

South Carolina Department of Transportation
Planning Office Process Directive

Number: 12

Date: February 2018

Subject: Public Involvement

Purpose: Procedure for providing public notifications and reporting

SCDOT's Public Involvement unit manages the public involvement process for all projects approved by SCDOT's commission for future inclusion in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan.

Public Involvement strives to include a diversified public in SCDOT's planning processes by developing and implementing strategies to solicit public participation in each phase of the transportation planning process.

The unit actively pursues a broad representation of stakeholders to maximize the distribution of information and solicitation of public comments via the news media, public meetings, the internet, email and social media. The unit assists in the development of and dissemination of press releases and announcements to stakeholders and interested citizens requesting public input on various projects.

Stakeholders are encouraged to forward requests for Public Comment to their constituents, local Businesses, Community Leaders, Policy Committee members, Transportation Study groups, Technical Committee members, local governments, local Chambers of Commerce, staff, and other interested groups to ensure greater public awareness of, and involvement in, transportation planning decision-making.

The unit also coordinates with the state's 10 regional Councils of Governments (COGs) offices and SCDOT's seven Engineering District Offices to make planning information available at their offices for public review and comment. Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) have their own public involvement plan that specifies the method and process to receive public comment.

The unit maintains and updates the **Public Participation Plan** for the Statewide Planning unit every 5 years and coordinates federal mandated **customer services surveys** for both internal and external planning processes and initiatives.

Another responsibility of the Public Involvement unit is the coordination of the Regional Update Information Meetings every 5 years for the Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan and every 3 years for the STIP. These meetings are to introduce the citizens to the updates in both and to

request public comment that will assist our efforts to inform and involve the citizens with the changes and new ideas.

Public Comment Work Flow Process

1. Each month the Public Involvement unit coordinates with the Director of Planning to determine if any Commission actions will require public comment. A transmittal has been created and submitted to the Leadership to consider an item for public comment that is usually but not always from one of the following areas:
 - STIP Amendments
 - Maintenance Projects
 - Commission Approved Items
 - Safety Projects
 - Transportation Alternative Programs
 - Prioritization Lists
 - Transit Programs
 - Office of Planning Press Releases: Regional Meetings, Customer Service Surveys, Review of Public Participation Plan, etc.
2. A press release is drafted from the transmittal and interviews with the authors.
3. The project is researched to identify its ownership; area of the state; program manager
4. A request for technical assistance is prepared and sent to the staff member responsible for the project asking for more details of project and any maps of the location involved.
5. An updated Draft is created and submitted to Director of Planning for review
6. Maps are requested from the Mapping Office of the location or project viewer is used for large statewide type projects with multiple locations.
7. Press Release Draft is edited and approved by Leadership and owners.
8. The approved press release is sent to Robert Ruiz for translation into proper Spanish.
9. Mock-Up (s) are created for IT Services.
10. An email is written to IT Services.
11. A HELP Desk Ticket is developed and submitted and a work order number is assigned.
12. The work order number is included in the email submitted to Web DesignTeam in IT Services (D8WebDesignTeam)

13. After IT Services post the press releases online, the Office of Communications is emailed the press releases for dissemination to the media outlets and Facebook, Twitter, etc.
14. Stakeholders in the database are emailed a copy of the public comment notices and related documents such as location maps and or associated lists. Stakeholders database is located in my contacts under Public Involvement Contacts with these (14) subcategories: Agency on Aging; Bicycle & Pedestrian Groups; COGs & SCDOT; County Community Leaders; County Officials; Disability & Special Needs County Boards; Environmental Groups; Federal Tribes; Hispanic Groups; League of Women Voters; Minority Contractors; Stakeholders & MPOs; State Tribes; Subscribers and Transit Agencies.
15. To ensure compliance with the South Carolina Department of Transportation's Public Participation Plan, Public Comment documents will be put out for a 21-day comment period. All comments received before the close of business on the comment closing date will be considered. Comments received after the comment closing date will be considered to the extent practicable, but SCDOT may issue a final plan at any time after the close of the comment period.
16. Comment Retrieval and Processing
 - Divide comments into categories of the same types
 - Coordinate responses with the public and the Department's Staff Members involved with the project. For example: Staff members in Maintenance Office, Safety Office or Regional Production Groups 1, 2, 3, or 4 are asked to respond to a citizen's comments. Public Involvement unit typically handles the response being sent to the citizens.
 - Prepare the Summary of Public Comments
 - The completed Summary of Public Comments is submitted to the Director of Planning for approval. Once approved, the Summary of Public Comments is submitted to those involved as well as the Secretary of Transportation Office. The Secretary of Transportation staff is responsible to forward copies of the Summary of Comments to the Commission members for inclusion in the commission notebook for consideration or it may be emailed to the Commissioners.

Other Public Involvement Responsibilities

1. Customer Service Surveys

➤ Rural Officials Survey

FIXING AMERICA'S SURFACE TRANSPORTATION (FAST) ACT legislation provides for States to consult with and consider the concerns of non-metropolitan officials when making transportation decisions in their Statewide Transportation Planning and Programming processes. The law requires States to document their non-metropolitan local officials' consultation process. These processes provide for the participation of non-metropolitan local officials in a statewide transportation planning and programming process, and that it is separate and discrete from the public involvement process.

At least every five years (as of February 29, 2016), States are required to review and solicit comments from non-metropolitan local officials and other interested parties regarding the effectiveness of the consultation process. This survey will be used as a tool to measure the effectiveness and overall satisfaction of rural officials in planning and programming transportation improvements in rural areas.

➤ Internal and External Customer Survey

A Customer Satisfaction Survey is conducted every 3 years. The last one was conducted May 2015. This survey is conducted to determine the Planning Office overall effectiveness in terms of serving the customers we deal with on a regular basis. We survey our internal customer consisting of these areas: Environmental, Intermodal & Freight, Maintenance, Program Controls, Traffic Engineering, RPG 1, 2, 3 & 4. The external customers are: MPOs, COGs staff members.

2. Title VI

- Coordinate quarterly monitoring reports from the MPOs & COGs to ascertain if they are in compliance with Title VI guidelines. Submit signed final report to the Title VI Program Manager at Headquarters.

3. CSTCS

- The agency has a Call Center for individuals to call with their concerns or questions about SCDOT. Call Center workers take inquiries and direct those interested in the

Planning Office items to Public Involvement Unit. The Public Involvement Unit is responsible to forward the inquiries to Office of Planning staff members involved with the area in question. When the Planning staff member has answered the inquiry, the Public Involvement Unit marks it completed. For a good customer service rating, inquiries are processed in two days. The system can be accessed by contacting Director of the Call Center, Ryan Cole at 803-737-6342.

4. Public Involvement Matrix is designed as a performance matrix. Quarterly, the volume and responsiveness of public input is measured with the coordination of IT Services gathering the data from the website.

Source	Measure	Results	Response Time	Report	Date
CSTCS	# inquiries			Quarterly	
Commission Items	# comment		N/A	Quarterly	
STIP Amendments	# comment		N/A	Quarterly	
Project Viewer	# of Visits		N/A	Quarterly	
Planning Public Involvement	# of Visits		N/A	Quarterly	
STIP Webpage	# of Visits		N/A	Quarterly	
Multimodal page	# of Visits		N/A	Quarterly	
Subscribers	# Contacts		N/A	Quarterly	
Stakeholders	# Contacts		N/A	Quarterly	
STIP Update Meeting	# Attended		N/A	3 years	
Customer Satisfaction Survey	# Response		N/A	3 years	
MTP Update Meeting	# Attended		N/A	5 years	
Rural Official Survey	# Response		N/A	5 years	

**Please note the files for the Public Involvement Unit are located in: PLN-ENV(\nts\hq)
(L:) PLN in the Public Involvement Section Folder. The Sub-folder is: 2018 SCDOT Public
Involvement Work Flow Report**

Submitted by:

Director of Planning

Approved by:

Deputy Secretary for Intermodal Planning