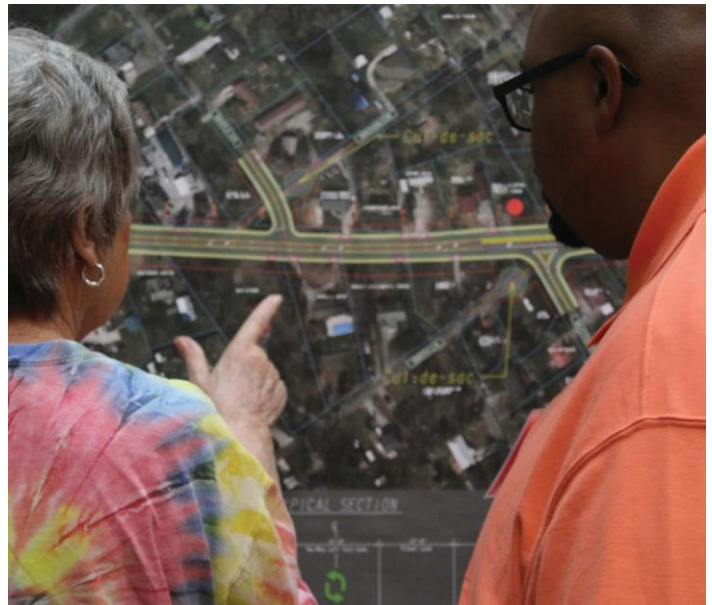


Why are we here?



To discuss and provide comments about proposed improvements to State Route 146 (Cloud Springs Road)

Thank you for coming and we need your input!



Check out our Lane Closures for this Weekend [▲](#)



Clayton: Lane, Ramp Closures on I-75 in Clayton County this Weekend for Bridge Rehabilitation Project



Cobb and Fulton: Daytime Lane Closures on I-285 this Weekend for Concrete Rehabilitation Project

Public Involvement Plan for Georgia DOT Projects

2021

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Chapter One: Introduction

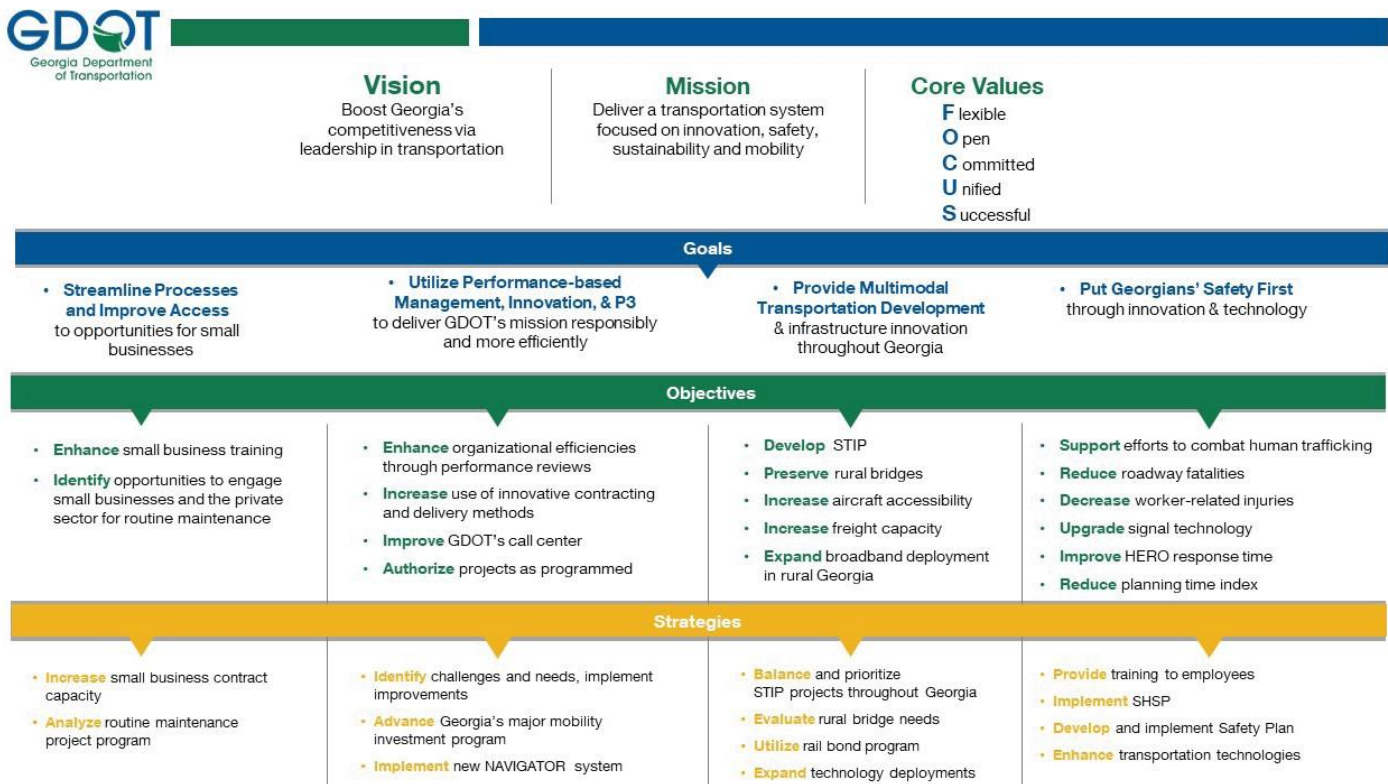
The development of this PI Plan is part of the Georgia Federal-Aid Stewardship and Oversight Agreement between FHWA and Georgia Department of Transportation (Georgia DOT or the Department) and it applies to all projects that include a public involvement component. Georgia DOT is the state agency responsible for the administration and operation of an efficient, modern system of public roads, highways and other modes of transportation including public transit, rail, aviation, ports and bicycle and pedestrian facilities. As such, Georgia DOT must ensure the effective and efficient planning, design, construction and maintenance of transportation systems statewide.

The State's Transportation Goals are to:

- Streamline processes and improve access to opportunities for small businesses
- Utilize Performance-based management, innovation, and P3 to deliver GDOT's mission responsibly and more efficiently
- Provide multimodal transportation development & infrastructure innovation throughout Georgia
- Put Georgians' safety first through innovation & technology

Georgia DOT's Vision, and Mission:

- **Vision**
 - Boost Georgia's competitiveness via leadership in transportation
- **Mission**
 - Deliver a transportation system focused on innovation, safety, sustainability and mobility



We, as an agency are public servants and stewards of the public trust. Our customers and stakeholders must be at the center of all we do; how we communicate with them on a daily basis and over time will determine the public's perception of us. The Public Involvement Plan will be updated as needed based on results of yearly audits conducted for the Federal Highway Administration to include new strategies, updated policies and innovative ideas to further engage the public.

1.1 Georgia DOT's Public Involvement Plan's Purpose and Goals

This Public Involvement Plan is designed to inform Georgia DOT staff and partners about the policies, expectations, and strategies that may be used for pro-active and responsive engagement with the public throughout the transportation project delivery process. As Georgia DOT works to plan, design, construct and maintain a high-quality transportation infrastructure, it is important to remember that the public is our primary customer. Listening and responding to customer concerns is the foundation of every successful public agency's mission and is necessary for competing interests to reach consensus on how to address multiple social needs.

The department is committed to proactively planning and providing opportunities that encourage public participation. There is no magic formula to meeting the needs and expectations of the public that is served, nor is there one way to encourage public participation. There also are no viable short cuts or a one-size fits all approach.

Instead, the process of soliciting, listening, and responding to citizen and customer input about a public agency's plans for action can be a complicated, challenging and often intimidating process for all involved. However, when planned and done well, it can be a rewarding and meaningful experience that leads to better decisions on issues of important public policy.

Seeking meaningful public involvement is important to understanding concerns of communities and to the final outcome of a program, project, plan or study. In addition, it is very important to encourage participation of traditionally underserved Georgians in identifying and addressing transportation issues. The goal is to foster improved two-way communication and trust between Georgia DOT and its customers, and to develop better products and services that not only address problems, but also promote a better quality of life in Georgia.

The public involvement process is successful only if it provides an opportunity to better serve Georgia's citizens and carry out the department's public service responsibilities. The benefit to the transportation program is a clear understanding of the cultural values, opinions and needs of a diverse citizenry; how those values and needs influence transportation planning; and how different communities use the transportation system in their daily lives.

Thus, the overarching purpose and goals of Georgia DOT's Public Involvement Plan are to:

- Ensure the department's compliance with requirements of federal and state laws, regulations and policies that guide public involvement in project development. (See Chapter 2 for the full listing);
- Provide guidance and a toolbox of strategies and initiatives that may be used by department staff and consultants in the effort to engage the public and enhance the transportation decision-making process;
- Underscore the importance of meaningful public involvement to the quality of Georgia's transportation programs and projects; and
- Provide guidance and strategies that help ensure that all impacted communities are not only invited, but encouraged to participate in Georgia's transportation decisions.

Georgia DOT has implemented a "cradle to grave," project management approach to deliver Georgia's transportation projects, which is inclusive of each project phase from planning through operations and maintenance. Project managers and project team members (see subsections 3.1 - 3.3) share and remain aware of each project's concept, design, environmental aspects, potential right-of-way implications, and construction. The team also identifies unique stakeholder groups, community contexts, design challenges and ultimate successes of the public involvement efforts. One of the key benefits of this approach, is the maximization of the continuum of information through all phases for the most efficient on-time, on-budget delivery. Toward that end, this Public Involvement Plan encourages project teams to understand the importance of their respective and collective roles in the public involvement process of the department's project development activities, and provides strategies and tactics for effective public involvement.

1.2 Understanding Georgia's Communities: Background Information for Context

Each of Georgia DOT's transportation projects will certainly have its own set of unique stakeholders (area residents, businesses, commuters, emergency response agencies, etc.) that will need unique strategies and tactics for effective public involvement. However, a general understanding of Georgia's diverse citizens, customers and communities, may be helpful as background context.

Largely fueled by strong regional economies (Atlanta, Athens, Columbus, etc.), Georgia is one of the fastest growing states in the country. Georgia's population has grown over 27% in the last ten years; the US Census documents Georgia's population as more than 10 million in 2014. Much of the growth is focused in the 20-county metropolitan Atlanta region; approximately 3.1 million people now reside in the Atlanta region, more than double the population of three decades ago.

Georgia Demographics

| | |
|---|------------|
| Population, 2016 estimate | 10,429,379 |
| Persons under 18 years, 2016 | 24.4% |
| Persons 65 years and over, 2016 | 13.1% |
| White alone, 2016 | 61.2% |
| Black or African American alone, 2016 | 32.0% |
| American Indian, Alaska Native alone 2016 | 0.5% |
| Asian alone, 2016 | 4.1% |
| Hispanic or Latino, 2016 | 9.4% |
| Foreign born persons, 2012-2016 | 9.8% |
| Language other than English spoken at home, 2012-2016 | 13.7% |
| High school grad or higher, age 25+, 2012-2016 | 85.8% |
| Bachelor's degree or higher, age 25+, 2012-2016 | 29.4% |
| Veterans, 2012-2016 | 662,333 |
| Homeownership rate, 2012-2016 | 62.8% |
| Per capita income in past 12 months (2016 dollars), 2012-2016 | \$26,678 |
| Median household income (2016 dollars), 2012-2016 | \$51,037 |
| Persons in poverty, percent | 16.0% |

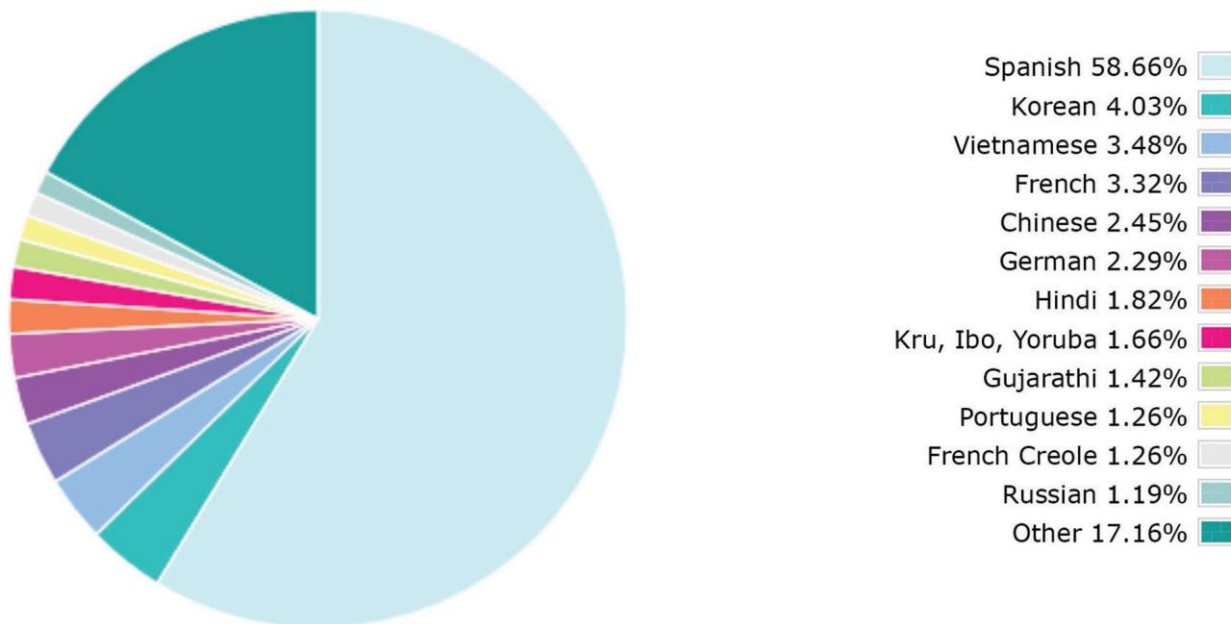
Some other general background factors that may inform public engagement considerations and tactics include community/stakeholder average age; educational attainment; income; and home and/or business ownership. The U.S. Census Bureau can also be of assistance to obtain some of this information by searching by county or city.

Closely related to the state's growth in population is the growth in population diversity. Georgia has become a more culturally diverse state as a result of tremendous commercial development, a thriving public and private college community, and population growth. For example, between 2000 and 2010, Gwinnett County in metro Atlanta became one of the most diverse counties in the nation, with nearly one third of all households speaking a language other than English and 25.5% foreign born residents.*

The U.S Census Bureau (www.census.gov) and the Modern Language Association (MLA) (https://apps.mla.org/map_data) are great resources to discover the languages used statewide may need to be addressed throughout the public involvement process.

Most spoken languages in Georgia in 2010

English is spoken by 87.35% of people over 5 years old in Georgia.
 Languages other than English are spoken by 12.65%.
 Speakers of languages other than English are divided up as follows.



MLA cites the top ten most common languages in Georgia between 2006 and 2010 as:

- | | |
|---------------|---------------------|
| 1. Spanish | 6. German |
| 2. Korean | 7. Hindi |
| 3. Vietnamese | 8. Kru, Ibo, Yoruba |
| 4. French | 9. Gujarati |
| 5. Chinese | 10. Portuguese |

[Sources * = US Census Bureau, **= Modern Language Association]

In keeping with Georgia's economic and population growth, its informed public citizenry expects greater accountability from public officials and high levels of efficiency and quality from the products and services provided by government agencies. The public's desire to be involved in decisions that affect the quality of their lives is increasing, along with the demand for government to be transparent and responsive to public needs and expectations. It is Georgia DOT's responsibility to establish the best ways to overcome barriers to effective public engagement and reach as many of our customers/stakeholders as possible. The department's commitment to public involvement encourages and continues to enhance the role of public involvement in Georgia's transportation decision-making process.

Chapter Two: Requirements for Public Involvement

The Public Involvement requirements of federal and state legislation are numerous and wide ranging and serve as guiding principles of the Department's expectations for public engagement activities. (See Appendix A, Federal and State Regulatory Requirements and Guidance Pertaining to Public Involvement) Georgia DOT is committed to embracing federal and state laws and regulations that guide public involvement in transportation decision-making, and additionally, applying these principles to transportation projects.

Public participation in transportation planning and programming processes, and in project development is emphasized in the following legislation references:

- Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA);
- 1998 Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21);
- TEA-21's successor, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) in 2005; and
- Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (Map-21). Enacted in 2012, MAP-21 Fast Act requires states and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) to involve constituents.
- 23 U.S.C. § 139 - U.S. Code - Efficient environmental reviews for project decision-making
- 23 U.S.C. § 128 - U.S. Code - Public hearings
- 23 U.S.C. § 168 - U.S. Code - Integration of planning and environmental review
- Federal legislation also requires public involvement in developing and amending metropolitan (and rural) long-range transportation plans (see subsection 4.1); Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs), the long range Statewide Transportation Plan (4.1); the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) (4.1); and throughout project development.
- The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations [CFR]) requires that agencies make a diligent effort to involve the public in preparing and implementing their NEPA procedures during the environmental phase of project delivery. NEPA also requires agencies to provide public notice of NEPA-related hearings, public meetings, and the availability of environmental documents to inform individuals and agencies that may be interested or affected. (see subsection 4.3)
- The environmental regulations of the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) can be found at CFR Title 23 Part 771 – Environmental Impact and Related Procedures. These regulations were adopted to implement NEPA requirements for surface transportation projects and include requirements for public input in the project development process. Under 23 CFR 771, agencies involved with federally funded transportation activities must:
 - make decisions in the overall public interest;
 - inform the public and other governmental entities and involve them in the decision-making process; publish legal notices; and
 - provide opportunity for public hearings to obtain input regarding transportation projects.
- Section 136(b) of the 1970 Federal-Aid Highway Act (23 USC 109[h]) directs the Secretary of Transportation to disseminate guidelines designed to ensure that possible social, economic, and environmental effects of federal-aid highway projects are fully considered and that final decisions are made in the best overall public interest.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other Non-discrimination laws:

- Title VI (42 USC 2000d-2000d-1) prohibits exclusion from participation in, denial of benefits of, and discrimination under federally assisted programs on grounds of race, color, or national origin.
- In addition to Title VI, there are other Non-discrimination Statutes that afford legal protection, including Section 162 (a) of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1973 (23 USC 324) (sex), Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (age), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973/Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 (disability). Taken together, these requirements define an over-arching Title VI/Nondiscrimination Program. It is important to also understand that Title VI and the additional Non-discrimination requirements are applicable to Federal programs in addition to programs receiving federal financial assistance due to the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987.⁸

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); 28CFR Part 35:

ADA of 1990 as amended encourages the involvement of people with disabilities in the development and improvement of transportation and paratransit plans and services and prohibits discrimination of the disabled.

- Title II of the Act, 42 US Code Sections 12131-12134 - "... no qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of services, programs, or activities of a public entity, or be subjected to discrimination by any such entity."
- Title III of the Act, 42 US Codes 20000d-2000d-1 - "... no qualified individual with a disability shall, because a public entity's facilities are inaccessible to or unusable by individuals with disabilities, be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of a public entity, or be subjected to discrimination by any public entity."

Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504 provides non-discrimination protection for persons with disabilities:

- No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States, as defined in Section 7(20) shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance or under any program or activity conducted by any Executive agency.

Section 162 (a) of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1973 (23 USC 324) addresses discrimination on the basis of sex:

- This section states that no person shall on the ground of sex be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal assistance.

Executive Order 12898:

Executive Order 12898 addresses environmental justice and emphasizes the need for the full and fair participation of minority and low income communities in public involvement and the environmental decision-making process.

- This Order requires identification of disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of agencies' actions on minority and low-income populations.
- Requires each agency to develop strategies for evaluating environmental justice.
- Promotes access by minority and low-income communities to public information and public participation.

Executive Order 13166:

Executive Order 13166 requires agencies to improve access to services for persons with limited English proficiency (LEP).

- Agencies must develop plans for persons who, as a result of national origin, have limited English Proficiency, to improve ensure their meaningful access to federally conducted and federally assisted programs, activities and services.
- The Federal Highway Administration has made Georgia DOT's Recipients and Sub-Recipients responsible for satisfying the requirements of LEP. Recipients and Sub-Recipients are responsible for satisfying the LEP requirements including conducting a Four-Factor Analysis and developing a Language Access Plan.
- USDOT is publishing guidance concerning services and policies by recipients of Federal financial assistance from the USDOT related to persons with Limited English proficiency. The guidance is based on the prohibition against national origin discrimination in Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as it affects limited English proficient persons.

2.1 Statutes At A Glance

Intent

| | |
|--|--|
| Title VI - (Section 42 USC 2000) - 1964 | Prevents discrimination based on race, color, religion or national origin. |
| Rehabilitation Act – 1973/ADA of 1990 (Section 504 29 USC 790) | Protects qualified individuals from discrimination based on their disability. |
| Federal-Aid Highway Act - 1973 (Section 23 USC 324) | Prevents discrimination based on gender. |
| Age Discrimination - 1975 (42 USC 6101) | Prevents discrimination based on age. |
| FHWA Title VI Regulations - 1976 (Section 23 CFR Part 200) | Identifies specific actions and attributes to ensure compliance. |
| Environmental Justice - 1976 (Executive Order 12898) | Mandates fair and equitable treatment of low-income and minority populations. |
| Executive Order 13166 - 2000 | Mandates that Limited English Proficiency persons (who do not speak English as their primary language and have limited ability to read, speak, write or understand English) have meaningful access to programs and services. |

At all levels, transportation planning is undertaken through continuing, cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning processes involving planning partners. All products developed at the state level are described on the following pages, including a description of their public involvement activities. Other tools available for public involvement programs are included in the section outlining public involvement techniques.

Chapter Three: From Project Initiation Through Completion, Operations and Maintenance:

Georgia DOT's Approach to Project Delivery and Public Involvement:

Georgia DOT has adopted a “cradle to grave,” concept/project management approach to project delivery, designed to enhance the continuum of information for the most efficient on-time, on-budget delivery. Toward that end, the Department encourages project teams to understand their important roles in public involvement activity from planning and project development through preconstruction and construction.

3.1 Project Teams:

At some point during the project delivery process, staff from the following areas become involved in the project, and are considered part of the Project Teams:

- Planning
- Project Management (OPD)
- Office of Roadway Design/Design Phase Leader
- Right of Way
- Office of Environmental Services
- Office of Innovative Project Delivery (when alternative delivery methods are utilized, see subsection 4.5)
- District Planning and District Preconstruction
- Office of Communications in General Office (G.O.) and/or District Communications Officers (DCOs)
- District Construction
- Office of Traffic Operations (District and G.O.)
- Office of Maintenance (District and G.O.)

The effectiveness of Georgia DOT project teams to engage the public and stakeholders on select projects from concept through completion has direct impact on achieving of the Department's strategic business goals, which include:

- To instill trust among our constituents (traveling public, elected officials, businesses, local governments, etc.) through transparency and accountability;
- To provide good customer service; and
- To communicate effectively to create strong partnerships.

There are many points along the Georgia DOT Plan Development Process (PDP) when members of Project Teams have the opportunity – and more importantly, the responsibility – to engage the public and/or key project stakeholders. While we at Georgia DOT understand how proposed transportation projects will benefit a community, a city, region or even the state, nearby residents and businesses may not fully understand or agree with the benefit of the end result.

When the project's complexity, longevity or public interest warrants, each member of the Georgia DOT Project Team should seek out, encourage and facilitate public input/engagement opportunities early and often. Each project has its own set of unique public involvement and outreach opportunities and challenges during each phase of project development. For example, public outreach may not be necessary during design phase for an intersection improvement in a low-traffic location; however, once that project moves to construction, traffic control impacts may warrant some outreach to local businesses, residents, schools, and community resources.

It is important to note that not all projects, including major projects (as defined by the PDP), carry negative connotations for the public. Project teams should be as aware of projects that have strong public support as they are of those that are negatively perceived by the public.

It is the responsibility of the Georgia DOT project team members to provide project stakeholders with the opportunity for input into our decision-making process. Toward that end, it is the responsibility of the Project Team to:

- Plan and implement early and often public involvement activities;
- Maximize opportunities to educate and inform any/all affected audiences/groups;
- Solicit, capture and respond to public input in a timely fashion with courtesy and in earnest; and
- Instill trust of the department and the authenticity of its public involvement process.

3.2 General Public Involvement Guidance for all Georgia DOT Project Teams:

- Pro-actively seek out and inform, involve the public early in the process
- Seek ways to educate the public on why a project is being proposed, what those existing conditions are, the need for the solution or solutions, what are the expected benefits of a project and what would occur if nothing is done to address the need and purpose of a project
- Let inclusion be your primary goal
- Research your project corridor to ensure you're considering the needs of the traditionally underserved and/or those with limited English proficiency, including minority groups and low-income populations
- Establish partnerships and communication with other agencies, local governments, private sector transportation entities and others
- Always strive to eliminate barriers to participation when determining how to communicate, and deciding on meeting times and locations
- Involve the services of the Visual Engineering Resource Group (VERG) unit in order to more effectively communicate the project purpose and benefits of the project through graphics and visual representations of the project
- Use Info Graphs and pictures to convey project information on introductory boards prior to public seeing displays
- Provide understandable information about future conditions - what will happen in the no-build condition
- Transparency, access to information and responsiveness will ensure the public trust
- Meaningful solicitation, collection, review and response to public comments

3.3 General Descriptions of Project Team Office Roles and Responsibilities in Public Involvement

The Department's policy is to ensure an open and transparent public involvement process. We are focused on developing an approach to public involvement that maintains clear and consistent procedures throughout the Department.

Office of Planning manages Georgia's transportation planning program, in addition to developing the Statewide Transportation Plan (SWTP), Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and the Statewide Strategic Transportation Plan (SSTP). These plans require extensive public involvement activities throughout the state. The Office of Planning also works with the local governments, elected officials and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), and assists with Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) development. The Office of Planning conducts various types of transportation studies, some of which have a public involvement component, throughout rural and urban communities. (See subsection 4.1)

Office of Program Control (OPC) creates initial schedules for project managers in the Office of Program Delivery and the Office of Innovative Program Delivery. The created schedules are used in the Project Team Initiation Process (PTIP) for Georgia DOT sponsored projects and in coordinating with Locals on Local sponsored projects. The schedules include activities for public meetings such as Public Information Open Houses (PIOH), Public Hearing Open Houses (PHOH), and supplemental public meetings as deemed necessary by the project team. The initial schedules will then be submitted to the Schedule Review Committee where they are reviewed by Subject Matter Experts (SME) to ensure activities within the schedules are sufficient for the scope of the project, including the Public Involvement Plan. It is at this time, the beginning of a project, that PI activities are often considered and weighted as critical to the success of a project. The Schedule Review Committee will then recommend schedules for approval by the Director of Planning and the Chief Engineer.

Office of Roadway Design/Design Phase Leader develops project conceptual displays that are discussed at the Concept team meetings, PIOH meetings, and PHOH meetings. The design office's activities typically include:

- Define the project footprint and the proposed ROW
- Identify and provide the project description and project limits
- Explain the project display to the team and ensures all team members have an understanding of the project display
- Ensure easy to understand and visually appealing graphics that demonstrate project benefits/impacts.
- Develop project quantity for preliminary cost estimate
- Participate in PIOH and PHOH dry run meetings
- Participate in the Public meetings, communicate and explain the projects display and design
- Develop the project Fact Sheet
- Provide easels and board to appropriately layout the project display
- Provide necessary information to the VERG team so they can develop Visualization models

Division of Program Delivery (OPD) focuses on management of a project's scope, schedule and budget, from the "cradle to the grave", while establishing stakeholder relationships. In partnership with other project team members, project managers (PMs) helping to achieve the maximum, meaningful public involvement for each project that results in sound transportation decisions for Georgia's communities.

OPD coordinates project development and delivery with department offices, MPO staff, local government, business and community stakeholders, and other state and federal agencies. Project managers focus on critical project delivery tasks that include scope, schedule and budget development due to the increased importance that delivery plays in life-cycle of a project.

Office of Environmental Services (OES) provides professional support and expertise to Georgia DOT project team members regarding NEPA and GEPA requirements and activities. It is key that OES staff or their designees are involved early in the project development process. A summary of OES activities include:

- Develop and review public involvement plans related to NEPA and GEPA (historical, cultural, air, noise, flora/fauna impacts, etc.);
- Provide guidance on the environmental process to project teams and consultants;
- Ensure that public involvement plans appropriately address and engage all project stakeholders, including any special activities employed to mitigate any ADA/access, language, socio-economic barriers to their participation in the decision-making process
- Conduct dry-runs of upcoming detour meetings, open houses and public hearings utilizing the check-list to thoroughly discuss each project and identify potential concerns the public may have expressed in the past or currently have and have personnel on hand at meetings to deal with any environmental questions that may arise;
- Ensure that all Public Information Open Houses (PIOH) and Public Hearing Open Houses (PHOH) are planned and held according to state and federal law standards;

- Participate in PIOHs and PHOHs to ensure the public involvement department standards are in accordance with brand guidelines and the record of the meeting is properly documented;
- Coordinate and organize all PIOHs and PHOHs within the state to lessen conflicts between offices and District's meeting times and locations;
- Coordinate with local governments and consultants on their public outreach efforts ensuring they have access to the appropriate brand guidelines to be in compliance with department guidelines associated with department projects;
- Prepare an initial synopsis of each PIOH, prepare a Summary of Comments of all comments for the official transcript of the meeting and coordinate responses from appropriate offices to public comments and questions to be discussed during meeting de-brief;
- Assist project managers and district personnel in making the decision on the need for a PIOH, PHOH or the opportunity for a PHOH or other outreach method; and
- Ensure the department's e-calendar, which lists all upcoming public hearings and meetings in the state, remains up-to-date
- Coordinate and develop project web pages, whether considered virtual public involvement or in-person public involvement, utilizing the department's standardized platform for development with project managers, communications staff and additional team members to ensure consistency and meet agency IT guidelines

Office of Innovative Delivery (OID) is part of the P3/Program Delivery Division and manages all activities related to alternative delivery and innovative contracting, including Design-Build and Public Private Partnerships (P3). In addition to the project management duties in the Office of Program Delivery, OID provides innovative approaches in delivery that can save time and money. This office is responsible for advising, procuring and managing projects that are to be delivered by a means that is different than the typical Design-Bid-Build approach. Instead of procuring solely a construction contract, alternative delivery allows the design and other elements to be combined into the contract. OID coordinates the respective innovative project development similar to OPD, serving as the point of responsibility for procurement, scope, schedule and budget.

Office of Communications complements and supports the efforts of individual offices by assisting with public involvement activities. Ideally, early in the project development phase, Communications is made aware of projects that may require utilization of the office's resources and capabilities. With the increase in technology and the department's utilization of more cost-effective and broad reaching digital initiatives, the public's expectation of the department to meet them where they are has increased. The office's capabilities may include, but are not limited to:

- Media relations
- Speeches and presentations
- Writing and editing of ads, proposals, press releases, response letters, etc.
- Social Media tactics utilizing Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Blog
- Publications and brochures
- Web page development utilizing Arc GIS Hub
- Grassroots community relations outreach utilizing the District Communications Officers, and/or
- Coordinating with public involvement consultants to ensure appropriate design and editorial standards are achieved in materials produced on Georgia DOT's behalf following brand standards and guidelines set forth by the department with creation of new brand identity in 2018.

For example, using media relations activities in support of making the public aware of public meetings (PIOHs and PHOHs), Communications staff will write and distribute press releases announcing the date, location and time of project public meetings; determine which media outlets in the project area are most appropriate to receive the press release; and follow up with questions from reporters; assist the project manager in providing timely responses to media inquiries. For some projects, the Communications team member or District Communications Officer will attend the PIOH/PHOH to assist with media inquiries during the meeting. Other communications strategies and tactics are described in Chapter 6.

Right-of-Way Office is responsible for the acquisition of properties necessary for transportation projects. This includes plan design review and approval, appraisal, relocation assistance, condemnation, negotiation and property management. Both Georgia DOT acquisitions and local government acquisitions (if the local-let project includes state or federal funds) are monitored by this office.

The Right-of-Way acquisition process can be daunting to the public. It is incumbent upon us to provide the information the public needs, and respond to questions and concerns during the process. (See subsection 4.4) Georgia DOT considers this important interaction with the public a form of public involvement.

District Planning and District Preconstruction staff assist project teams with identifying and securing locations in or near proposed project corridors that meet Georgia DOT standards for public meeting sites. These sites should meet some basic criteria for size, ADA accessibility, proximity to transit, etc. to ensure maximum public participation. Staff in this office will also:

- Provide guidance on the print media legal organ in the county where the project is located and placement of the appropriate advertisement to announce the meeting;
- Secure outside vendors to provide language translations and/or to transcribe verbal comments from the public as appropriate;
- Make recommendations on quantities and locations of signage to be printed and posted in the project community that announces upcoming public meetings in advance; and
- Document the number of attendees at the meetings, including any public/elected officials.

Consultants and Local Governments

The Department works with many consultants and local government bodies in the process of taking a project from the planning stage to construction and then to operations and maintenance if needed. The Department takes the following measures to ensure that local governments and consultant groups understand and utilize Georgia DOT's official Public Involvement Plan: (See Appendix H)

- The Project Framework Agreement (PFA) states that all local government entities working on a Georgia DOT project must follow the guidelines of the Department's Public Involvement Plan when doing public outreach.
- The Plan is distributed to all consultants/contractors working on any project that may involve any level of public outreach. The Department's plan should be used as a general guide in the development of individual project public involvement plans.
- Consultants are encouraged to contact the Office of Communications regarding public outreach on any project to ensure that when necessary, outreach efforts can be combined and leveraged on other projects, and that project information is developed in keeping with Georgia DOT's editorial and design standards.
- In addition to the formal requirements mentioned, consultants are encouraged to ensure that the following public involvement themes are followed:
 - Insist on early and continuing public involvement opportunities throughout the transportation planning and programming process;
 - When appropriate, provide the public access to technical and policy information used to develop transportation programs and projects;
 - Develop a public information clearinghouse, coordinating with the Office of Communications for public meetings; and
 - Ensure that invitations to public officials, when appropriate, are accurate and timely

Chapter Four: Georgia DOT's Public Involvement Activities By Project Development Phase: Planning

4.1 The Georgia DOT Office of Planning, in partnership with federal and state agencies, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and local governments, is responsible for the statewide transportation planning process. This includes the development of the federally-required long-range Statewide Transportation Plan (SWTP); the short-range Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP); and the state-required Statewide Strategic Transportation Plan (SSTP).

- **SWTP** - The SWTP is the federally-required multimodal long-range transportation plan that maintains at least a 20-year planning horizon. The SWTP assesses the current and future performance of all major transportation modes in the state and also examines the linkages between modes. The SWTP provides GDOT with technical and programmatic guidance needed to meet the transportation demands of the state.
- **STIP** - The STIP is a federally-required short-term programming document which identifies specific project phases for implementation over the current and next three fiscal years. The STIP must be updated at least every four years, and projects included in the STIP must be consistent with the long-range SWTP.
- **SSTP** - The SSTP is the long range investment strategy for transportation in Georgia and supports the state's strategic transportation goals and policies.

Public Involvement for the Statewide Transportation Plan (SWTP)

Federal regulation, under 23 CFR 450, requires public involvement in the development of the Statewide Transportation Plan (SWTP). Public involvement must be a part of statewide long-range visioning and transportation policy making, which now includes the SSTP. Georgia DOT's official policy document regarding SWTP public involvement, including an extensive list of outreach strategies and tactics can be found here:

<http://www.dot.ga.gov/IS/SSTP>

Office of Planning leads the public involvement effort for the update of the SWTP targeted to reach all sectors of the public, including the traditionally underserved, and to offer opportunities to participate in shaping the state's future transportation. For example, the public involvement plan for the SWTP/SSTP ensures stakeholder involvement by using a number of potential approaches as follows:

- Outreach efforts through a Stakeholder Advisory Committee established for the SWTP/SSTP update will involve Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), local jurisdictions, modal representatives, transit providers, and state agencies.
- Additional meetings will be held in the midpoint of the SWTP development; and
- Meetings will be held with the interested parties to inform the group of the SWTP findings and recommendations.
- In order to ensure the widest possible public participation, project activities, findings and conclusions and public meeting schedules are disseminated through the general media across the state, including social media and on the web.
- Information materials (brochures, fact sheets, slides, summary reports, display boards, etc.) will be developed to provide summary information on the SWTP/SSTP update process in layman's terms for the general public, when necessary.
- The Georgia DOT website posts information on the SWTP/SSTP which can be found at <http://www.dot.ga.gov/IS/SSTP>. Visitors to this page are able to submit comments and questions about the SWTP/SSTP via the email address provided on the website. In addition, the site offers visitors a project fact sheet, schedule, FAQs, current and historical reports and documents and a GDOT social media live stream banner. The website helps in documenting outreach efforts; the number of visitors to the website is counted. The website also houses study update public surveys during the time periods that they are active and soliciting responses.

- Various techniques should be employed to ensure that language, culture, access and economic barriers are addressed when SWTP information is shared and public input is needed. Example of these techniques might include the following:
 - Partnering with minority business associations and Chambers of Commerce, etc.
 - Focus group meetings inviting members of the African-American, Asian, Hispanic, disabled and other traditionally underserved communities to give ideas/comments and gain feedback on the Plan
 - Targeted focus on minority media outlets and inclusion of minority media in the paid advertising schedule
 - Securing hired and/or volunteer translators to assist at project meetings and to translate project documents
 - Adjust meeting dates, times and locations to fit the work schedules and/or cultural behaviors of the affected community. For example, be mindful of religious and other holidays and dress codes that would impact how successfully your project information will be received
 - Consider a mix of low- and high-tech ways to communicate

Public Involvement for the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP)

Federal legislation requires development of a Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The STIP lists projects proposed statewide for the next four years and it is updated and approved at least every four years. Public involvement is crucial to developing the STIP. In Georgia's 16 metropolitan areas, the MPOs are responsible for public involvement in the development of their respective Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP). In the rural areas of the state, the Department is responsible for providing opportunities for public review and comment on the STIP.

Georgia DOT's policies on STIP public involvement and the role of the MPOs can be found here:

<http://www.dot.ga.gov/IS/STIP>

Examples of STIP public involvement process outreach strategies include:

- Hold public meetings in six of Georgia DOT's seven districts (District 7 contains only urban areas, which is handled by the MPO's public involvement process) to provide a local opportunity to comment on the STIP
- Coordinate with the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) and the Association of County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG) to provide outreach to their respective city and county members
- Coordinate with Regional Commissions
- Provide interpreters for citizens with limited English proficiency and/or hearing impairments as needed.
- Ensure that hand-outs are written in simple, easy-to-read language
- Georgia DOT District staff meet with representatives from each county and some cities in their area to review projects proposed for their county/city in the pre-draft STIP. At these meetings, transportation issues and projects are discussed, local officials offer comments, and new requests are forwarded to the appropriate Georgia DOT office for action
- Implement special outreach to media in traditionally underserved communities including, but not limited to, neighborhood newspapers; Hispanic, African-American and Asian newspapers and broadcast stations
- The STIP is available on Georgia DOT's web page: <http://www.dot.ga.gov/IS/STIP>. The page also includes an email contact, STIPCoordinator@dot.ga.gov for those citizens who would like to ask questions or make comments via email

The planning related public outreach activities can include a combination of in person and virtual meetings.

Chapter Four (cont.): Georgia DOT's Public Involvement Activities By Project Development Phase: Design

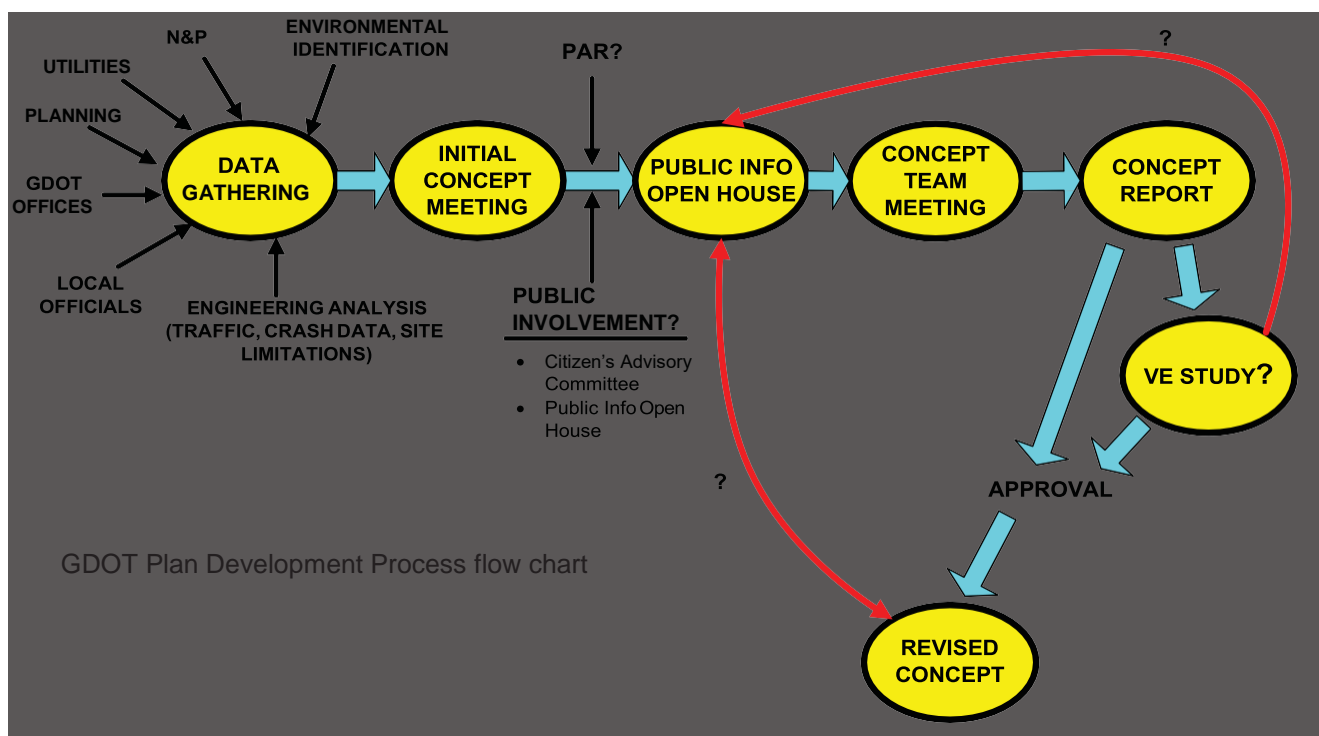
4.2 From input received during the planning phase, projects advance through to the design phase of project delivery. Georgia DOT conducts a number of public involvement activities and meetings in coordination with local governments to “hone in” on the preferred practical design alternative. In the project development process, the GDOT's goals are to:

- Develop and implement practices that offer the public a better understanding of design related activities and further solicit public input into the transportation decision making processes, and
- Enhance public awareness and transparency in the project development process

Initial Concept Meetings

The purpose of the Initial Concept Meeting is to produce, as early in the project development process as possible, a high quality and more detailed concept for all major projects and many minor projects by proactively organizing the Department's resources more efficiently. Depending on the anticipated scope and complexity of the proposed project, the Project Manager (PM) is encouraged to review the project location with the Area Engineer prior to the initial concept meeting to obtain local understanding of the area/corridor and public sentiment, if known. Then, the Initial Concept Meeting, attended by Project Team members (Planning and Programming, Roadway Design, Environmental Services, Communications, Bridge Design [if bridge is on project], Right-of-Way, Construction, Traffic Operations, Materials and Research, Utility and District offices) and any specialty team members, discussion will help the project team to:

- Establish lines of communications and responsibilities between Project Team members
- Validate the “need and purpose” before working on the concept
- Gain a better understanding of the project corridor from a local perspective
- Understand the environmental scope
- Determine the anticipated public involvement approach
- Identify and review existing project information
- Define information that is needed to develop the concept
- Review the project schedule
- Provide an efficient transition between Planning and Design phases and their respective roles and responsibilities



Context Sensitive Design/Solutions

Context-Sensitive Design (CSD) is a process for achieving design excellence by developing transportation alternatives that require continuous, collaborative communication and consensus between transportation agencies, professionals, and any and all project stakeholders. The idea of good design has been undergoing a transformation to include the element of context—how transportation facilities can integrate and interact with the dynamics of the existing natural and man-made environment, and what can be done to preserve or even enhance those features.

Toward that end, the goal of CSD projects is to develop a facility that:

- Is harmonious with the community;
- Preserves existing aesthetics, history and environmental resources; and
- Integrates these innovative approaches with traditional transportation goals for safety and performance

Originally called context-sensitive design, the industry practice has evolved into Context-Sensitive Solutions (CSS) to represent the multi-dimensional nature of the process. CSS calls for innovative thinking, improved coordination and communication, and interdisciplinary decision-making, all as a part of the project development and implementation process. Details on the steps to be taken to mobilize adequate staff or consultant resources to complete the tasks associated with managing a Stakeholders Group, Advisory Committee, or other CSD public involvement strategy, are described in Georgia DOT's Context Sensitive Design Manual, which can be found here: http://www.dot.ga.gov/PartnerSmart/DesignManuals/ContextSensitiveDesign/GDOT_CSD_Manual.pdf

For the purposes of roadway planning and design in Georgia, there are five Guiding Principles that define and promote good CSS practices:

1. Interdisciplinary Project Teams - Project Teams should include multiple disciplines such as community outreach professionals, design engineers, landscape architects, land use planners, environmental resource specialists, historic preservation and cultural resources staff, and public transportation professionals who can address the multi-modal issues of a transportation project.
2. Community and Stakeholder Focus - CSS requires an early and continuous commitment to public involvement. Community residents and stakeholders play an important role in identifying local and regional issues and concerns, as well as neighborhood values. Furthermore, they have much to offer regarding strategies or solutions that may better meet and balance the needs of community stakeholders and the project. These teams can be used as a conduit for informational gathering and dissemination to the community they represent.
3. Environmental Sensitivity in Design - Understanding the natural and built environments, the roadway as a part of the landscape, and the valued resources within that landscape, must be accomplished before engineering design progresses. In addition, the design approach of avoiding and/or minimizing effects on important resources to the extent possible, and creating resource enhancement opportunities where impacts are unavoidable should be pursued.
4. Design Flexibility in Reaching Solutions - Informed design decision-making should not preclude new ideas to ensure flexibility in roadway design standards where feasible. Designers and CSS practitioners should be encouraged to research new ways of solving transportation project needs and to keep an open mind to flexibility in community settings due to the unique natural and social contexts in these areas.
5. Context-Sensitive Solutions is a Process - CSD and CSS is a process that begins during early transportation planning and programming and continues through specific project development, preliminary engineering, final design and construction and maintenance.

Identifying Project Stakeholders

Once an initial design concept or set of design alternatives has been achieved, it is the responsibility of the Project Manager and Project Team members to research, identify and compile a database of the key stakeholders for the project. (For additional guidance on project stakeholders see subsection 5.2) The specific groups, locations, languages and needs of the stakeholders in a project corridor will be different from project to project; however, some key stakeholder groups in proximity remain standard for effective public involvement for each project, including:

- Local city and county officials
- EMS/ first responders
- Area hospitals
- Residential and business property owners in corridor
- Users of the corridor (commuters, truckers, tourists, etc.)
- Any affected transportation partners (transit, airport, etc.)
- Any impacted persons or communities vis a vis physical, language, historical/cultural or socio-economic disadvantages
- State Transportation Board members
- FHWA
- Regulatory agencies
- Tribal Governments
- General public
- Media

Early identification of key project stakeholders as well as those that are specific to the project (nearby homeowners associations, for example) is the first step to, and determines the range of public involvement needed. Early in the project development process, the PM and/or Project Team members are encouraged to research the project area using a combination of:

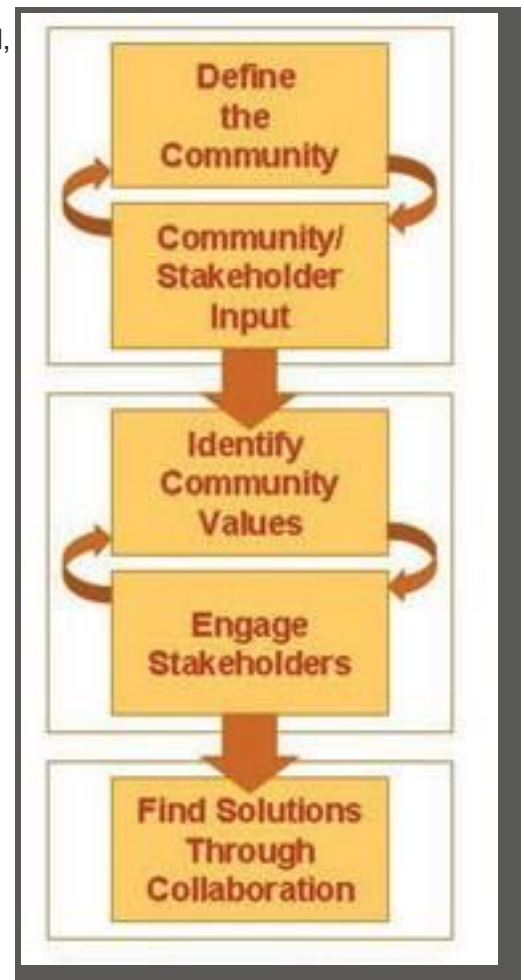
- Google maps/GIS images
- Census data, local chamber of commerce reports, etc.
- "Ride-Throughs"
- Informal dialogues with area residents, business owners, local government staff, etc.

Citizens Advisory Committees

Citizens Advisory Committees (CAC) include local residents, business people, and the traditionally underserved groups that are keenly vested in a proposed project and in providing assistance to the development of the project concept. Depending on the magnitude and the scope of the project, the CAC actively participates in developing the project concept through a series of workshops, input and consensus-building.

The PM forms a CAC by gathering nominations from local government officials (elected and appointed) or by the department soliciting citizens to serve as stakeholders. The committee selection is made from this group of interested candidates with consideration given to each stakeholder's connection to the project and with the goal of having a cross-section of interested parties involved. After the committee member nominees are collected by the PM, the final list of nominees is submitted to the Director of Engineering and Chief Engineer for approval. Once approved, the stakeholders are contacted and asked to serve on the project's CAC.

The PM will establish a series of CAC meetings to get valuable input and also to convey back to their respective stakeholder groups the CAC's discussions and decisions.

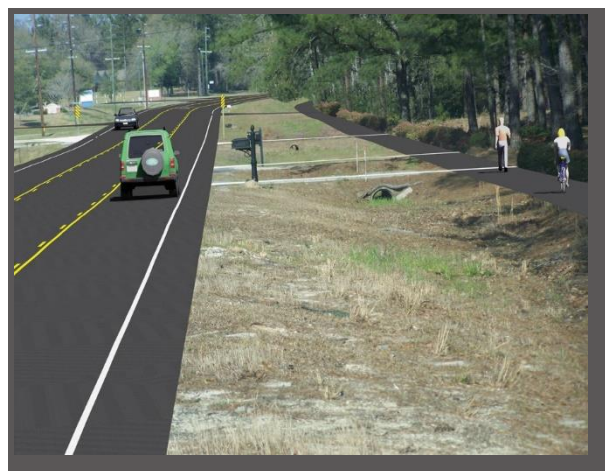


Visualization

The department added a work unit for the purpose of enhancing the ability to clearly convey a project's need and purpose, as well as benefits to the public early in the concept development process in a cost-effective way. The Visual Engineering Resource Group (VERG), housed in the Office of Design Policy and Support, uses computer technology to provide visual photo simulations, 3D modeling, and video animations of select projects. These graphic/visual representations of projects simulate the relationship between the existing conditions and the effects and benefits of the proposed project. By visually representing the proposed project, the purpose of the project is clearly conveyed in a way that is easily understood by the public, whether it is to address congestion, safety, or other purposes. Additionally, the use of graphics and visual representations of the proposed project clearly demonstrate what the project does (purpose and need); what are the issues associated with project (what is the impact if project is not built); and the outcome (the benefits of building the project). Beyond just concept level involvement, VERG can also assist in communicating methods of construction staging, lane closures, end results, and more.

Some of the services offered by the VERG unit are:

- Photo-paste: Composite image comprised of a photo of existing conditions aligned with a photo of similar proposed conditions from a different location,
- Photo-matching: Overlay of 2D or 3D proposed design data onto photo perspective using known control points for proper alignment,
- Renderings: Photo realistic views from any perspective of the project,
- Animations/Simulations: A walk-through or fly-through experience of the proposed design
- VISSIM Animations: A simulation representing the proposed design, but also including the actual design traffic to reflect a build/no-build scenario,
- Videos, and
- Education/Training pieces



NOTE:

To ensure that there is always consideration of the need to graphically and simply represent a project to the public the visual engineering activities/request have been inserted in the P6 scheduling phase.



Chapter Four (cont.): Georgia DOT's Public Involvement Activities By Project Phase: Environmental Evaluation

Public involvement activities are most extensive during this project development phase, which is also referred to as the environmental process. In simple terms, this phase links the proposed project concept with more detailed project location, need and purpose and design to NEPA, related to the human and natural environment. On federally funded projects, Georgia DOT in partnership with either FHWA or FTA assesses and addresses each project's social, economic, and environmental concerns, and the effectiveness of our outreach to and collaboration with state, local, and tribal governments; public and private organizations; and the public to understand the potential impacts of the project.

The principles or essential elements of NEPA decision-making include:

- Assessment of the social, economic, and environmental impacts of a proposed action or project;
- Analysis of a range of reasonable alternatives to the proposed project, based on the defined need and purpose for the project;
- Consideration of appropriate impact mitigation (avoidance, minimization and compensation);
- Interdisciplinary approach to transportation decision making;
- Inter-agency participation, coordination and consultation;
- Public involvement, including opportunities to participate and comment; and
- Documentation and disclosure.

During this early project development phase, the Office of Environmental Services (OES) provides professional support and expertise to Georgia DOT project team members regarding NEPA and GEPA requirements and activities. It is important for OES staff to become involved early in the project development process. (See Appendix B, Public Involvement Worksheet.) OES activities include:

- Providing guidance on the environmental approval process to project teams and consultants, and (see Environmental Documents, below),
- Coordinating with internal Department staff, consultants, and local governments on their public involvement efforts associated with department projects. Some projects may require their own public involvement plans. (See subsection 3.3)

Environmental Documents

OES staff will coordinate with the FHWA to determine the level of environmental documentation (see below) and public involvement required for a proposed project, depending on the environmental effects that a project is likely to have on a community. For more information on Public Hearing Open Houses (PHOH) and Public Information Open Houses (PIOH), see pages 24-25.

- **Categorical Exclusion (CE)**—lowest level of environmental documentation for projects that normally do not have a significant effect on the environment. These projects tend to be non-controversial and do not require a public hearing. However, in some instances, even small projects may have some adverse effect on the community or other environmental resource or may be controversial. On this level of document if it is determined that controversy may exist (typically projects with long term detours, access changes, lane reductions) public outreach will begin by setting up a project web page. Citizens would be mailed a post card inviting them to review the project information, ask question, and provide feedback. If a citizen does not have access to the internet they can call or provide written comments/questions.

If there is controversy: If the controversy is between one entity i.e. a local government, school, emergency

services, a neighborhood, etc. further coordination will take place between the entity and Georgia DOT.

If project changes result that effect the community at large, additional coordination with the community will occur. If controversy exists on a large scale i.e. petitions signed by citizens along the corridor, wide spread comments of disagreement on the direction of the project, large stakeholder concerns (i.e. business/employee concerns, neighborhoods, etc. than a stakeholder meeting or a general open house will be held.

- **Environmental Assessments (EA)**—are prepared when the level of environmental impact is unknown and a study is done to determine the level of impact. PIOHs may be held at any time during the preparation of the draft EA document. To meet federal requirements, after FHWA has approved the Draft EA, a PHOH must be held (or with FHWA's concurrence, the opportunity for a PHOH must be advertised). In addition to PIOHs and PHOHs, the project team can consider other outreach initiatives as conditions warrant. While many EAs do not have a stand-alone Public Involvement Plan, consideration should be given to developing one for projects that are controversial or result in community impacts.
- **Environmental Impact Study (EIS)**—The EIS is the appropriate level of environmental documentation for projects that have the potential to result in significant environmental impacts. This includes projects that are very controversial. A draft EIS must be prepared, and the public must be given an opportunity to respond to the assessments contained in the draft document. At a minimum, a PHOH will be held after the Draft EIS is approved by FHWA. Other open houses or public involvement strategies may be appropriate depending on the time frame and phases of the project. Most EIS's will have a stand-alone Public Involvement Plan.
- **Reevaluations** - Public involvement needs must also be reconsidered during the reevaluation phase of a project if substantial time has elapsed since the last outreach effort and/or if project changes warrant additional outreach. In addition, for those projects that involve closing a roadway and/or bridge during construction and result in an off-site detour, or for projects that involve noise impacts and require additional public comment on feasible/reasonable noise barriers, additional PIOHs may be required. If the change is minor in nature the outreach may be held utilizing the approach identified in CE's above. In addition, noise voting may also be held via mail in ballot to eligible voters.

Determining the Appropriate Level of Public Involvement

The size, scope and complexity of a project, usually reflected in the class of environmental document assigned to the project, will guide OES staff in an early determination of the extent of public outreach and engagement needed to meaningfully gauge public sentiment and concerns. As mentioned in the descriptions of the classes of environmental documents above, OES may recommend that Project Teams create (either with internal staff or with consultant assistance) a project Public Involvement Plan. This PIP becomes the strategy document that will guide all the outreach activities for the proposed project, and will become part of the official project documentation files.

Public Involvement Plan (PIP)

The size, scope and complexity of a project will guide OES in an early determination of whether a project will need a stand-alone PIP to best reach and gather input from the project stakeholders and the general public. Additional guidance on development of PIPs can be found in Chapter 5 or by contacting OES or the Office of Communications.

Some of the outreach and education activities that may be included in a project PIP include:

- How outreach will be done
- How virtual options will be utilized
- Scheduling a series of community and government meetings and presentations;
- Creation of content for a project web page; and
- Writing and distribution of a project e-newsletter

Public Meetings

Depending upon each proposed project's unique environmental challenges and opportunities, the department's OES staff will likely recommend public meetings, both formal and informal, as a public involvement strategy during the project development phase. The responsibilities of OES staff at these meetings include:

- Assisting PMs and District personnel in making the decision on the need for a PHOH or the opportunity for a PHOH.
- Ensuring that all PIOHs and PHOHs are planned and held in accordance with state and federal law standards.
- Conducting dry-runs and participating in pre-meetings for all open houses and having personnel on hand at meetings to discuss environmental issues.
- Attending PIOH and PHOH to answer any questions from the public and to ensure the public involvement record is properly documented.
- Preparing the initial synopsis for each open house, preparing the Summary of Comments (See Appendix G.) of all comments for the official transcript of the open house and coordinating responses from appropriate offices that address public comments and questions into a Response Letter.
- Ensure that PIOH/PHOH are appropriately staffed with subject matter experts to address public's concerns/questions.

General Guidelines for Public Meetings

- The staff in attendance will be knowledgeable of the project and consist of, at minimum, the project manager, design engineer, traffic engineer, greeter/attendance counter, planning and programming engineer, and noise subject matter experts (SME's), right-of-way specialist and communications staff (if necessary).
- Court reporters will be secured, for all PHOH meetings, to transcribe comments. A court reporter should be considered for in-person PIOH meeting where low literacy and low English proficiency may be prevalent.
- Interpreters and translated materials will be provided as needed for any impacted communities identified in the corridor.
- The facility must be compliant with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines and accessible to all citizens. Locations near transit are preferred, and the facility should be able to easily accommodate 100-125 people, have internet connection and large enough for the creation of sections for SME's to speak specifically to their area of expertise. School auditoriums and church banquet halls are good examples of meeting locations.
- The meeting location should be within or in very close proximity to the proposed project.
- The meeting(s) should be scheduled at times most convenient to the identified project stakeholders, including after typical work hours, during typical lunch hours.
- Clearly delineated project information should be on display and available, including maps, design plans and other information.
- The meeting handout packet will contain at a minimum a welcome letter, project description, a project location map and a comment card. (See Appendices D and E)
- The public should be made aware that 1) the project information is also available on-line or on display at an appropriate department or district location; 2) that comments on the project from the public will be accepted for ten (10) days after the meeting; and 3) how and when comments will be compiled, responded to and available for public view. (See Appendix I, Response Letter)
- If appropriate, it is preferred that maps of any proposed noise/sound barriers or potential detour routes for the proposed project also be included.
- Communications staff should disseminate information on the meeting to local media outlets via press release, social media channels and in radio and TV interviews (if needed), be knowledgeable about the project in anticipation of media interviews and as needed, attend the meeting(s) to address any media inquiries on-site.
- Appropriate information on projects should be added to the website in a timely manner to ensure availability to those affected by the project, but not in attendance at the physical location site.

Informal Meetings

Informal public meetings may be held with individual property owners, local public officials, neighborhood groups, civic associations/groups (e.g., Parent-Teacher Associations, Chambers of Commerce), special interest groups and business associations at their request or if Department staff determine that informal meetings are needed. These meetings are generally not advertised to the general public. However, a summary of informal meetings should be prepared by representative department offices and submitted to OES for inclusion in the project environmental documentation and shared with appropriate district personnel.

Virtual Meetings

The term virtual meeting is defined as a meeting that takes place without physical contact. A virtual meeting may supplement public hearing activities; however, it may not take the place of a PHOH. These meetings can be via telephone, mailers, websites, web pages (such as social platforms), or a combination of these. This means that a virtual meeting may be set up with or without a live presentation. The complexity of a project will determine what type of presentation would best serve the community. For minor projects or for minor project changes that need to be communicated graphics may be posted, whereas for more complex projects a video or pre-recorded discussion of the project may be shown. All comments will be responded to after the close of a formal comment period. This virtual format provides citizens opportunities to view information from any location including on their mobile devices, or tablets and in all cases, other than scheduled live interaction events - such as a phone town hall type of meeting, at a time convenient to them.

Options such as a live chat may be available for citizens to get answers during a scheduled live interactive time period. This may occur in conjunction with an in-person meeting or as a replacement to an in-person meeting. If live chat is available the conversation will not be treated as formal project comments. All live chat questions will be treated similarly to face to face questions and answers that occur at formal meetings. Formal project feedback should be encouraged during live chat just as it is during conversations at formal meetings. Not all projects will utilize the live chat option. This option will need to be looked at on a project by project basis taking complexity and the scope of the project into consideration.

These meetings will be advertised in local papers and via post cards/mailers sent to zip codes within the proposed project corridor. In addition, other advertising methods may be utilized such as strategically located fliers, billboards, social media platforms, etc.

Advertisements in the paper and postcards will be published/mailed approximately 7-15 days prior to the date of the virtual meeting. The ad may be run a second time directly before the meeting.

Virtual meetings will be utilized and serve as a replacement to in-person public meetings during times when a public gathering is not advisable due to public safety concerns from the US Government, State Government, or Local Officials. If it is unsafe to conduct a physical meeting then virtual meetings will take the place of a public meeting until such time that it is no longer a risk to meet face to face. A Public Hearing, with FHWA concurrence, can utilize virtual public involvement (VPI) tools to supplement the required in-person component for NEPA required Public Hearings during times when its unsafe to conduct a physical meeting. Please see PHOH below for more details.



Formal Meetings

- **Public Information Open House (PIOH)** - The two-fold purpose of the PIOH is to inform the public of a project that is proposed in their area and to gather information and receive comments from the public about the proposed project. The PIOH provides an opportunity for local citizens, local public officials, neighborhood groups, civic associations or business associations to comment/ask questions and express their views for inclusion into the final environmental document.

PIOHs are held at the earliest stages of project development, usually before the environmental document is completed. The number of PIOHs required is determined by the needs of the affected community. PIOHs are usually an open house format, offering the public project information for two to three hours. Generally, formal presentations are not made at these meetings. If the project team determines that a formal presentation should be made, the Project Manager will discuss with the Project Team and/or the Georgia DOT Director of Engineering. This decision must be made prior to the PIOH advertisement (see page 26) so that the presentation time can be included in any public announcement or press release. Additionally, a video presentation should be considered to explain the nature of the transportation improvements. (See page 20 for information on the VERG unit)

- **Public Hearing Open House (PHOH)** - State and federal law requires that public hearings be held after the project's Draft EA or Draft EIS is signed by FHWA, after the Georgia DOT Commissioner approves the Environmental Effects Report (EER), or if requested by 100 citizens or more, whichever is appropriate. A PHOH is held to exchange information and to address public comments and concerns, between the Department and the public prior to making a commitment to the location and design of the project.

Information available at the PHOH should include the need and purpose for the project, visual representation of the projects needs and benefits, alternative designs, and any impacts to social, economic, and environmental resources of each alternative. Information displays include handouts, display boards, visuals and graphics, and the draft environmental document. Additionally, a video presentation should be considered to explain the nature of the transportation improvements. (See page 20 for information on the VERG unit) Generally, formal presentations are not made at these meetings. If the project team determines that a formal presentation should be made, the PM will discuss with the Georgia DOT Director of Engineering. This decision must be made prior to the PHOH advertisement so that the presentation time can be announced (see page 26). The PHOH generally lasts three hours.

PHOHs must comply with federal requirements (23 CFR 771.111 (2) (v) (A-E)) by presenting information on:

- Right-of-way relocation services;
- The land acquisition process; and
- Opportunities for discussion

All state and local elected officials within the jurisdiction of the project should be invited to the PHOH. The district office coordinates with OES to send letters of notification to all local elected officials, utility and railroad owners, and traditionally underserved groups that have expressed an interest in the project.

In the event that US, State, or Local governments determine it is unsafe to meet in large groups for any reason, social distancing in person PHOH meetings, in conjunction with virtual public involvement or in conjunction with advertising the opportunity to hold a PHOH (see below) can be considered. A social distance in person event may consist of but is not limited to, large rooms or outdoor venues where people

sign up to attend a particular time slot in order to keep numbers to a safe level, drive in event with social distance walk up area, outdoor open event at a fair ground etc.

- **Opportunity to hold a Public Hearing Open House** - The requirements for holding a PHOH may be satisfied by publishing two notices of an "Opportunity for PHOH" in a newspaper with general circulation in the vicinity of the proposed project. (See sample Appendix C.) For a NEPA document, this may be appropriate if a PIOH has already been held in the months prior to the approval of the EA. However, FHWA must concur with the decision to advertise as opposed to holding another PHOH. If there are requests for a PHOH, then the Department will decide on the appropriate action.

OES prepares the notice for the Opportunity for PHOH and the availability of the environmental document. The district is responsible for securing the print publication space to publish the notice. Where a portion of a project is in more than one district, the District with the greatest length of the project limits is responsible for the publishing.

- **Public Hearing Open House supplemented with Virtual Public Involvement (VPI) -**

A virtual component should be provided as an option (at a minimum posting all project meeting materials on line), to supplement all PHOH meetings. In addition, it may also be used as a way to provide information for the public to consider when advertising the opportunity for a PHOH.

The virtual platform must comply with federal requirements (23 CFR 771.111 (2) (v) (A-E)) and present the required information mentioned above. All the same information that would be available at an in-person meeting must be placed in a readable format on the internet and easily located/accessed. Options for individuals without internet access must be made available upon request. The project specific Public Involvement plan should cover advertising approach, language barriers, ability to access the internet, options for individuals without internet access, information about what will be posted on the virtual platform, a communication plan (how would questions be answered, how formal comments will be handled, what information can be placed in audio format, etc.).

In addition, all procedures outlined in Chapter two: Requirements for Public Involvement must be followed and considered when advertising and placing materials on the internet. Also see Advance Notice about Public Meetings below.

Advance Notice about Public Meetings

Key to the success of the department's public engagement process is obtaining as many comments from the public as possible on each proposed project. Thus, it is important to utilize a combination of traditional and non-traditional ways to let the affected stakeholders know about scheduled meetings.

- **PIOH/PHOH Advertisements** - OES prepares the open house advertisements and notification that the draft environmental document is available. The appropriate District Planning and Programming Engineer (DPPE) is responsible for publishing the advertisement. Where a portion of a project is in more than one District, the District with the greatest length of project is responsible for publishing the advertisement. Open houses are advertised twice in the local newspaper having general circulation in the vicinity (county or counties) of the project location:
 - PIOH advertisements will be published 15 days prior to the date of the open house. The second advertisement for PIOHs will be published 5 days prior to the date of the open house. (See sample Appendix C)
 - PHOH first advertisements should be published at least 30 to 40 days prior to the date of the open house. The second advertisement for a PHOH must be published at least 5 to 9 days before the date of the open house.
 - Either legal or retail advertisements may be used

The PIOH and PHOH advertisement includes:

- The project description, time, date, ADA accommodations, and place of the open house.
- A statement that relocation assistance will be explained at the open house.
- A statement that information and displays of the proposed project will be available for 10 days after the open house for public review and comment at designated venues (district office, Georgia DOT website, etc.).
- A statement that the open house transcript will be available for review at the local District office as soon as the transcript is prepared.
- A statement that the draft environmental document is also available for review at the local department office and other convenient locations such as libraries, county commissioner's office, etc.

Projects with an EA or EIS must have a draft environmental document approved by FHWA or FTA prior to advertising the project PHOH. A separate Notice of Availability of the draft environmental document is advertised if a PHOH is not required.

- **Signage** - Signs along the road will no longer be utilized as the preferred method to advertise public meetings. Instead citizens living in the corridor will be notified via post cards. These post cards would invite citizens to attend the meeting and provide citizens with the project information for viewing on the web prior to the meeting. For projects where commuters may need to be notified of an upcoming meeting signage will be considered. If signage is utilized, multiple signs should be installed in prominent places in the project area notifying the public that an open house will be held. Signs should include information about project identification, date, time, and place of the open house. Sign construction and placement is the responsibility of the district office. Signs should be placed in the project area at least two (2) weeks prior to the open house.
- **Press Releases** – With the intent to maximize the public's awareness of project public meetings in their communities, communications staff should write and distribute press releases and press advisories to announce upcoming project public meeting(s). At minimum, the press release and advisory should include general information about the need and purpose of the proposed project; location, date and time of the public meeting; information about the comment period and alternate ways to review the project information; and contact information for the appropriate communications staff person or PM.
- **Post Cards** – Post cards or mailers should be utilized to invite citizens to attend meetings when there will be no in-person meeting option. They are also a good way to advertise in person meetings and should be considered. Information on the postcard should include what and where the project is located, directions of where they can view meeting materials, if a meeting is on-line only or if there will also be an in-person meeting. If there is a meeting location that information must be included on the post card. In addition, if there is no in-person meeting the post card should provide an alternate method for obtaining project information, such as providing a phone number.

In most cases post cards will be sent based on postal delivery routes obtained from the USPS website. However, on larger projects the mailing list may be comprised by individuals signing up/requesting to be on a distribution lists.

- **Other Advance Notice Methods/EJ and Limited English Proficiency considerations** – To maximize public engagement on proposed projects, it is important that Project Teams consider using more direct, non-traditional advance notice methods for public meetings, including but not limited to:
 - Handing out flyers at homeowners' association meetings, PTA meetings, church services, individual letter notification, etc.;
 - Sending emails to local business groups and civic associations to share with their customers, employees, etc.; and
 - Inclusion of the announcement on either the department's or district's social media (Facebook and Twitter) channels or both

- Sending letters home with school age children, in areas where there are high levels of free/reduced lunches
- Highlighted sheets of papers in utility bills
- Notices at local Churches/community centers
- Text messages

Preparations for an Effective Public Meeting

- **Before a meeting is scheduled** – The project team should get together and discuss assignments for who will be in charge of preparing PIOH materials, due dates for materials, and review all materials prior to OPD and OES management before scheduling a PIOH/PHOH.
- **PIOH/PHOH Dry Run** – This logistical planning meeting is scheduled by OES staff approximately three weeks prior to the scheduled open house. Representatives of the different offices and consultants, if appropriate, utilize a checklist (see Appendix B, Public Involvement Worksheet) to discuss the date, time, directions, and location of the open house; project fact sheets, displays and other project information; personnel scheduled to attend; environmental findings; type and number of handout materials needed, room set up, questions most likely to come up; secured transcribers, translators and equipment needed; other department projects in proximity; and to discuss general flow of the meeting.
- **PIOH/PHOH Pre-meeting Briefing** – The dry run checklist may be used in preparing for the PIOH or PHOH. It is used in a pre-meeting briefing with internal staff and consultants, if applicable, at least one hour before the meeting. All offices that will be represented at the public hearing are required to be at the meeting location for this pre-meeting briefing.

Public Meetings to Determine Noise Barriers

If a noise study was required and a barrier was found to be both reasonable and feasible, OES will conduct a Noise Barrier vote by mail or by sending mailers and setting up a Public Information Open House. The noise analysis also determines which residents and businesses in the project area will be impacted by project-related noise. Because of the need to target specific residents and businesses in a community, outreach activities will need to be customized. Federal regulation 23 CFR 772 requires citizen input be factored into the decision to construct noise walls. To the greatest degree possible, property owners, residents, and businesses that will benefit from the proposed noise barrier will be individually notified and invited to participate in public outreach activities regarding the proposed barrier. Called “benefited receptors,” these impacted citizens will be asked for their feedback on the proposed noise barrier to determine if it is desired. On occasion, other citizens may attend the noise meeting and comment; however, the intent of these meetings is to solely consider the comments and feedback (often just a “yes” or “no” vote) of the benefited receptors in decision-making.

When public or community meetings are held for noise outreach, the Project Team will be prepared to provide information on the project in general in addition to the proposed location(s), height(s), and on occasion, the look and materials of the noise barriers. The date and time of the meeting will be scheduled to allow maximum participation. Information will be presented on aerial plots at a scale that readily conveys project details that are included in a meeting handout.

Air & Noise



Chapter Four (cont.): Georgia DOT's Public Involvement Activities By Project Development Phase: Right-of-Way

4.3 Perhaps one of the most critical times for effective public involvement in a project is during the right-of-way phase, when property owners must be communicated with early and often in order to best convey their rights and the laws that guide the Department's right of way processes. The department's Right-of-Way (ROW) booklet, which explains these processes in detail, is made available at all PHOHs and can also be found on-line at <http://www.dot.ga.gov/PS/ROW>. As noted in the previous section, at least one right-of-way representative is present at each PHOH to answer questions from attendees. In addition, PHOHs must comply with federal requirements by presenting information on:

- A. Relocation services;
- B. The land acquisition process; and
- C. Opportunities for discussion

Property Owners' Meetings

The Office of Right-of-Way conducts a Property Owners' Meeting at the initiation of the ROW acquisition phase of each project. This meeting is conducted at a location near the project to encourage participation by all property owners that have been identified as having property rights to be acquired to construct the proposed project. All impacted property owners will receive a written invitation that will include date, time and location of meeting. This is an informal meeting and property owners are invited to stop by at their convenience during the specified hours. They are also encouraged to notify any other parties related to this property that may be interested in attending. This may include tenants, lien holders, or other persons having a vested interest in the property.

The primary purposes of the meeting is to familiarize owners with the proposed project, how the specific project impacts their property, and to help property owners gain an understanding of the ROW acquisition and relocation process. Below is a list of desired outcomes and items for discussion at these meetings:

- Property owners will be provided personalized one-on-one guidance about the ROW process by ROW agents who are directly involved with the specific project.
- A Georgia DOT Questionnaire is provided to collect ownership information, contact information, and most importantly, to determine the most convenient times and ways to contact property owners in the future.
- Property owners will be provided a ROW Plan Sheet identifying the necessary acquisition of their property. This plan sheet will be explained in detail by the ROW agent.
- Agents will provide detailed explanation of the ROW process, including data/information collection, the property appraisal process, the negotiation for purchase process, the relocation program and available benefits, property ownership conveyance and explanation of the eminent domain process.
- Agents will outline critical milestones that will occur as the project progresses and the anticipated schedule for acquisition and construction.
- Property Owners will also receive the Georgia DOT ROW Booklet entitled "What Happens When Your Property Is Needed for a Transportation Facility." It is currently available in Korean and Spanish; other languages are also in development.

Summary of Right of Way Acquisition and Relocation Assistance Processes and Procedures:

- Unless waived by appropriate Department personnel (i.e. when minor uncomplicated small projects are proposed), a Property Owners Meeting will be set up and held specifically for property owners, tenants, and others that may have an interest in property needed for a transportation facility.
- Property owners, tenants, and others present will be advised of rights under state and federal law and provided with a copy of GDOT's booklet titled "What Happens When Your Property Is Needed For A Transportation Facility".
- Right of Way acquisition and relocation assistance will be conducted by the Department in accordance with the federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, commonly known as the Uniform Act.
- Project activity timelines for starting preliminary right of way activities such as appraisal processes, relocation interviews, and property management inspections will be explained.
- If an owner's property or a portion of their property is required, they will be contacted by an appraiser who will inspect the property and appraise it for a Fair Market Value determination, including any damages to the remainder land, improvements, or trade fixtures, when applicable. Georgia DOT encourages the property owner to be present during this appraisal inspection.
- If property owners are required to relocate, or have personal property to be relocated, they will be treated fairly, equitable, and in compliance with the Uniform Act. The Department will furnish relocation advisory services at no

cost to those occupants requiring relocation assistance. Since relocation occupants vary (i.e. residential, business, farm operators, non-profit, etc.), relocation assistance benefits and payments may also vary; however, property owners' assigned Relocation Agent will explain more specific benefits or payments for which a property owner may be eligible. Please note, should owners chose to relocate, prior to receiving an official written notification letter outlining their relocation assistance availability, they will jeopardize receiving benefits that otherwise may have been available.

- Upon reaching a written agreement with the Department for a settlement amount for the owner's land, including any damages, if any, and/or damages to trade fixtures, if any, a closing will be arranged by the Department's closing attorney, at the owner's convenience, and at the Department's expense. If an owner is required to relocate, they will have no less than ninety (90) days from written notification OR sixty (60) days from after the department obtains title, whichever is the later, to relocate.

- The department will handle preparing, processing, and recording the deeds. The Department will handle preparing and processing relocation assistance claim forms and disbursement of relocation assistance payments.

- More details are available in the Department's booklet titled "What Happens When Your Property Is Needed for a Transportation Facility".

What Happens If Your Property is Needed For A Transportation Facility



Chapter Four (cont.): Georgia DOT's Public Involvement Activities During Alternate Project Delivery Methods

4.4 The traditional project delivery approach is that a project moves into construction after completion of the design phase. The alternative approach combines design and construction into one phase, known as Design-Build. Design-Build projects with a financial component are typically Public-Private Partnerships (P3)s.

Design-Bid-Build Projects

Most projects are designed fully by the department and then let to a construction contract, a process we call "Design-Bid-Build." This model is the norm for most of the department's construction work program and has been successful for many years in achieving efficient delivery.

Design-Build Projects

In keeping with the Department's goal to streamline and expedite project delivery, the department uses a delivery method called "Design-Build." In this method, the Contractor and the Engineer are selected under one contract early to simultaneously complete the design and construct the project. The primary benefit of this innovative contracting technique is the earlier collaboration of the Contractor with the Engineer, resulting in efficiencies, cost savings, innovation, and achievement of other project-specific goals, based on the scope of the project. Design-Build contracts are awarded on the basis of cost and technical proposal submissions. In this approach, less detail regarding the design of the project is available at the time of contract letting.

- Projects that are approved for Design-Build are posted on the Department's Design-Build web page, which also includes opportunity for the public to submit feedback on the projects. The "Submit Feedback" function on the web page allows Contractors, Engineers, or the general public to request information regarding the projects proposed for Design-Build or the way in which the Design-Build program is procured and administered.
- The need to defer preliminary and final design elements generally is reflected in the outreach to the public during the customary PIOH and PHOH, as appropriate.
- Follow-through requirements regarding public involvement during the execution of Design-Build projects are established on a project-by-project basis, including any commitments that were agreed to during the completion of the Environmental Process.

Public Private Partnership (P3) Projects

P3 projects represent another method to bring certain types of projects to fruition. The process of identifying potential P3 projects begins with the Department providing a list to the State's elected leadership and State Transportation Board for approval. In P3s, the Contractor, Engineer, Developer and/or concessionaire are selected under one contract early to complete the desired project. This methodology involves joining some combination of engineering, finance, construction, operation and/or maintenance that leverages the state's assets with private sector contributions to achieve state goals. Award of P3 project contracts is based on a combination of cost, financial and technical proposal submissions.

- In each county where a P3 project is proposed, specific public involvement activities for P3 procurement include a special Public Hearing that provides executive summaries of the P3 proposals.
- Follow-through requirements regarding public involvement during the execution of P3 projects is established on a project-by-project basis, including any commitments that were agreed to during the completion of the environmental process.

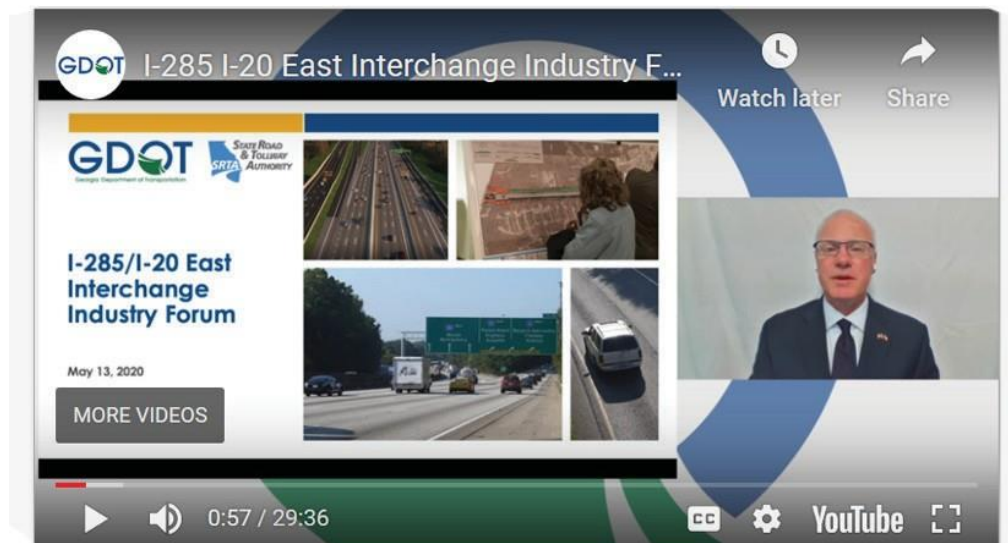
General Public Involvement Activities for Alternate Project Delivery

Whether a Design-Build or P3 project, the alternative project delivery process typically begins with the preparation of a Request for Proposal (RFP) package. During the development of the RFP, one or more community meetings and workshops are held, as the RFP may include the preparation of preliminary engineering plans.

Some projects are large enough that the department may elect to hire a separate Public Involvement Consultant (PIC) to represent the department as a Public Information Officer (PIO) dedicated to compiling and distributing project information. Not all projects warrant a PIC; however, in either case, the Office of Communications provides guidance and oversight of the need for information-sharing with the public. The PI guidelines discussed in Sections 3.2 and 3.3 should be followed, as for any design or construction project, depending on the project context and procurement method utilized.

Meetings and methods for reaching the public during the preparation of the RFP package and during the Design-Build project may include the following:

- Kickoff or introductory meeting
- MPO meetings
- Industry Forums
- Public information meetings
- Local government council or Commission meetings
- Elected and appointed official coordination
- Meetings with special interest groups (homeowners associations, environmental groups, etc.)
- Meetings with and outreach to minority individuals and groups
- Newsletters and e-newsletters
- Website
- Facebook, Twitter
- Print and broadcast media outlets
- CMS signs
- Stakeholder surveys



I-285 I-20 East Interchange Industry Forum (May 2020)

youtube.com

Chapter Four (cont.): Georgia DOT's Public Involvement Activities By Development Phase: Construction

4.6 As the transition from preconstruction (design) to construction occurs, the Project Team grows to include the District Construction Project Engineer and others in the District, including the Area Engineer. Depending on the size, scope and public interest in the project, these new Project Team members are expected to “pick up the mantle” of public involvement that was begun in preconstruction. Very often, months and even years may have passed since the public was informed about a particular project during preconstruction. In these cases, and with consideration of the scope and potential impacts of the construction and the completed project, it is beneficial to “re-engage” the stakeholders in the corridor during construction.

• Transition Meetings

The Transition Meeting is the perfect opportunity for the construction Project Team member to become familiar with any design or ROW issues, challenges or promises made in preconstruction. It is also the time to discuss controversial issues from the community and what needs now exist as a result of past controversies. These meetings will help determine the level of continued outreach needed for homeowners, businesses and travelers in the project corridor.

• Preconstruction (“Pre-Con”) Meetings

After contract award and before issuance of Notice to Proceed, the District Construction Project Engineer will likely hold a pre-con meeting with the contractor to review utility relocations and gauge proposed work schedules and traffic impacts. With the contractor joining the Project Team, this meeting offers another opportunity to emphasize the Department's expectations for minimizing impacts to the public as much as possible while maintaining completion milestones and deadlines and project budgets. There should also be a robust discussion on the need, timing and extent of public outreach on this project. Again, depending on the history of project, the outreach component could include:

- Press releases/press briefings after award of the project
- When appropriate, letters to property owners informing them of delay and impact of project.

• Traffic Impacts

One of the department's priorities is on-time project delivery, and in practical terms, that sometimes results in traffic delays related to construction impacts. Balanced with the Department's goal to provide good customer service, we seek to minimize driver frustration with lane closures that impact the traveling public during peak travel/commute hours. In recognition of the state's frequent hosting of major sporting, business and recreational events and conferences, Georgia DOT has a policy (Construction Specification 150) that limits interstate lane closures on holidays and during some major special events, i.e., the NCAA Final Four, the Masters Golf Tournament, NASCAR Races. In addition, as more than one construction project is going on in an area, the department attempts to avoid conflicts with lane closures in close proximity that would hinder commuter travel.

One of the ways to effectively address the department's goal to get projects completed on-time while minimizing customer frustration is to implement a communications plan. The objective is to be proactive – to alert the public before and during lane closures so that alternate travel decisions can be determined and planned. The 511 ITS system (see page 36) is a huge part of the department's success in keeping the public informed about roadway incidents and construction activities. These efforts to inform the public about construction-related activities significantly ease traveler frustration and enhance Georgia DOT's image as a Department that cares about the public it serves.

After letting, some projects may require more impactful traffic interruptions than were needed during preconstruction. In addition, projects that attracted significant public interest in the preconstruction phase are also likely to continue to be of interest during construction. Based on public feedback and/or the likelihood of impactful lane closures in high-traffic areas, the project team should anticipate the need for proactive communications activities that will provide a service to the impacted residents and/or businesses and traveling public in general.

Utility Impacts

Utility impacts can be devastating to communities and as such the department should ensure the decision affecting the relocation and installation of essential utilities services are done in such a manner that they enhance the health, safety and general welfare of the public and properties while minimizing negative impacts to the homeowners and business environment.

The Utilities Office ensures a permit is issued to the utility owners for utilities service relocated or extended in any public right-of-way. The utility's relocation or adjustments must comply with established state and federal guidelines. This includes:

- "Electricity distribution" means medium voltage (less than 50KV) power lines, low voltage electrical substations and pole-mounted transformers; and low voltage (less than 1,000V) distribution wiring to provide service to individual customers or business; and
- "Service pipeline" means a distribution line that transports gas, oil, water, or sewage from a common source of supply to the meter set assembly or distribution endpoint to provide service to individual customers or business
- "Electricity transmission" means high-voltage (50KV or higher) power lines, high-voltage electrical substations and pole-mounted transformers, and high-voltage distribution or transmission wiring; and
- "Transmission pipeline" means pipelines installed for the purpose of transmitting gas, oil, water, or sewage from a source or sources of supply to one or more distribution centers, to one or more large volume customers, or a pipeline installed to interconnect sources of supply

In typical cases, transmission lines differ from distribution lines in that they operate at higher pressures, are longer, and the distance between connections is greater.

The Office of Communications as an Internal/External Resource

Communications staff is responsible for ensuring that department brand standards and guidelines are followed by internal and external partners throughout the life of a project from concept to construction. It is important to involve a communications SME as early as possible in the concept phase of the project cycle. They can assist with determining proper and consistent messaging for the project team members all with an eye for concise and timely information to help facilitate outreach efforts. Staff informs the public, media partners and other stakeholders of the status of preconstruction activities associated with projects and continues those outreach efforts when projects will have potential traffic impacts during the construction phase.

In fact, the more complex and impactful projects have already had a representative from Communications on the project team during the preconstruction phase to issue press releases, create web content on the project, and assist with robust community outreach. The Communications project team member should re-evaluate the potential concerns of the project post-letting and determine:

- If in-house Communications resources are capable of handling proactive and ongoing activities to inform the public about construction impacts, including:
 - writing and distributing press releases;
 - making presentations at neighborhood meetings;
 - flyers to businesses impacted;
 - social media outreach;
 - coordination with 511 to include information in alerts;

- creating and/or updating project web pages; and
- sending email blasts or newsletters to stakeholders in the project corridor, etc.
- If additional activities will be needed that are pay items (i.e., social media ads, radio ads or on-line ads, printing brochures, direct mail, video production, kiosks, etc.) and what budget amount should be established for them

Using Paid Placements to Maximize Construction Awareness

If it is determined that some pay items would be needed to best “guarantee” effective public outreach, the project manager can request the recommended paid advertising budget amount by adding it to the project cost estimate as a pay item. Some considerations to determine paid outreach activities are:

- High density project location and lane closures;
- Duration of impactful construction lane closures;
- Average Daily Traffic Counts (ADTs) and how wide an audience will be impacted by the construction;
- Limited English Proficiency (LEP) communities in corridor that need project materials translated into other languages; and/or
- Project complexity/innovation which may require public education, i.e. roundabouts, in advance of project completion;
- Road closures; and detours needed

Continue Communications with Stakeholders

- If any of the considerations above exist, it is presumed that some special outreach activities were implemented during preconstruction. It may be most appropriate to resume/continue those activities
- There may be a database of key stakeholders who received project information during preconstruction – this is the ideal resource to update and use to continue dissemination of project progress and lane closures during construction phase via email
- If a project requires an extensive detour on a major route, or changes to permanent access to a property or properties, targeted outreach to affected property owners, local governments, local schools and emergency service providers should be implemented in advance
- Even when detour meetings have been held earlier on in project development, it may have been several months or even years since the public was notified of this activity; additional public notifications are needed once the project is Let and prior to any road closures

These communications activities will either be developed and implemented by the District Communications Officer (DCO) or by a staff member in the General Office (G.O.) Office of Communications. It is most effective to include a communications representative in all project meetings that occur post-Notice to Proceed.

In the Field, Face-to-Face

While project team members are in the field, the construction phase is a perfect opportunity to meet and greet affected residents and business owners. Once they see cones, equipment or other signs that construction is imminent, the public is likely to ask questions or voice concerns when they see project team members on-site. Field staff or anyone associated with the project team should be prepared to respond to questions about the project need and purpose, temporary construction traffic impacts and resultant benefits to the traveling public.

When our construction activities involve traffic impacts on major thoroughfares, in particular, the Communications Office can assist in developing flyers, press releases, door hangers and other materials that can be distributed in face-to-face, informal outreach efforts in the field. In addition, project team members in the field should routinely utilize the traditional, but very effective, “knock on the door” strategy when construction activities will have direct impacts to small numbers of residents and business owners in the project corridor. This personal, face-to-face effort minimizes stakeholder confusion and frustration about activities going on in proximity to their properties and is often very meaningful in allowing the affected property owners to ask questions.

Chapter Four (cont.): Georgia DOT's Public Involvement Activities By Development Phase: Construction, Operations and Management

4.7 Once a project is complete and open to traffic, the clock starts ticking toward the department's constitutional responsibilities to 1) ensure the corridor operates safely and efficiently for traffic and 2) to ensure that the corridor and all of its structural elements (bridge supports, pavement, curb and gutter, guardrail, etc.) are monitored for integrity and repaired or replaced when needed to maintain safe travel conditions.

Lane closures or other traffic interruptions during construction, operations or maintenance activities are all considered roadway work zones, although they each have varying worker and driver safety hazards, on-site equipment needs and traffic control requirements based on average travel speeds, sight distances, pavement drop-offs, etc.

As in the construction phase, public involvement activities during the operation and maintenance phases is typically focused on informing affected travelers about lane closures, work zones, detours and temporary access impacts, if any. Some examples of operations activities include improvements to traffic signals, pavement markings and signage installation. Examples of maintenance activities are roadside mowing/landscaping, pavement repairs and drainage system upkeep. Depending upon the locations and typical traffic volumes of these activities, proactive public involvement strategies may be necessary to minimize motorist delays. This may include sending a press release or press alert to local media specifically or statewide depending on scope of project.

Public involvement during operations and maintenance activities may be limited to the use of overhead roadway dynamic message boards and District Communications' press releases on upcoming lane closures. However, there may be times when the potential impacts are worthy of more extensive outreach to neighborhood associations, business groups and others in proximity.

For example, when the department installed new Flashing Yellow Arrow signals statewide, Communications coordinated with the Office of Traffic Safety to alert the public and county and city stakeholders in the signals' areas in advance. In a similar case, outreach materials may include:

- PowerPoint presentations for government, civic and school groups to show how the new signals worked
- Press releases including information on what the signals look like and how they worked so that media outlets could easily access and print/broadcast the information to the public
- Talking points/speeches developed for those doing presentations
- Flyer/infographics to inform the public on this new project/program
- Video explaining how to use
- VERG graphic clearly demonstrating purpose and impact of devices

Real Time Traffic Information: 511



Georgia DOT's state-of-the-art 511 Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) includes: roadside cameras, detectors, changeable message signs and a web-based map populated with real-time accident and construction information. These tools provide motorists with a wide range of ways to stay informed about travel conditions and congestion in real time so that they can adjust their travel accordingly to avoid delays. With the goal of providing assistance to the traveling public, it is the responsibility of district construction and communications staff to routinely provide information on planned construction activities on each of Georgia's interstates and state routes to 511. This information allows the public to get real-time information on construction lane closures by visiting www.georgianavigator.com, www.511ga.org, or by subscribing to enable email alerts sent directly to users smartphones.

Work Zone Safety and Mobility Policy

In response to 23 CFR 630 Subpart J, the Department is in the process of a self-assessment and policy review to develop a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) that would guide strategies to mitigate impacts of construction work zones (and in particular, work zones of significant projects and within the state's five highly urbanized Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) and the communications and public involvement strategies needed to inform the public about expected work zone impacts. The WZS&M Policy can be found here <http://www.dot.ga.gov/PartnerSmart/Training/Documents/WZS/WorkZoneSafety/C00/index/index.swf>

The scope, content and level of detail of project TMPs will vary based on the anticipated work zone impacts, including: type of work being performed; duration of the work, length and location of the corridor; existing and projected traffic congestion; and crash data. When the WZS&M Policy is complete, it will also include provisions for pedestrian safety and mobility, location of and access to transit facilities, and revisions to existing traffic operations and traffic control practices, policies and training for appropriate staff.

A key component of this effort includes the necessary public involvement strategies and activities that would provide the outreach to the public, businesses, Community Improvement Districts, TMAs, MPOs, and other stakeholders to make the public aware of each project's anticipated traffic impacts.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and Traffic Mitigation

For the past decade, Georgia DOT has sponsored TDM efforts in the 20-county metro Atlanta region to address traffic congestion and its related air quality and economic development impacts. Through its Georgia Commute Options (GCO) program, the department has implemented and supported employer and commuter efforts to increase the use of transit, teleworking, carpooling and vanpools and active transportation such as biking and walking in the region to reduce single-occupant travel on our roadways, especially during morning and evening peak commute times.

More information about GCO programs and efforts can be found at www.gacommuteoptions.com. The department also maximizes GCO staff and outreach efforts to businesses and commuters in the region to make the public aware of upcoming lane closures related to construction, operations and maintenance, using the GCO website and its social media channels.



The program's Employer Services Staff maintain close connections to the Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) in the region. TMAs are organized groups of individuals or businesses created to address localized transportation issues. TMAs in the Atlanta region are nonprofit organizations that were formed to help improve accessibility and mobility in and around activity centers which have often experienced rapid urban/suburban growth. TMAs assist employers by providing technical advice and assistance on commute options, and by brokering transportation services, including carpool, vanpool, and transit options.

The Atlanta Regional Commission refers to both TMAs and other organizations that offer other transportation demand management services as Employer Service Organizations (ESOs).

The department's partnership with the TMAs affords excellent opportunity for direct and effective outreach to businesses and commuters when we anticipate traffic impacts. Our TDM traffic mitigation efforts also track and compare traffic counts pre-outreach vs post-outreach to ensure that we are, indeed, keeping as many vehicles as possible away from roadway lane closures.

Resolving Emergency Roadway Impacts



The department is prepared to respond to, and provide public awareness/involvement activities for emergency/disaster events and other major roadway traffic impacts, including:

- Natural disasters like hurricanes, floods, snow/ice storms, etc. that may require evacuations, clearing road debris, etc.;
- Assisting law enforcement agencies with presidential/VIP/dignitary escorts and route road closings;
- Special transport needs of over-sized freight loads and hazardous or sensitive materials; and
- Any significant, multi-jurisdictional roadway response and recovery effort

Informing the public about these emergencies might include:

- Focused media relations, including phone calls, emails and advisories to convey the emergency to the public;
- Information pieces, including publications, presentations and flyers on preparedness for weather-related emergencies, distributed to local government and civic groups;
- Email blasts to partner state agencies, legislators, county and city elected officials;
- Social media campaigns; and
- Web announcements

Suspension of Lane Closures During Holidays and Special Events

It is the Department's policy to temporarily suspend impactful construction, operations and maintenance lane closures on interstates and state routes on and/or during official state holidays and holiday weekends to minimize traffic congestion. In addition, when Georgia hosts major special events like the Masters Golf Tournament, or major NASCAR events when increased traffic is anticipated, the department will suspend impactful lane closures on the interstates and primary access roads leading into/out of the event location. The Communications Office District Communications Officers (DCOs) will:

- Issue a press release announcing the suspension in advance of an approaching special event or holiday. The announcement is also posted on the department's website and on social media channels
- Implement an ongoing campaign through various channels
- Engage in active coordination with media, traffic reporters keeping them informed of changes along road closures
- Actively inform motorists of 511 alerts incidents/crashes to avoid during these high traffic events

Please do not reply to NewsReleases@dot.ga.gov. [View this email in your browser](#)

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:
Monday, May 18, 2020

Contact:
mediarequests@dot.ga.gov

Georgia DOT Restricts Construction-Related Lane Closures Statewide During Memorial Day Holiday Weekend

ATLANTA, GA – To ease potential Memorial Day weekend traffic congestion, the Georgia Department of Transportation is **suspending construction-related lane closures from noon Friday, May 22, 2020 through 5 a.m. Tuesday, May 26, 2020** on Interstate highways and limiting lane closures on state routes that directly serve major tourist and recreation centers.

Exception: Construction at 400 SB to 285 EB (For more information on closures [click here](#))

A construction related road closure is scheduled for Friday, Saturday, and Sunday night 10 pm to 6 am. The closure is to set beams for a bridge and will take place from 400 south bound (SB) to 285 eastbound

Chapter Five: Elements of Effective Public Involvement Plan (PIP) Development

5.1 Identify Goals

Each PIP should have goals identified allowing the Department to measure outcomes against stated objectives and goals. Identify achievable goals to either inform and educate; reach consensus or participate in decision-making process.

5.2 Identify Stakeholders

A primary goal of the Department's public involvement activities is to be inclusive of and accessible to anyone who may have an interest in the project, regardless of race, age, income and educational levels, language or physical disability. In this regard, it becomes obvious that traditional and cookie-cutter approaches to these activities probably won't achieve the goal.

There are some stakeholders that are common to every project's public involvement activities, including:

- County and city officials and planning/public works staff
- Emergency responders and hospitals
- Residential and business property owners in corridor
- Users of the corridor (commuters, truckers, tourists, etc.)
- Any affected transportation partners (transit, airport, etc.)
- Any impacted persons or communities vis a vis physical, language, historical/cultural or socio-economic disadvantages
- State Transportation Board members
- Members of the Georgia General Assembly
- FHWA
- Tribal Governments
- General public
- Media
- Resources to help identify stakeholders that are not common to every project which may include:
 - Environmental group organized
 - Groups in opposition to project
 - Online petition groups
 - Minority associations
 - Homeowners' associations
 - Local chamber of commerce and/or business groups
 - TMAs and/or CIDs
 - Tourism bureaus and/or local development authority
 - Schools and colleges, including PTAs and alumni chapters
 - Urban League chapters
 - NAACP chapters
 - Sororities, fraternities
 - Social service agencies for the disabled, elderly, children, unemployed, etc.
 - Asian American Resource Center
 - Latin American Association
 - Native American tribes
 - Civic group chapters like Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions Club, Civitan Clubs

Many Project Teams may also expect to coordinate with other significant stakeholder agencies and organizations, including, but not limited to:

- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- National Marine Fisheries Service
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources
- US Environmental Protection Agency
- Georgia Environmental Protection Division
- US Corps of Engineers
- State Roadway and Toll Authority
- Georgia Regional Transportation Authority
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations
- Atlanta Regional Commission
- Georgia Regional Commissions
- Local Chambers of Commerce
- Transportation Management Associations
- Community Improvement Districts
- Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority
- PATH Foundation
- Georgia BIKES
- Pedestrians Educating Drivers on Safety
- Sierra Club
- Georgia Conservancy
- Southern Poverty Law Center

Here are some basic factors to inform public involvement strategies to be considered for project-specific databases:

- Field Review, including ride-throughs
- Profile of project area demographics – US Census Bureau and Modern Language Association
 - Race/ethnicity, Limited English proficiencies
 - Homeowners or apartment dwellers
 - Income/employment levels, educational attainment
 - Predominant age levels represented
- Google maps/GIS images
- Informal dialogues with area residents, business owners, local government staff, etc.
- Identification of schools and senior citizens' facilities
- Special interest groups that would advocate for existing area characteristics, like parks, scenic routes, bike trails, lakes, etc.
- Nearby attractions, special event venues
- Area places of worship, schools, social services agencies, etc.
- In the metro Atlanta region, Neighborhood Planning Units
- Future developments
- Actively solicit involvement on web pages by including a section specific to project “sign-up for information”

5.3 Identify Community Concerns

Being aware that community's concerns may also guide the Project Team to include other interested groups or organizations as project stakeholders. These concerns about a proposed project can be generally categorized as:

- Potential negative environmental impacts, including concerns about increased traffic and air quality;
- Potential negative social impacts, including concerns about the integrity of existing community, cultural or recreational sites;
- Potential community conflict over the detriments/benefits of the project, like roadways medians; and/or
- Complex, unfamiliar projects like roundabouts, that are a barrier to informed public participation.

Becoming familiar with the particular dynamics of each project is both a challenge and an opportunity to deliver the best project for the community and travelers it will serve. The best way to achieve this is for project team members to be experts on the proposed concept and design while being open and available to hearing the concerns of the public about the proposed project.

As transportation professionals, project team members are aware of the industry and safety standards and practices that guide our decisions on project concepts and designs. Most citizens are not aware of these standards and practices when they make suggestions on changes to proposed project plans. In cases where addressing public concerns would conflict with safety, standards, policies or cost-efficiencies, the public would still benefit from knowing that we heard their comments and concerns; were willing to discuss and evaluate them; and that as a steward of taxpayer dollars, we have federal, state and industry parameters to guide our decisions.

Conversely, there have been many occasions when suggestions from the public have been incorporated into proposed project plans. These situations are the result of meaningful public engagement, and create transportation projects that truly reflect the communities and residents they were designed to serve. It is at these times that the department must ALWAYS find ways to inform the public of the impact of their input. These could include:

- Verbiage in project fact sheet/information letter on decision
- Separate flyer on community impact on project decision
- Visual/graphic/display board notifying public of decision on their behalf

5.4 Assess and Secure Public Involvement Resource Needs

Fairly early in the scoping process, the Project Team may have been able to foresee the extent of the public involvement activities needed for the proposed project. Beyond consideration of the project as a CE, EA or EIS, the particular dynamics of either the range of alternatives to address the project purpose and need, design, project location or stakeholder interest will likely determine the level of public involvement needed.

Here are some general descriptions of the resources needed for different levels of outreach:

1. Project Team Resources

Traditional meetings with local government officials; holding one or two PIOHs (and all related logistics); compiling and providing responses to public comments, phone calls and emails; and series of press releases to local media outlets announcing PIOH, public comment period, project Letting, construction traffic interruptions and completion.

2. Enhanced Project Team Resources with stand-alone PI Plan

Early focus on messaging need and purpose and safety and/or mobility benefits; graphics or animation to compare existing and future traffic flow and volumes; traditional meetings with local government officials; holding one or two PIOHs (and all related logistics); meetings with area homeowners' associations, PTA and CID; outreach to local transit providers; project web page content development; compilation of database for several email updates through project development; compiling and providing responses to public comments, phone calls and emails; and series of press releases to local media outlets announcing PIOH, public comment period, project Letting, construction traffic interruptions and completion.

3. Consultant Resources with Stand Alone PI Plan

Early focus on messaging need and purpose and safety and/or mobility benefits; produce video or animation to compare existing and future traffic flow and volumes; traditional meetings with local government officials; holding one or two PIOHs (and all related logistics); meetings with area homeowners' associations, CID and several key stakeholder groups; outreach to local transit providers; project web page content development; compilation of extensive database for several email updates to all stakeholders through project development; design and distribution of project e-newsletters; compiling and providing responses to public comments, phone calls and emails; and series of press releases to local media outlets announcing PIOH, public comment period, project letting, construction traffic interruptions and completion.

5.5 Document All Public Involvement Activities

Project Team members are always responding to questions from the public, either in person when they are in the field, or from behind their desks via email and phone calls. Even these informal inquiries and responses to the public should be documented as part of the project public involvement record. Of course, the more formal public involvement activities like meetings with local government officials, parent-teacher associations, or presentations to neighborhood groups and county commissioners are all considered open, public meetings and should be documented as a form of public outreach during the project.

5.6 Evaluate Efforts

Taking a moment to evaluate which activities worked well and which didn't helps to ensure that future meetings and activities will be more effective. There is neither a cookie cutter nor standard checklist to achieve meaningful public involvement and engagement. Develop a creative approach to reach project stakeholders. When participants see that the agency has improved its process, their enthusiasm is renewed, and project teams become more capable in achieving meaningful public involvement. See Chapter 8 for more information on evaluation.

Chapter Six: Public Involvement Tools and Techniques

The department's goal is to achieve meaningful public involvement. For most projects, this will require implementation of more than one public involvement tool or technique to garner robust public feedback. This includes the institutionalization of virtual public involvement (VPI) tools to provide additional outreach for traditional and non-traditional public participation. The following are provided as suggested tools and techniques to support the federally required public outreach activities for Georgia DOT projects.

6.1 General Media Outreach

In order to ensure the widest possible public participation, project activities, findings and conclusions and public meeting schedules are disseminated through the general, minority and industry media across the state, including television, radio, newspapers, and their respective web/on-line presences. The Office of Communications may research and write press releases, briefing papers/fact sheets and public service announcements and distribute via press conferences, media briefings and paid advertisements. Specific techniques for media outreach may include, but are not limited to:

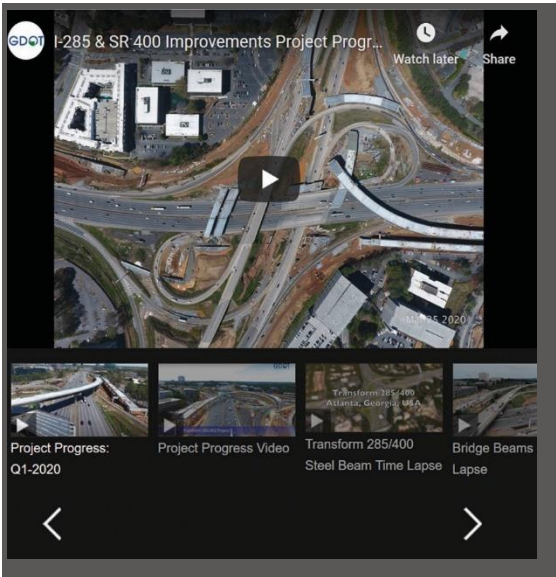
- Editorial Board meetings, which are briefings for reporters and editors. These meetings help to give in-depth background to editors and reporters and also provide a forum for reporter's comments and questions. However, they must be used sparingly and only on issues that are of great interest and have great impact on the community at large.
- Press releases are sent to all related media prior to public meeting/event. These provide an in-depth explanation of the issues involved and the time, date and location of meetings.
- Follow-up calls to reporters ensuring that they received the release and that all their questions are answered; try to gauge the reporter's interest level in the story and have an expert on the issue ready to speak to the reporter if necessary.
- Media advisories are sent as a reminder at least two days before the public meeting.
- Calls to radio stations for spots/mentions on daily drive time talk shows, etc.; ensure that there is an "expert" available to talk about the project or issue.
- Editorials in local papers penned by State Transportation Board members, District Engineers or community champions.
- Letters to editors to correct inaccuracies or to inform of a development on a project.
- As appropriate, design and place paid advertisements.

6.2 Public Information Materials

Public information materials are a key component of the public involvement process. These materials are developed to provide summary information on the projects for the general public. Clear, non-technical descriptions without jargon are most effective. These materials may include:

- Brochures,
- Fact sheets,
- Flyers,
- Newsletters,
- Articles written for internal publications of the Department, external stakeholders and other state agencies,
- Online components
 - E-alerts
 - E-newsletters
 - Web page updates
 - Informational videos





6.3 Visuals

The production of visual/graphic depictions are helpful in gaining public understanding of complex and/or innovative projects. These visuals include:

- PowerPoint presentations
- Display boards
- Logos (for larger projects)
- Table-top displays
- Maps
- Animations, simulations
- Videos

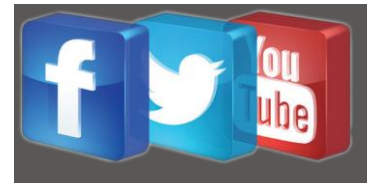
6.4 Georgia DOT Website – www.dot.ga.gov

The Georgia DOT Website posts information on:

- Upcoming PIOHs and PHOHs by county;
- As appropriate, web pages dedicated to significant/major projects
- Press releases that may have been produced and distributed to promote project-related information;
- As appropriate, project web pages may be created as a way for the public to submit comments and questions on-line, and can offer visitors the ability to be added to a project information mailing list; and
- The website also helps in documenting outreach efforts, as comments provided via the site are fully documented as part of the project outreach.

6.5 Georgia DOT Social Media Channels

- Facebook
 - <https://www.facebook.com/GeorgiaDOT>
 - <https://www.facebook.com/GDOTProjects>
 - <https://www.facebook.com/GDOTServices>
 - <https://www.facebook.com/GDOTNE>
 - <https://www.facebook.com/GDOTEast>
 - <https://www.facebook.com/GDOTWest>
 - <https://www.facebook.com/GDOTSW>
 - <https://www.facebook.com/GDOTSouthEast>
 - <https://www.facebook.com/GDOTNW>
 - <https://www.facebook.com/GDOTMETROATL>
- Twitter
 - <https://twitter.com/GADeptofTrans>
- YouTube
 - <https://www.youtube.com/user/GeorgiaDeptofTrans>



6.6 Special Outreach Activities/Addressing Traditionally Underserved Communities

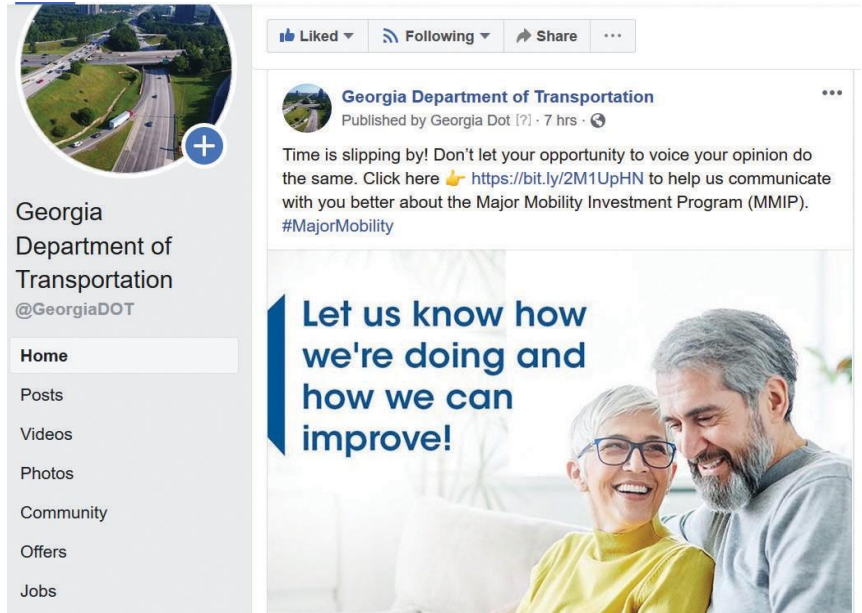
Contact with traditionally underserved (limited English proficiency, disabled, low-income) communities is very important. Project Teams must be keenly aware of various techniques to ensure that language, culture, access and economic barriers are addressed when project information is shared and public input is needed. These techniques might include:

- Identify a few key community influencers who may be willing and able to partner in outreach efforts.
- Partner with minority organizations/associations and Chambers of Commerce.
- Focus group meetings inviting members of the African-American, Asian, Hispanic, disabled and other traditionally underserved communities to give comments and gain feedback.
- Targeted focus on minority media outlets, ensuring that they are receiving press releases and advisories in a timely manner, and will cover project activities.
- Include minority media in the paid advertising schedule.
- Develop a database of traditionally underserved groups and minority media groups in specific communities.
- Secure hired and/or volunteer translators to assist at project meetings and to translate project documents.
- Businesses and places of worship are effective locations for project meetings, while community events, like festivals, are great opportunities to provide translated hand-outs to attendees.
- Adjust meeting dates, times and locations to fit the work schedules and/or cultural behaviors of the affected community. For example, be mindful of religious and other holidays and dress codes that would impact how successfully project information will be received.
- Consider a mix of low- and high-tech ways to communicate. Reliance on email and web, for example, as primary communications vehicles, may miss the more elderly and low-income households among the target audiences.
- Consider that Project Teams may have to address and overcome some lack of trust - and even fear -- as it relates to government representatives, in particular, during ROW discussions. Continuity and regard for cultural differences and communication in the appropriate language will help in these difficult situations.
- Distribute invitation flyers within communities, including home mailings, libraries, stores, and other places where residents are likely to see them.
- Email information to local Chambers of Commerce, PTAs, homeowners' associations and/or neighborhood groups.
- Make face-to-face contact with property owners, tenants, homeowners, business owners, etc.
- Place information on partner agencies' websites, community calendars, etc.
- Additional activities may be needed that are pay items (i.e., radio or on-line ads, printing brochures, direct mail, video production, kiosks, etc.).
- Mobile Apps/Mobile text advertising
- Find meeting locations that won't hinder attendance, including neighborhood shopping centers, agricultural fairs, neighborhood fairs and events and community sports events, where residents frequent. Use resources such as census data and often MLA resources to identify traditionally underserved communities.



6.7 Surveys and other New Tools

- Use social media tools not only to publicize a meeting or event, but also to keep the public engaged and updated on new information on a program or project.
- When appropriate, consider virtual public meetings that can reach a larger audience for longer periods of time, over an expansive project
- For projects with large numbers of stakeholders and a corresponding level of public interest and/or controversy, consider the use of web-based feedback software, such as MetroQuest, MindMixer, Crowdbrite, IdeaScale and others.
- Electronic town hall meetings allow large amounts of people to participate from their homes. Typically done through a local cable channel broadcast a presentation and a panel is available to answer questions that the community will submit by phone or web.
- Interactive displays and kiosks deliver information to the user; offer a variety of issues to explore and elicit responses that can also serve as a survey instrument.
- Teleconferences provide broader access to public meetings as well as widen the level of public involvement. They help save time, money and resources spent on traveling to various locations.
- Games, contests and other hands-on activities help generate “buzz” about transportation projects.
- Implement and use a “one call” system that catalogs telephone numbers within a specified area and is programmed to call with a pre-recorded reminder of upcoming public meetings, times and locations.



GDOT Georgia Department of Transportation

2020 Communications Survey

Thank you for taking the time to complete our survey. This survey will close on **June 19, 2020.**

1. How satisfied are you with the following communications methods? (rank from 1-5 from unsatisfied to satisfied)

| | 1 (unsatisfied) | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (satisfied) |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|---|---|---|---------------|
| MMIP website and project web pages | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Project Frequently | | | | | |

Chapter Seven: Public Involvement Training

7.1 External Training Opportunities

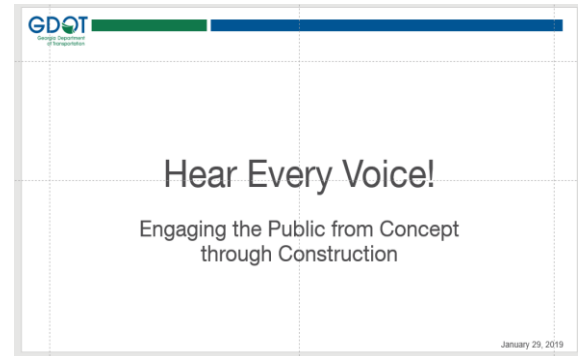
Members of Georgia DOT Project Teams are encouraged to take advantage of public involvement training opportunities provided by FHWA, National Highway Institute (NHI), Transportation Research Board (TRB) and other agencies/organizations. These training classes provide information on the most comprehensive and updated approaches to achieve meaningful public involvement.

7.2 Internal Training

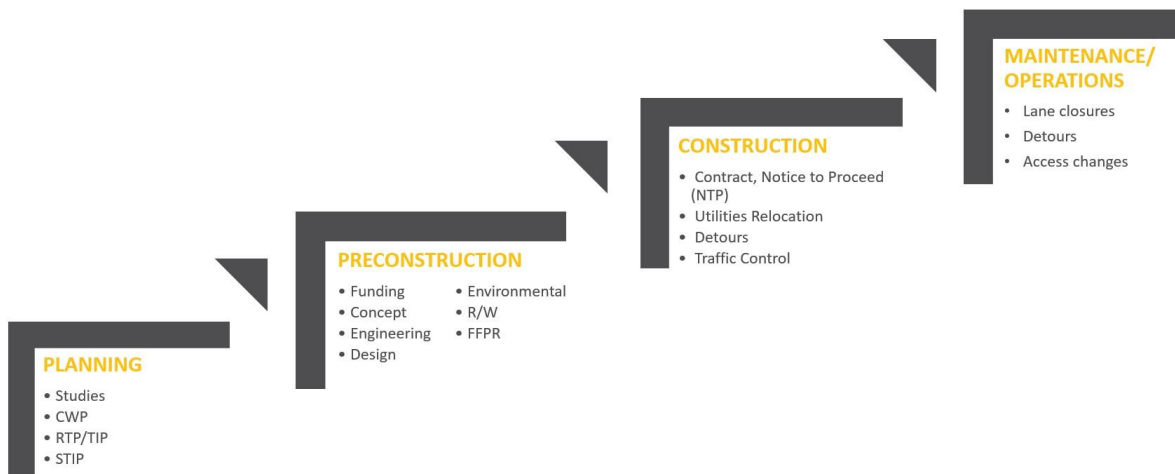
Hear Every Voice! Workshops and Resources

The Georgia DOT offices of Program Delivery, Environmental Services and Communications have collaboratively developed in-house public involvement training for project team members. "Hear Every Voice!" is a multi-pronged effort to enhance the public involvement skills of project team members as they manage the project delivery process from concept through construction. The effort consists of:

- Communications and Hear Every Voice! training that includes case studies of real Georgia DOT projects and their unique public involvement challenges and opportunities, delivered by more experienced project managers.



GDOT Public Involvement 101: A Continuum



Chapter Eight: Measurement and Evaluation of Public Involvement Activities

Georgia DOT recognizes the importance of measuring and evaluating its public involvement effort based on the achievements of objectives and feedback from the public. In addition, State and Metropolitan Planning Regulations also require a periodic review of the effectiveness of public involvement processes. An evaluation form should be completed following public outreach activities. Results from individual evaluations are used to refine subsequent involvement activities and the total results are incorporated into future updates of the department's Public Involvement Guide.

Georgia DOT uses both quantitative and qualitative measures to evaluate the effectiveness of public involvement activities associated with a particular plan, program or project. Appropriate measures for evaluating public involvement activities are currently limited, but we recognize that simple counts of the number of comments received on a particular issue and attendance at a particular meeting are not adequate indicators of the effectiveness of the public involvement effort. Georgia DOT will continue to research and work with experts in this area to develop better evaluation techniques and incorporate new measures.

8.1 Quantitative Measures

1. Attendance, including number attended and number in attendance previously at this location (if applicable).
2. Requests to add to mailing list.
3. Calls to toll free number.
4. Website hits, Facebook and Twitter followers.
5. Evaluation of advertising participation and responses -- legal notice, press release, fliers, newsletters, invitations, road signs, surveys.
6. Listing of articles and the various publications where they appeared.

8.2 Qualitative Measures

1. Survey participants on their preferences concerning:
 - Overall anecdotal thoughts of the activity.
 - Timing of public involvement.
 - Method and how often contact is made.
 - Public's opinion on whether or not their involvement was meaningful.
 - Meeting convenience: time, place, transit accessible.
 - Meeting format and effectiveness of communication tools.
 - What improvements could be made?
2. Survey selected staff concerning:
 - Impressions of questions/comments on event location and timing.
 - Impressions on attendance.
 - Impressions on tone of the meeting:
 - Did the format meet expectations?
 - Were questions/comments relevant/focused?
 - Was outreach tailored to specific community needs?
 - Were participants able to overcome their self-interest and work toward an overall solution?
3. Demonstrate integration of concerns and document where public involvement impacts the project.
4. Document all feedback and identify issues for future meetings.

8.3 Standardization of Reporting

Successfully implementing Georgia DOT's Public Involvement Plan requires standardized reporting procedures that allow for evaluating all staff efforts and tracking outreach follow-up needs.

1. Comment Cards - offered at all PIOHs, PHOHs and other specified events, including project presentations, when appropriate. All comments from the public will be included in the transcript for public hearings. For public meetings or other outreach events, the comments will be compiled and the necessary responses written by the office in charge of the outreach activity. (Appendix F)
2. Open House Report - completed by the OES and NEPA Analyst. This report is a summary of the overall Open House meeting and includes the number of attendees and some general comment categories. (Appendix G)

8.4 Monitoring and Evaluation

Public involvement is an integral part of the transportation process. It helps ensure that decisions are made in consideration of, and to benefit public needs and preferences. Early and continuous public involvement brings diverse viewpoints and values into the decision-making process. This process enables Georgia DOT to make better decisions through collaborative efforts that build mutual understanding and trust between agencies and the public we serve. Georgia DOT focuses on increasing public involvement in decisions rather than on conducting participation activities because they are required. Timely response to ideas from the public and the integration of those ideas into decisions shows the public that their public involvement is a worthwhile endeavor.

Evaluation, both formal and informal, helps to measure, define and improve public involvement effectiveness. Feedback from people who participate in public involvement events or processes often points out what works and what does not. Continuous reassessment can lead to events and processes that are more meaningful for participants and contribute more to transportation decision-making processes. Evaluating the impact and effectiveness of public involvement is a critical step in developing successful strategies. Georgia DOT will monitor and evaluate the public involvement framework as listed below:

1. Monitoring and Evaluation of the effectiveness of the Georgia Department of Transportation Public Involvement Plan will be undertaken through annual internal reviews conducted by Georgia DOT. The monitoring and evaluation period will coincide with the state fiscal year (July 1 through June 30) and a report (to include a revised plan if needed) will be produced by October 31st of the following fiscal year and will be submitted to FHWA for review.
2. Georgia DOT internal review will focus on the accuracy of the Georgia Department of Transportation Public Involvement Plan and will include the evaluation and reassessment of the following policies, processes, and information contained within the Plan:
 - purpose and goal,
 - legislative changes,
 - internal Georgia DOT changes, whether structural or process oriented;
 - technology changes;
 - revisions to public involvement themes, techniques, and training;
 - comments received from internal/external partners and the public; and
 - whether the document is current overall.

###

List of Acronyms

| | |
|-------------|--|
| ADA | Americans With Disabilities Act |
| ADT | Average Daily Traffic Counts |
| CAC | Community Advisory Committee |
| CE | Categorical Exclusion |
| CEQ | Council on Environmental Quality |
| CFR | Code of Federal Regulations |
| CSD | Context Sensitive Design |
| CSS | Context Sensitive Solutions |
| DCO | District Communications Officer |
| DOT | Department of Transportation |
| EA | Environmental Assessment |
| EIS | Environmental Impact Statement |
| EPA | Environmental Protection Agency |
| ESO | Employer Service Organization |
| FHWA | Federal Highway Administration |
| FTA | Federal Transit Administration |
| Georgia DOT | Georgia Department of Transportation/the Department |
| GEPA | Georgia Environmental Policy Act |
| GCO | Georgia Commute Options |
| GIS | Geographic Information System |
| GO | General Office/Georgia DOT Headquarters |
| IPD | Office of Innovative Project Delivery |
| ISTEA | Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act |
| LAP | Local Administered Project |
| LEP | Limited English Proficiency |
| LRTP | Long Range Transportation Program |
| MAP-21 | Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century |
| MPO | Metropolitan Planning Organization |
| NEPA | National Environmental Policy Act |
| OES | Office of Environmental Services |
| OPD | Office of Program Delivery |
| OID | Office of Innovative Delivery |
| PDP | Project Development Process |
| PFA | Project Framework Agreement |
| PHOH | Public Hearing Open House |
| PIO | Public Information Officer |
| PIOH | Public Information Open House |
| PIP | Public Involvement Plan |
| PM | Project Manager |
| PPP/P3 | Public Private Partnership |
| PSA | Public Service Announcement |
| RFP | Request for Proposals |
| ROW | Right-of-Way |
| SAFETEA-LU | The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy For Users |
| STIP | State Transportation Improvement Program |
| SSTP | Statewide Strategic Transportation Plan |
| STWP | Statewide Transportation Plan |
| TDM | Transportation Demand Management |
| TEA-21 | Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century |
| TMA | Transportation Management Association |
| TMP | Transportation Management Plan |
| TIP | Transportation Improvement Program |
| USC | United States Code |
| CMS | Changeable Message Sign |

APPENDIX A - Federal and State Regulatory Requirements and Guidance Pertaining to Public Involvement

| | |
|--|---|
| Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users | Continued and enhanced emphasis on strong planning processes and public involvement |
| 23 CFR 450 | Guides the development of statewide transportation plans and programs; requires early and continuous public involvement |
| 23 CFR 771 Environmental Impact and Related Procedures | Addresses early coordination, public involvement, project development |
| 23 CFR 772.11(f) Procedures for Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise and Construction Noise | Requirements for public involvement in noise barrier decision-making by DOT |
| 28 CFR 36 Americans with Disabilities Act | Provides nondiscrimination on the basis of disability by public accommodations and commercial facilities |
| 40 CFR, Chapter I, Part 93.105 | Guides Federal, State, and local intergovernmental consultation, resolution of conflicts, and public involvement concerning environmental protection |
| 40 CFR, Volume 31, Chapter V, Parts 1500-1508 | Addresses availability of information to public officials and citizens prior to decisions being made |
| 49 CFR 24 Uniform Relocation Assistance & Real Property Acquisition Policies Act Federal-aid | Ensures property owners and people displaced by projects are treated fairly, consistently and equitably |
| 23 USC 109(h) | Ensures that adverse effects of decisions have been fully considered on Federal highway projects |
| 23 USC 128 | Requires public hearings or the opportunity for public hearings for plans for Federal-aid highway projects |
| 23 USC 135 | Provides for reasonable access to comment on proposed plans |
| 23 USC 139 | Lay out opportunities to involve the public throughout the environmental review process |
| 23 USC 168 | Lays out opportunities for public participation during the Planning and Environmental Linkage(PEL) process |
| Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 | Declares that no person shall be excluded from participating in any program receiving federal assistance on the basis of race, color or national origin |
| National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) | Requires consideration of impacts on human environment |
| Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice | Addresses avoidance of actions that can cause disproportionately high and adverse impacts on minority and low income populations |
| Executive Order 13166 on Limited English Proficiency | Improving access to services for people with limited English proficiency |
| Technical Advisory 6640.8A | Guidance for preparing and processing Environmental and Section 4(f) documents |
| 36 CFR 800.2(d) | Federal regulations regarding public involvement in the Section 106 process |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>OCGA Title 32-2-3(f)(2)-(5)</p> | <p>State law regarding method of conducting and advertising public hearings to provide an opportunity for effective participating by interested persons in transportation decision making.</p> |
| <p>GDOT Environmental Procedures Manual</p> | <p>covers GDOT procedures for conducting public involvement</p> |
| <p>GDOT Public Hearing Format, Procedures and Federal Guidelines -</p> | <p>Procedures for implementing public involvement/public hearing</p> |

APPENDIX B - Public Involvement Worksheet

GDOT Office of Environmental Services | Public Involvement Worksheet

PI#(s): Choose an item., County: Choose an item. Project Name: Click here to enter text.

Completion of this worksheet is a collaborative effort beginning with the GDOT **Project Manager (PM)** and the **GDOT Environmental (ENV) Analyst**. Please be advised that Step 3 (below) should allow a **minimum of 60 days** to arrange/advertise all public meetings; therefore, it is advised that this form start 4-6 months prior to a public meeting.

Use of this form: Step 1 **PM** sets up a team meeting to discuss Public Involvement (PI); **Step 2: PM** obtains this worksheet from **Env Analyst** after team approves required material for step 2: layout, draft fact sheet, draft introductory boards, and draft handout **PM** to submit to OPD OH and OES Env- AOH. Concurrence to move forward with scheduling a meeting Must be received before moving to → **Step 3: PM** and **ENV Analyst** confer to provide request info, propose date → **Step 4: District** completes Title VI research/documentation below and in conjunction with → **Step 5: District Planning and Programming Engineer (DPPE)** reviews request info and arranges location, schedules open house (OH), advertising and other needs → **Step 6: ENV Analyst** provides ad/s, postcards, schedules dry run, adds info to public involvement calendar → **Step 7: Env Analyst** schedules dry run. **Step 8 ENV Analyst** uses this form to lead the dry run. Following the dry run, this worksheet should be accessible for general information related to the OH (email PDF to attendees and add to ProjectWise.) → **Step 9: ENV Analyst** ensures team has reviewed website, its live and postcards are mailed out. → **Step 10: Env Analyst** coordinates responses to comments and sends responses to citizens

Step 1 - PI Kick off Meeting: **PM** holds a team meeting to discuss projects PI Plan (for new projects it is recommended that step 1 takes place at the PI kick-off meeting or within one month of schedule approval. For additional PI meetings this should be discussed 4-6 months prior to meeting). **PM** should invite: OES Environmental Analyst, Env Consultant if applicable, Designer, District Planning and Programming Engineer, District Communications, OGC Communications.

Env Analyst fills out **Step 1** during meeting; PI Worksheet should be uploaded to ProjectWise Public Involvement Folder (within NEPA Folder) after the meeting so that review and approval dates can be tracked by Env Analyst and **PM**. **PM** will move to **Step 2** when approvals are complete.

General Information

| | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Meeting Sponsor: Choose an item. | |
| Meeting Target Month: Choose an item. | Type of Meeting: Choose an item. |
| GDOT PM: Click here to enter text. | |
| GDOT Designer/Design Consultant Contact: Click here to enter text. | |
| GDOT Communications (GO): Click here to enter text. | |
| GDOT Communications (District): Choose an item. | |
| GDOT ENV Analyst: Click here to enter text. | DPPE: Choose an item. |
| ENV Analyst Consultant (if applicable): Click here to enter text. | |
| Personnel not listed above that will be attending PIOH: | |

PI Materials

Reviews to be complete 10 days after submittal: Click or tap to enter a date. ***

Revisions to be complete after 5 days: Click or tap to enter a date.

Approval required 5 days after review: Click or tap to enter a date.

| PI Materials | Needed | Who is Responsible | Date Materials Needed on Projectwise | Material Reviewer | Date Material Review Complete*** | Date Material Approved |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Welcome Letter/Web Information | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | Click or tap to enter a date. | GDOT Team | Click or tap to enter a date. | Click or tap to enter a date. |
| Fact Sheet | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | Click or tap to enter a date. | GDOT Team | Click or tap to enter a date. | Click or tap to enter a date. |
| Layouts | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | Click or tap to enter a date. | GDOT Team | Click or tap to enter a date. | Click or tap to enter a date. |

APPENDIX B (cont.) - Public Involvement Worksheet

GDOT Office of Environmental Services | Public Involvement Worksheet

PI#(s): Choose an item., County: Choose an item. Project Name: [Click here to enter text.](#)

| | | | | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Introductory Boards | Choose an item. | Choose an item.** | Click or tap to enter a date. | GDOT Team | Click or tap to enter a date. | Click or tap to enter a date. |
| Video* | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | Click or tap to enter a date. | GDOT Team | Click or tap to enter a date. | Click or tap to enter a date. |
| Web Page* | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | Click or tap to enter a date. | GDOT Team | Click or tap to enter a date. | Click or tap to enter a date. |
| Post Card* | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | Click or tap to enter a date. | GDOT Team | Click or tap to enter a date. | Click or tap to enter a date. |
| Begin Name Tag Key* | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | Click or tap to enter a date. | GDOT Team | Click or tap to enter a date. | Click or tap to enter a date. |

Please see directions for completing materials in Public Involvement Workflow Guidance in the NEPA Library

*not needed to advance to step 2, in step 1 it will establish if this is a need and who will complete, if web only meeting, mark as yes if it's needed

**Environmental should gather project information/wording for introductory boards, GDOT or Consultant Design will pull down images and layout the boards

***Should be same date: 10 days after materials are posted to ProjectWise for simultaneous OES and OPD review

Materials for Reviews to be placed in Public Involvement PW Folder by Environmental Analyst who will forward link to team. Reviews to be complete 10 calendar days after submittal - Advance to Step 2 when all approvals are completed: [Click or tap to enter a date.](#)

Step 2 - Management Approval to Schedule Meeting: PM obtains approved welcome letter, fact sheet, layout, and introductory boards if identified as needed in Step 1 above. PM should ensure that all draft materials were reviewed by team prior to submitting PIOH package, package should be submitted with this worksheet: PIOH package is submitted to **OPD office head** once approved, OPD will forward to **OES Environmental Section AOH**. After concurrence is received to move forward with scheduling a meeting the team should move to step 2. **AOH** will forward final approval to ENV Analyst, PM, and EPM. Concurrence e-mails to advance should be attached to this sheet.

Virtual/Web only meetings, do not advance to Step 3: Env. Analyst

1. Analyst/Consultant Go to USPS website, open the direct mailing map to obtain the postal code routs
2. Analyst/Consultant Create Ad to send to district (when Ad is sent to districts let them know advertisement date and request, they let local/elected officials know about the web meeting)
3. GDOT (Analyst or PI staff member) Create Web Page; ensure information is placed on the web and visible to the public prior to the ad being published and postcards being mailed – Should not go live until Step 1 approval date is complete
4. Mail out Post Cards/Run Ad (one-two weeks prior to beginning of comment period)
5. Respond to comments (**Advance to Step 10**)

Step 3 - Information for District Consideration about Meeting Date/Location: EPM submits this to Env Analyst and PM once they approve step 2: ENV Analyst inserts the necessary information in the fields below. Upon completion of this step, Env Analyst - submit the form via email to the DPPE for review. copy the, **PM and Environmental Program Manager, General Office (GO)/District Communications staff.**

Proposed Open House Time/Date

| |
|---|
| Requested Meeting Month: Choose an item. |
| Suggested Days: Click here to enter a date. ; Click here to enter a date. ; Click here to enter a date. |
| Time: Choose an item. |
| Room Needs: (insert room size requirements, if the location will need to provide anything for video needs, etc.) |
| Additional Outreach Needs*: |

*(Ex: distribution of flyers/hiring interpreters)

Please Note: State Law requires PHOHs to be advertised a minimum of 30 days prior to the meeting date.

- All OH ads must be run in the county's legal organ. They should run 3 weeks out and again 1 week before OH.
- Consider the newspapers' submission deadline when determining the meeting's ad deliverable date.
- It generally takes the District Office 6 to 8 weeks to obtain the roadway signs.
- Meetings should make attempts to be held on Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday, unless the area dictates otherwise

APPENDIX B (cont.) - Public Involvement Worksheet

GDOT Office of Environmental Services | Public Involvement Worksheet

PI#(s): Choose an item., County: Choose an item. Project Name: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Step 4 - Title VI: District/Consultant with district duties: Please complete Steps 4 & 5 together think about the below when setting up the meeting to ensure Title VI is being complied with: "No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or natural origin be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination."

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Yes | No | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are there minority populations in the project area? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is the meeting location easily accessible and in a place all citizens would feel safe/comfortable attending, regardless of race, color, or natural origin? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is the location handicap accessible? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do materials need to be translated in another language? If yes what language/s _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Does the District recommend any specialized approach to advertising in order to engage the community? If yes please provide information: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Does the date of the meeting avoid major religious holidays (of citizens in the corridor), Election Days, or any other day citizens would otherwise not be available to attend? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | List projects in the area currently under construction: _____ - |

Step 5 - Schedule Meeting/Advertising Needs: District: The DPPE/Consultant with DPPE duties should 1) Review Step 3 above and information from corridor research used in Step 4; 2) Arrange the OH time and location based on Step 3 & 4; 3) Complete the fields below; Once steps 4 and 5 are complete submit this form via email to the ENV Analyst, the PM, and Communications (GO and District).

Meeting Information

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| OH Date: Click here to enter a date. | OH Time: Choose an item., | Setup Time: Click here to enter text. |
| OH Location(s) Address(es): Click here to enter text. | | |
| OH Location Contact: Click here to enter text. | | |
| Court Reporter (s) info: Click here to enter text. | | |
| Interpreter(s) info: Click here to enter text. | | |
| Where will displays be available for public review after the OH: | | |

Meeting Advertisement

| | |
|--|---|
| Advertisement Due Date (Newspaper Deadline)*: Click here to enter a date. | |
| Name of Paper(s): Click here to enter text. | |
| Anticipated publication dates: Click here to enter a date.; Click here to enter a date.; add more as needed) | |
| Local Officials Invited: Click here to enter text. | |
| Party responsible for the signs: Click here to enter text. | Date for sign installation: Click here to enter a date. |

*ENV Analyst/consultant must provide ad/s to the PM and the DPPE/consultant for review at least 3 days before ad due date. If Ads in other languages are needed the ENV analyst will complete at the same time.

Step 6 - Meeting Advertisement: ENV Analyst/Consultant prepares the ad/s based on the information above (see step 4 above for language Ads are needed in) and GDOT Env Analyst provides to DPPE/Consultant and copy PM. The ENV Analyst then schedules the Dry Run (typically two weeks prior to the OH). Also, the GDOT ENV Analyst must add the Dry Run and the OH to the Public Events Calendar: www.dot.ga.gov/aboutgdot/publicoutreach . All projects need to be coordinated with Ron Battle one month prior to meeting date (this is typically done through a GDOT ENV Analyst section coordinator).

Post Cards should be created/finished in this step: Team should review - (see Step 4 for language needs). Post cards should be mailed out two weeks prior to meeting, at that time all materials should be placed on the web for public review.

Is Additional Outreach Needed (See Step 4 & 5): [Choose an item.](#) If yes what was done (Add in completion date once complete):

ENV Analyst/Consultant must ensure that additional outreach (if needed) is carried out.

APPENDIX B (cont.) - Public Involvement Worksheet

GDOT Office of Environmental Services | Public Involvement Worksheet

PI#(s): Choose an item., County: Choose an item. Project Name: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Step 7 - Schedule Dry Run: ENV Analyst schedules dry run via outlook three weeks prior to Meeting. At this point the PIOH Representatives nametag Key list should be complete and those individuals should be invited to and attend dry run.

Dry Run Date: [Click here to enter a date.](#)

Create Talking Points and submit with the below when scheduling Dry Run.

Please Note: The following should be available (via email) to all attendees when the Dry Run is scheduled (completed in step 1): Handout, Fact Sheet, welcome boards, etc. All final comments, if any should be ready by the day of the Dry Run. Invite should alert team to that fact...no comments will be accepted after the Dry Run, comments should be e-mailed three days prior to Dry Run.

The Dry run is about preparing the team: All team members attending public meeting should make every effort to attend the dry run

Step 8 - Hold Dry Run: ENV Analyst/Consultant should use this form to lead the dry run. Following the dry run, the ENV Analyst should add a PDF of this form to ProjectWise and send to the dry run attendees via email.

*** Below for use during the Dry Run. Please fill in blanks with necessary info (handwritten or typed after Dry Run).***

Directions for Leading Meeting: (Fill in tables below as discussion takes place)

1. Discuss Emergency Exits/Bathroom (Fire/Inclement Weather) locations
2. Introductions
3. Discuss Meeting Materials (NOT Reviewing)
4. Discuss Room Schematic/Assignments. Note: if Schematic has not been created the team should draft one in the meeting (this can also be drafted before meeting by NEPA and can be revised at the meeting)
5. Discuss Room Set up/Equipment needs
6. Discuss the ID's/Nametag Key list
7. Discuss the following
 - Concerns from previous meetings
 - What questions we expect to receive
 - Will this project have any road closures, if so, ensure they are identified at the meeting – Specific Detour Rout does not need to be known at this time the purpose of showing closure is to satisfy PI NEPA requirements in project planning; however, if detour route has been identified it should be shown
 - Other Projects in the area/other proposed detours in the area
 - Discuss Fact sheet/Talking points
8. Discuss Steps Required After Meeting/Responding to Comment

Note: Stress how important it is to be responsive both at the meeting and after the meeting with the comments we were NOT able to answer the day of the meeting. Discuss the timelines for Post Meeting Responsibilities (see step 9 Below)

Meeting Materials

| How many attendees do we expect? | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| Handouts | Number needed for meeting: | Person Responsible for bringing to meeting: |
| Welcome Letter | | |
| Fact Sheet* | | |
| Talking Points/Notes* | | |

*Fact Sheets and talking points are for staff working at the meeting and should try to be limited to one sheet front/back. These should be created and handed out at the Dry Run as well as discussed. Staff working the meeting should become very familiar with these sheets prior to working at the OH.

Room Schematic (show picture with location of boards to facilitate this discussion or create it at the meeting)

| Location | Assignments (who will cover which areas) |
|---------------------------|--|
| Welcome Table | |
| Introductory Boards/Video | |
| Main Boards | |
| Specialty Areas* (list) | |
| Court Reporter | N/A: Note Court Reporter needs to be next to an outlet |

* ROW area, Traffic, Noise, Interpreter, DOT map, etc. These are not needed at every meeting, but a ROW station is recommended in most cases

APPENDIX B (cont.) - Public Involvement Worksheet

GDOT Office of Environmental Services | Public Involvement Worksheet

PI#(s): Choose an item., County: Choose an item. Project Name: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Room Set up

| | | |
|-------------------|--|----------------------|
| Easels | Number Needed*: | Who will bring them: |
| Video | Special Equipment needs: Y/N | Who will bring them: |
| Set up Crew | Arrival Time | |
| General Staff | Arrival Time | |
| Court Reporter | Arrival Time | |
| Meeting Materials | MS 4 Signs | Who is Responsible: |
| | Comment Box | Who is Responsible: |
| | Clicker | Who is Responsible: |
| | Directional signs | Who is Responsible: |
| | ROW Brochures | Who is Responsible: |
| | Table Signs (Public Official sign in/court reporter/comment box) | Who is Responsible: |
| | Title VI Brochures | Who is Responsible: |
| | Other Materials (list)Choose an item. | Who is Responsible: |

*if we can tape displays to the wall, answer 0

Discuss ID's (this is an environmental Consultant/OES responsibility; color codes are standard)

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| Color Coded Name Badges (list or attach attendees from each area) | Go over Color codes |
| Design: | Blue |
| Environment: | Green |
| ROW: | Red |
| District: | White |
| Communications: | Purple |
| Program Delivery: | Yellow |
| Traffic Operations: | Orange |
| Who is Bringing ID's to Meeting * | Who is Responsible: |

*Blank ID's in each color with additional badge inserts should be brought to each meeting with a sharpie marker to account for last minute replacements

Step 9 – Web Site/Post Cards: Env Analyst will ensure project information is placed on the web page and post cards are mailed out two weeks prior to meeting. The web page must be visible to the public at the time post cards are placed in the mail.

Step 10 - Respond to Public Comment: Post Meeting Responsibilities (If dates are missed escalation procedures should be followed)

| | Required by date (business days) | Person Responsibility |
|----------------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Synopsis | Click or tap to enter a date. | |
| Summary of comments* | Click or tap to enter a date. | |
| Debrief meeting/work flow)** | Click or tap to enter a date. | |
| Response letter wrap up | Click or tap to enter a date. | |
| Response letter review 1*** | Click or tap to enter a date. | |
| Response letter revisions | Click or tap to enter a date. | |
| Response letter review 2**** | Click or tap to enter a date. | |
| Response submitted for signature | Click or tap to enter a date. | |

*Summary of comments should NOT wait for close of comment period. If a new comment comes in it will be added to the summary at the close of the comment period and submitted to the appropriate office for response.

** This can be done in one meeting with discussion/live typing or via a work flow where offices type in response direction.

*** All parties will review at the same time aside from OPD/OES office heads, who have 5 days for review. If no comments are provided, it will be assumed the office has none. If this is a bad week for a reviewer the task should be assigned to another team member.

**** This will go to OPD OH at the same time. If the letter is not approved, proceed to workshop.

APPENDIX B (cont.) - Public Involvement Worksheet

GDOT Office of Environmental Services | Public Involvement Worksheet

PI#(s): Choose an item., County: Choose an item. Project Name: [Click here to enter text.](#)

APPENDIX C - VERG Visualization Needs Matrix

| Project Types | Available VERG Graphic Deliverables | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Photo-Paste Simple before and after picture | Photo-Match Overlay of proposed design data onto photo perspective | Rendering Photorealistic view from any perspective of the project | Animations Walk-through or fly-through experience of the proposed design | VISSIM Animations Simulation representing proposed design including actual design traffic |
| Turning/ Passing Lanes | • | | | | |
| Roundabouts | | • | • | • | • |
| Widening/ Reconstruction | | • | • | • | • |
| Bridge Replacement | • | • | • | | |
| Interchanges | | | • | • | • |
| Streetscapes | • | • | • | | |
| Lighting | | • | • | | |
| Multi-use Trails | • | • | • | | |

This matrix is intended for use as a general guide for possible graphic deliverables for various types of projects. It is not to be considered all-inclusive. Based on project-specific requirements, other deliverables not listed may be appropriate.

For example, an animation may be appropriate for a Bridge Replacement project if the project team thinks showing how the bridge will be constructed would be helpful (ie: construction staging, detours, etc.).

APPENDIX D - Sample Advertisement

Open House Ad Instructions

1. If this is a local project, replace GDOT references with the Local Sponsor.
2. Input the Open House information from the DPPE. Double-check the information, particularly the address of the meeting location.
3. Highlight everything below, right-click and select "Remove Content Control".
4. Before submitting, DELETE THESE INSTRUCTIONS.

Georgia Department of Transportation To Hold

Choose an item.

For P.I. Choose an item. Click here to enter text.

Click here to enter text. Choose an item.

Choose an item. Click here to enter text.

On Click here to enter a date. at Click here to enter text., the Georgia Department of Transportation will hold a Choose an item. concerning the project listed above.

This project proposes to Click here to enter text..

Choose an item.

The Open House will be held from Choose an item.. It will be informal, and the public is invited to attend anytime during these hours. There will be no formal presentation. A court reporter will be available to allow the public an opportunity to make verbal comments about the project.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information:

The meeting site is accessible to persons with disabilities. Accommodations for people with disabilities can be arranged with advance notice by calling Click here to enter text. at Click here to enter text..

Written statements will be accepted concerning this project until Click here to enter a date..
Written statements may be submitted to:

Mr. Eric Duff
State Environmental Administrator
Georgia Department of Transportation
600 West Peachtree Street, NW – 16th Floor
Atlanta, Georgia 30308

Choose an item.

Choose an item.

Choose an item.

APPENDIX E - Sample Virtual Public Involvement Advertisement

Online Project Information Ad Instructions

1. If this is a local project, replace GDOT references with the Local Sponsor.
3. Highlight everything below, right-click and select "*Remove Content Control*".
4. Before submitting, DELETE THESE INSTRUCTIONS.

**Georgia Department of Transportation
Requests Feedback & Comments
For P.I. No. ####
DeKalb County**

[Click here to enter text.](#)

In keeping with Governor Brian Kemp's directive to keep state government agencies functioning as Georgia combats the COVID-19 pandemic, Georgia DOT is moving forward by placing project information for review and feedback into an internet platform to comply with social distancing and avoiding crowds of 10+ people. We appreciate your participation in this process.

The Georgia Department of Transportation has posted information at (insert web address) related to the proposed (insert project name)

This project proposes to ##Insert project description##. (Include information about any proposed impacts to traffic, detouring, and public recreational areas).

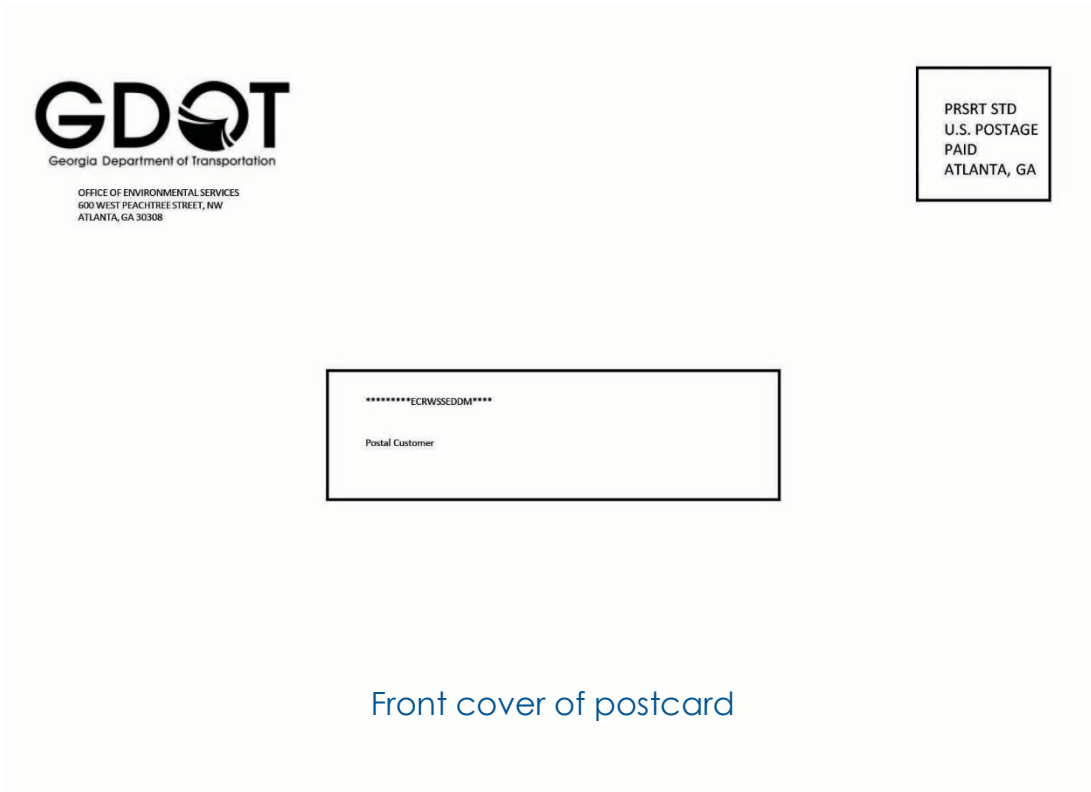
The purpose of this internet posting is to replace an in-person meeting, while allowing the public to review the proposed project, provide feedback, or write in with questions.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information:
To request materials in accessible formats for people with disabilities contact the district planning and programming engineer at. [Click here to enter text.](#)

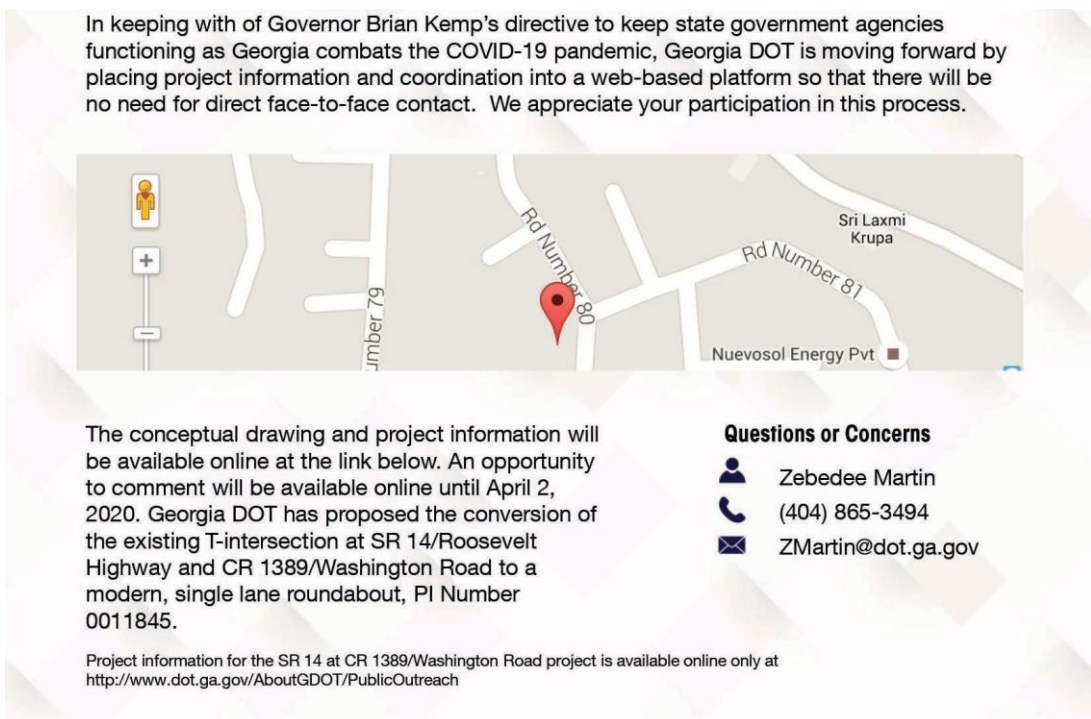
Comments will be accepted concerning this project until [Click here to enter a date.](#) Written statements may be submitted to:

Mr. Eric Duff
State Environmental Administrator
Georgia Department of Transportation
600 West Peachtree Street, NW – 16th Floor
Atlanta, Georgia 30308

APPENDIX F - Postcard



Front cover of postcard



Back cover of postcard

APPENDIX G - PIOH, Detour OH and PHOH Handout Template



Russell R. McMurry, P.E., Commissioner
 One Georgia Center
 600 West Peachtree NW
 Atlanta, GA 30308
 (404) 631-1990 Main Office

Date

Thank you for attending the Public Information Open House for the proposed [Click here to enter text](#), PI Number [Click here to enter text](#). We are currently in [Click or tap to enter a date](#) of this project and are here to gather information from the public as well as to share information that we have gathered.

In this handout, you will find a description of the transportation issue we are attempting to solve, a proposed solution, a location map, and a comment card for you to provide additional feedback for the project team.

Your comments are important to us. You may provide your comments today by filling out the comment card provided with this handout and dropping it in the comment box. If you wish to provide your verbal comments, a court reporter is located onsite who will transcribe your comments and provide those to the project team.

If you prefer to leave comments after the meeting, you can also provide comments by [Click or tap to enter a date](#) using any of the following methods:

- Online at [Click or tap to enter a date](#).
- Mail in your comment card to Mr. Eric Duff, Georgia Department of Transportation, 600 West Peachtree Street NW, 16th Floor, Atlanta, Georgia 30308.

The project displays and plans seen here at the meeting will be available for review for ten days after this open house at the website noted above. Hardcopies will also be available at the GDOT [located at](#) . All comments will become part of the project's official record and will be responded to by [Click or tap to enter a date](#).

Again, thank you for attending this open house. If you should have any questions or need additional information, feel free to contact the project manager, [, at](#) , at [, at](#) of the Office of Environmental Services.

Sincerely,

Eric Duff
 State Environmental Administrator
 Georgia Department of Transportation

APPENDIX G (cont.) - PIOH, Detour OH and PHOH Handout Template

Georgia Department of Transportation | Public Information Open House Handout

PI#(s): [Click here to enter text.](#), County: [Click here to enter text.](#), Date: [Click here to enter a date.](#)

Why are we here and what is the issue we are seeking to address within your community?

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) is seeking feedback about a proposed solution [Click or tap to enter a date.](#) to improve operations and reduce crashes on State Route 146 (Cloud Springs Road) from US 27 /SR 1 to Lakeview Drive in Catoosa County.

Current conditions along the [Click or tap to enter a date.](#) SR 146 corridor:

- Crash rates in some areas at or above Georgia's average for this type of road
- No left or right turn lanes along SR 146 between US 27 /SR 1 & Fant Drive.
- SR 146 Serves as a major connector (between Lafayette Road, I-75, and Old Dixie Highway) and currently has a "bottleneck" causing traffic delays at Lakeview Drive
- Several intersection angles with limited line of sight (view)
- Areas where three roadways come in at the same point or close to each other (example: SR 146/Cloud Springs Road @ Smith Lane @ McOtis Driveskews)
- No existing sidewalk or pedestrian accommodations within the project area

Without this Project (No Build):

- The lack of turn lanes would not be corrected
- The bottleneck causing traffic delays at Lakeview Drive would remain
- Intersections with limited sight distances would not be realigned to improve visibility for motorists
- Access points along the corridor would not be combined or reduced to assist in corridor improvements and traffic congestion mitigation
- The lack of sidewalks would not be addressed along the corridor; sidewalks increase pedestrian safety

Proposed Solution: (Also See Project Location Map attached)

In order to reduce crashes and improve traffic flow, GDOT proposes to widen Cloud Springs Road from US 27 /SR 1 to Lakeview Drive in Catoosa County for approximately 2.17 miles. The proposed project would consist of two 12 ft. travel lanes (one in each direction) from US 27/SR 1 to Cross Street, with a 14 ft. flush median from Cross Street to Fant Drive. A 20 ft. raised median is proposed from Fant Drive to Colony Cir (East), with four 12-ft. travel lanes (two in each direction) and a 20 ft. raised median from Colony Cir (East) to Lakeview Drive, where the project ties into the existing 4 lane section at Cloud Springs Road. Shoulders would be 12 ft. wide with a sidewalk to accommodate pedestrians along the corridor. Roundabouts are proposed at the SR 146 intersections with Cross Street and Fant Drive. Cul-de-sacs are proposed at Brown Circle and Smith Lane (East).

Benefits of Project Implementation:

- Improved sight distance and the addition of turn lanes: moves left turning vehicles out of through lane
- Project proposes to add roundabouts at two locations along the corridor at Cross Street and Fant Drive; studies have shown roundabouts reduce crashes and improve operations by eliminating crossing conflicts and reduce delay when compared to a signalized intersection
- Improve merge at Lakeview Drive by extending the through lanes
- Realign intersections that currently have limited line of sight and potentially cul-de-sac access points at various locations.
- Add sidewalks for walkability and safety enhancements for those walking on foot

APPENDIX G (cont.) - PIOH, Detour OH and PHOH Handout Template

Georgia Department of Transportation | Public Information Open House Handout

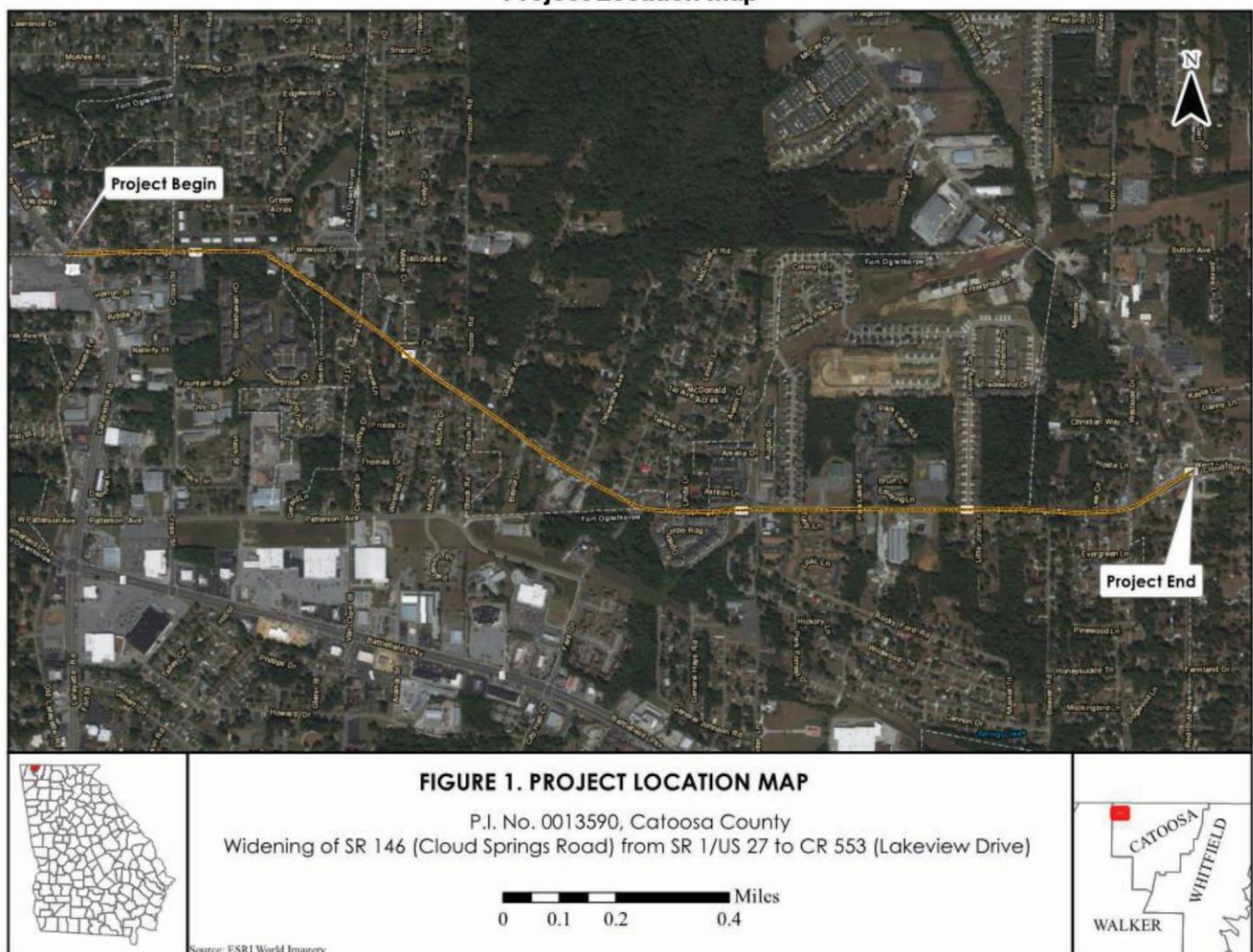
PI#(s): [Click here to enter text.](#), County: [Click here to enter text.](#), Date: [Click here to enter a date.](#)

How Can You Assist: Please provide feedback about our proposed solution as well as information about any resources important to you or to the community. Are there events that future construction may affect once it begins?

Where is this project in the process? This project is currently in the concept phase. The concept phase defines the existing issue seeking to be resolved along with a proposed solution that will meet the community's needs.

What are the Next Steps? After the public meeting is held, feedback will be assessed, revisions may occur to the proposed plan initially brought to the public or the no build alternative will be selected. Once a Concept Report is approved, the project alignment would be refined. If major changes occur to what was previously shown to the community, additional public outreach would occur. If no major changes are proposed, the project would advance to right-of-way acquisition and into final design. After all right-of-way acquisition occurs, project design is finalized, and the project would advance to construction.

Project Location Map



APPENDIX G (cont.) - PIOH, Detour OH and PHOH Handout Template

Georgia Department of Transportation | Public Information Open House Handout

PI#(s): [Click here to enter text.](#), County: [Click here to enter text.](#), Date: [Click here to enter a date.](#)

Use for EA/EIS PHOH remove for other types of meetings, comment card should be used for all meetings

Summary of Environmental Study

In compliance with the 1969 National Environmental Policy Act, the Georgia Department of Transportation has conducted an assessment of the social, economic and environmental effects for the proposed [Click here to enter text.](#). The following information gives a summary of the environmental document.

Approximately [Click here to enter text.](#) residential unit(s) and [Click here to enter text.](#) business(es) would be displaced by the proposed project. [Choose an item.](#) [Choose an item.](#) However, owners would be compensated for these losses. Please see the right-of-way acquisition statement on the next page for more information.

In accordance with Executive Order 11990, the proposed project was surveyed for wetland and stream involvement. [Click here to enter text.](#) jurisdictional wetlands and [Click here to enter text.](#) jurisdictional streams were identified within the project's area of potential effect (APE). It is estimated that [Click here to enter text.](#) acres of wetlands and [Click here to enter text.](#) linear feet of streams would be impacted by the proposed project. A U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 permit [Choose an item.](#) required for this project.

In accordance with Executive Order 11988, the proposed project was surveyed for floodplain involvement. The proposed project would not significantly encroach upon floodplain or floodways within the project area. The project would not have an adverse effect on water quality within the project corridor.

The proposed project would not exceed state and federal air quality standards, and it is consistent with the State Implementation Plan for the attainment of clean air quality in the state. [Choose an item.](#)

The construction of this project would result in a [Click here to enter text.](#) decibel increase in traffic generated noise by the design year [Click here to enter text.](#), and [Click here to enter text.](#) houses would approach or exceed the noise abatement criteria. [Choose an item.](#)

In compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the project has been surveyed for existing and eligible National Register properties. [Click here to enter text.](#) existing or eligible historic or archaeological resources were found to be located within the project's area of potential environmental effect.

The proposed project [Choose an item.](#) affect any threatened or endangered plant or wildlife species, as [Click here to enter text.](#) are located in or frequent the project area. [Click here to enter text.](#)

In accordance with the Farmland Protection Policy Act, the criteria of 7 CFR, Part 658 have been applied to determine the project effects on farmland. Based on the assessment of these effects, the project [Choose an item.](#) additional alternates need to be examined.

The proposed project has been surveyed for potential sites where contaminated soil and/or water from leaking underground storage tanks may exist. The [Click here to enter text.](#) potential sites that were identified are being further investigated. If contaminants are found, avoidance alternates may be considered, or applicable laws and regulations concerning the removal of toxic or hazardous material will be coordinated with the Environmental Protection Division.

APPENDIX G (cont.) - PIOH, Detour OH and PHOH Handout Template

Georgia Department of Transportation | Public Information Open House Handout

PI#(s): [Click here to enter text.](#), County: [Click here to enter text.](#), Date: [Click here to enter a date.](#)

Copies of the environmental document are available at this hearing for your review or by request to the Atlanta office on the first page of this handout.

APPENDIX G (cont.) - PIOH, Detour OH and PHOH Handout Template

Georgia Department of Transportation | Public Information Open House Handout

PI#(s): [Click here to enter text.](#), County: [Click here to enter text.](#), Date: [Click here to enter a date.](#)

Right-Of-Way Acquisition

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) has the responsibility, once a project is approved, of appraising, purchasing property and, if required, assisting individuals, families or businesses in relocating. When purchasing property, we desire to pay full market value for the necessary property. This value will be established by using qualified real estate appraisers who will prepare, for GDOT's use, written appraisals using actual sales data in the surrounding community.

In making an appraisal, the appraiser will contact each property owner and arrange a convenient time to make an on-site inspection of the property with him or her. After completion of the appraisal, the right-of-way appraisal staff will review and field check the findings for accuracy to ensure that all things relating to value have been considered in establishing the amount to be offered. When only a part of the property is needed, we will purchase that part plus pay for loss of value, if any, to the remaining property. In all cases, when GDOT purchases property, we will make additional payments to property owners for the cost of transferring ownership to GDOT. These costs generally include transfer taxes, deed-recording fees, mortgage pre-payment penalties and the pro-rata share of city or county taxes.

Georgia DOT is aware of the problems experienced by individuals, families, businesses, and nonprofit organizations when they are required to move. It is our commitment that no family or individual will be required to relocate until comparable decent, safe and sanitary housing is available or is provided for those occupants.

Additionally, GDOT will provide assistance to businesses and nonprofit organizations in relocating to other sites and will encourage them to remain in the community.

The information pamphlet "*What Happens When Your Property is Needed for a Transportation Facility*" is available at the greeter's table. This booklet outlines the services offered and any payments for which you may be eligible, such as moving expenses and replacement housing benefits for owners and tenants. The brochure also outlines the eligibility requirements for receiving these payments.

Results of the field inspection by GDOT personnel have revealed that there will be [Click here to enter text.](#) residences and [Click here to enter text.](#) businesses that will be required to relocate.

It is important to remember that GDOT is committed to the principle that no one will be required to relocate until housing is available, or, if there is no housing available, until provisions have been made by GDOT to provide housing. It is also important to remember that all displacees will be given sufficient advance notice of GDOT's intention to purchase any property in order to allow sufficient time in which to relocate.

The GDOT District Office, located in [Choose an item.](#), Georgia, [Click here to enter text.](#) will be in charge of acquiring the necessary right-of-way for this project.

APPENDIX H - PIOH/PHOH/Detour Public Comment Card

Georgia Department of Transportation | Public Information Open House Handout

PI#(s): [Click here to enter text.](#), County: [Click here to enter text.](#), Date: [Click here to enter a date.](#)

Comment Card

Please print responses.

Name _____

Address _____

Do you support the project **Choose an item (check your response)**

For **Against** **Conditional (I would support this project if... describe below)** **Uncommitted**

Comments: _____

Help GDOT Improve Future Meetings:

Advertising: How Did you hear about the meeting: Newspaper Signs GDOT Website Radio

Word of mouth Social Media Post card Other _____

Attendance: Did you attend in person? Yes No

| Questions: | Answer | If answer is no please provide a suggestion/comment |
|--|--|---|
| Was the location convenient? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |
| Was the time convenient? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |
| Were your questions answered? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |
| Do you understand the project? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |
| Were Materials (in person or virtual) understandable | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |

Please share your suggestions on improving the ways GDOT conducts or advertises Open Houses:

Mail to:
 Mr. Eric Duff, State Environmental Administrator
 Georgia Department of Transportation
 600 West Peachtree Street, NW – 16th Floor
 Atlanta, Georgia 30308

APPENDIX I - Summary of Comments

GDOT Office of Environmental Services | Choose an item. Summary of Comments

PI#(s): [Click here to enter text.](#), County: [Click here to enter text.](#)

GDOT NEPA Planner: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Date Submitted: [Click here to enter a date.](#)

Consultant Preparer (if applicable): [Click here to enter text.](#)

GDOT Project Manager: [Click here to enter text.](#)

*Instructions: Once the comment period has ended and the NEPA analyst has scheduled and held the OH Debrief (with the Project Manager [PM], designer, NEPA, consultants and representatives from other offices as needed. A draft of this summary of comments may be available at the OH Debrief), the NEPA Analyst should have enough information to finalize this Summary of Comments and draft a response letter. Upon completion, the GDOT NEPA Analyst should route this as a pdf to the GDOT PM (and others as listed below) along with a pdf of the comments and a Word document of the draft response letter. Once the draft response letter is vetted through the offices copied below, the GDOT NEPA Analyst and the PM should follow the [OH Response Letter Guidance](#) for review and approval of the response letter. GDOT aims to respond to all comments within **30 days** of close of the comment period.*

By copy of this summary, please review the comments and provide responses within the draft response letter by [Click here to enter a date.](#)

Copy and paste in the space below the NEPA Team site info regarding this Open House. All information but the "Date Responded" should be available at the completion of this Summary of Comments.

Step 1 – Go to: <http://gdotteams.dot.ga.gov/offices/envservices/epa/Lists/Open%20House%20Outcomes/AllItems.aspx>.

Contact the NEPA Section Leader if you don't have access.

Step 2 – Click "add new item". Enter the available information (you should have everything but the "Date Responded". Click "save".

Step 3 – Step 2 should have created a new row for the OH information that you just entered. Click the row to highlight it, then click "View Item" in the list tools ribbon.

Step 4 – Highlight/select all of the rows from "PI#s" to "Add'l Efforts", copy the rows and paste the information in the space on this form directly below the following line of asterisks.

Step 5 – DELETE THESE INSTRUCTIONS!

Major Concerns:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Public Officials:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Media:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Disposition of Comments:

Suggested strategy: (1) Sort your comments alphabetically by the commenter's last name. Give each commenter a number. Be aware that some commenters provide their comments in multiple ways (i.e. providing a comment form and a court reporter interview). Should this occur, the commenter should still only have one comment number and these different sources for comments should be grouped together. (2) If the commenter touches on multiple subjects, split the commenter's remarks into multiple parts designated with letters and combined with the number (e.g. 1a, 1b, 1c...). (3) Summarize these comments in the Nature of Comment Column. List in the Comment # Column all comments (from multiple commenters) that fit the Nature of Comment description.

Please Note: If a comment is specific to a commenter's property or individual situation, it may not be appropriate for a combined response letter. In these instances, prepare a response letter that addresses the commenter's individual concerns but also includes the comments/responses provided in the combined response letter. If ROW specific, use the ROW response to comment language. Do not deviate from this language.

Office of Program Delivery/Office of Innovative Delivery

| Nature of Comment | Comment # |
|--|-----------|
| **Use complete sentences with enough context and information that these "Nature of Comment" statements can be listed in the response letter. Add rows as needed.** | |

APPENDIX I (cont.) - Summary of Comments

GDOT Office of Environmental Services | Choose an item. Summary of Comments

PI#(s): [Click here to enter text.](#), County: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Office of Roadway Design/Office of Bridge Design and Maintenance, or Responsible Design Office

| Nature of Comment | Comment # |
|-------------------|-----------|
| | |

Office of Right of Way

| Nature of Comment | Comment # |
|-------------------|-----------|
| | |

Office of Traffic Operations

| Nature of Comment | Comment # |
|-------------------|-----------|
| | |

Office of Planning

| Nature of Comment | Comment # |
|-------------------|-----------|
| | |

Office of Environmental Services

| Nature of Comment | Comment # |
|-------------------|-----------|
| | |

Please find attached a PDF of all comments and the public official sign in sheet (or a link to the PDF) and a Word document of the draft response letter.

Cc (by email): [Click here to enter text.](#), Project Manager,
[Click here to enter text.](#), Project Designer
 Katrina Anderson, Assistant ROW Administrator
 Landon Perry, Traffic Operations
 Matthew Fowler, Assistant Office Head of Planning
[Click here to enter text.](#)

PDF to Projectwise

APPENDIX J - Early Coordination Local Governments and Agencies



Russell R. McMurry, P.E., Commissioner
One Georgia Center
600 West Peachtree NW
Atlanta, GA 30308
(404) 631-1990 Main Office

[Click here to enter a date.](#)

Guidance (to be deleted from letter): this letter should be accompanied by or inserted in an e-mail to the individual. E-mails are more likely to draw a response. A follow up e-mail should be sent if the initial one does not draw a response.

«AddressBlock»

Re: Early Coordination Request for PI#(s): [Click here to enter text.](#), [Click here to enter text.](#)
County, [Click here to enter text.](#); Choose an item. [Click here to enter text.](#)

«GreetingLine»

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) is in the beginning stages of project development for the above noted project. The proposal consists of [Click here to enter text.](#) Please see the attached Project Location Map.

The design for the project is being developed concurrently with the [Choose an item.](#) and in compliance with applicable environmental laws and regulations. The purpose of this letter is to ask you to advise us of any known project area resources or conditions that should be considered during the environmental evaluation.

This evaluation process, developed by GDOT to make our projects responsive to social, economic, and environmental concerns, offers you the opportunity to identify site specific conditions to be addressed in the environmental evaluation. With your assistance, we can give these issues due consideration and integrate them into the development of the project alignment and design.

GDOT would especially appreciate your assistance in identifying communities in the project area— low income and minority communities in particular. If you are aware of community associations or community leaders who might serve as liaisons with neighborhoods, please bring these to our attention. We would like to be certain that communities are recognized and given the opportunity to fully participate and provide meaningful input in the project development process.

Your assistance is appreciated. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact the NEPA Analyst, [Click here to enter text.](#) ([Click here to enter text.](#)), at 404-631-[Click here to enter text.](#) or the project manager, [Click here to enter text.](#), ([Click here to enter text.](#)), at [Click here to enter text.](#)

Sincerely,

Eric Duff
State Environmental Administrator
ED/[Click here to enter text.](#)
Attachments: Project Location Map

cc: [Click here to enter text.](#), GDOT Project Manager (via email)
PDF for Project File

APPENDIX K - PIOH/PHOH/Detour Response Letters



Russell R. McMurry, P.E., Commissioner
 One Georgia Center
 600 West Peachtree NW
 Atlanta, GA 30308
 (404) 631-1990 Main Office

Click here to enter a date

«AddressBlock»

Re: Responses to Open House Comments for PI#(s): Click here to enter text, Click here to enter text Choose an item., Click here to enter text
 Choose an item. Click here to enter text

«GreetingLine»

Thank you for your comments concerning the proposed project referenced above. We appreciate your participation and all of the input that was received as a result of the Click here to enter a date Choose an item. Every written comment received and verbal comment given to the court reporter will be made part of the project's official record.

A total of Click here to enter text people attended the open house. Of the Click here to enter text respondents who formally commented, Click here to enter text were in **support** of the project, Click here to enter text were **opposed**, Click here to enter text were **uncommitted**, and Click here to enter text expressed **conditional support**.

The attendees of the open house and those persons sending in comments within the comment period raised the following questions. The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) has prepared this one response letter that addresses all comments received so that everyone can be aware of the questions raised and the responses given. Please find the comments summarized below (in *italics*) followed by our response.

- "*comment*"

Response

- "*comment*"

Response

- ****ROW Related Question. Use this response for questions that are directly about the ROW acquisition process. Do not over use or misuse this response; if the question only tangentially raises ROW issues and especially if it is really about design or alignment concerns—why do you have to take my RW rather than shifting?, etc.—address the comment. (In rare cases a ROW comment may require an individual letter, but consult with OES NEPA before making that decision.) Remember to include the brochure (for the specific commenter only) if this discussion is included. DELETE instructions between these asterisks. ****

Please note that the proposed project alignment has not yet been finalized and there is some chance that the proposed ROW shown on the plans can be reduced or

APPENDIX K (cont.) - PIOH/PHOH/Defour Response Letters

Open House Response Letter
2 of 2

perhaps eliminated. In the event your property is required in total or in part, a certified appraiser from the Department's appraiser prequalification list will make a fair market value appraisal of the area to be required, including any damages to the remainder land, if applicable. The appraisal will also include values for improvements required or damages that may be applicable.

Should you be required to relocate as part of this project, a Department representative will assist you during your relocation. To further explain the relocation program and hopefully answer any other questions you may have, we have enclosed a copy of the brochure "What Happens When Your Property is Needed for a Transportation Facility".

Again, thank you for your comments. Should you have further questions, comments or concerns, please call the project manager, [Click here to enter text](#), at [Click here to enter text](#) or the environmental analyst, [Click here to enter text](#), at 404-631-[Click here to enter text](#).

Sincerely,

Eric Duff
State Environmental Administrator

ED/[Click here to enter text](#)

cc: [Click here to enter text](#), GDOT Board Member (District [Click here to enter text](#))
[Click here to enter text](#), State Representative (District [Click here to enter text](#))
[Click here to enter text](#), State Senator (District [Click here to enter text](#))
[Click here to enter text](#), GDOT Project Manager (via email)
PDF for Project File



600 West Peachtree Street, NW • Atlanta, GA 30308 • 404.631.1990