
Public Involvement Plan

Introduction

The Nevada Department of Transportation's commitment to public involvement is embodied in the myriad of transportation projects, plans, and studies currently underway across Nevada. NDOT has a long and recognized history of proactive public involvement, applying new and innovative outreach methods to projects ranging from the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program to various large-scale infrastructure projects. The goals common to all public involvement programs initiated by NDOT are to identify and evaluate any concerns, suggestions, comments, and unique needs of transportation system users as they relate to proposed projects, studies and plans.

The public outreach strategies employed by NDOT are often determined by the circumstances unique to individual projects and typically include a mix of public hearings, stakeholder meetings and listening sessions. Information is distributed via the NDOT website or project specific social media websites, surveys, newsletters, advertising, media outreach, community events, and targeted presentations. NDOT's commitment to public participation is based firmly on the belief that public involvement fosters an open decision-making process that elicits active participation from affected individuals, groups, communities, and other public agencies.

Transportation Together

Every transportation decision affects somebody. Residents rely on the transportation system to move around their communities for work and pleasure. Visitors rely on the system to reach their destinations and return safely home. Businesses rely on the system to move products and materials around the state. In addition to their reliance on the system to meet transportation needs, all of these users have a stake in transportation decisions because they are the ones who pay for the system and expect the system to be safe and efficient. Therefore, it should not be a surprise that these same users - the public-want to have a say in transportation decision-making.

NDOT wants to meet the public where they are, identify what is important to their communities, and invest in a safe, sustainable transportation system that gets them where they want to go.

Public Involvement Plan Purpose

The purpose of this Public Involvement Plan is to provide a sound basis and justification, as well as a set of attainable goals and objectives for the public outreach processes and tools that will be the building blocks for success. Additionally, the Public Involvement Plan will serve as a functional subset of tasks, activities, milestones, and deliverables. In this way, NDOT and the community will have a uniform understanding and expectation of how, when, and for what

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purpose stakeholders and the general public will be engaged during the life of a study, project or plan. Provided on the following page are the goals and objectives of the Public Involvement Plan, which taken together will result in robust, informative, mutually beneficial and educational programs for involving stakeholders and the general public through the decision making process for NDOT's future planning and program efforts.

Public Involvement Plan Value

NDOT has tremendous federal and statewide knowledge and strong working relationships with local agencies and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). During the public involvement process, NDOT's resources will be combined with the knowledge of community stakeholders to evaluate development patterns, trends, needs, local transportation and land use plans, and emerging issues. Broad based stakeholder participation will encourage thoughtful and balanced deliberation of issues discussed and will support informed outcomes at critical junctures throughout the planning process. Emphasis will be placed on expanding stakeholder participation to include greater collaboration with MPO's, economic development agencies, utilities and renewable energy developers, businesses and trade associations, and conservation groups. The motivation for expanding stakeholder participation is to draw upon the organizational strengths and subject matter expertise of stakeholder groups.

The public will also be collaboratively engaged to provide comments and feedback on planning efforts. Through the processes and tools discussed below, NDOT's team will provide methods by which NDOT will be able to engage awareness, interest, and active involvement from the general public. A long-term, cohesive and flexible plan for transportation and corridor identification will infuse elements of predictability and expectation in terms of how transportation will impact economic development, community planning, infrastructure, and the overall quality of life in Nevada's communities. By involving stakeholders and the public early and often in collaborative ways and encouraging active participation in the decision-making process, NDOT is driven to generate a sense of value and ownership of the transportation needs for Nevada.

Public Involvement Program Structure

The Public Involvement Program for NDOT will be implemented through a logical sequence of tasks, including administration of a Technical Advisory Committee and Steering Committee; identification of stakeholder groups; facilitation of two intervals of stakeholder focus groups; coordination of two public meetings; and recommendations for community speaking engagements and presentation opportunities. Each of these processes is described below in greater detail. The corresponding subject matter, timeline and implementation approach is also described for each process.

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Statewide Transportation Technical Advisory and Steering Committees

Statewide Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (STTAC) – This Committee is comprised of department staff, including district engineers; representatives of four Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs); one non-NDOT representative from each of the three NDOT districts; and others as assigned by the Department. This group will review technical papers in advance of public outreach efforts and in preparation of major project milestones. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) will be asked to provide technical insight into the materials and processes employed as part of the project. The TAC will also assist in the identification of stakeholders and outreach opportunities.

Steering Committee (SC) – The SC consists of NDOT staff that will oversee tasks, direct the project team, and provide feedback and comments for work plan components. The SC may also be well suited to convene for implementation actions or plan triggers, such as yearly updates, NDOT Planning updates, and state and federal legislation.

Stakeholder Meetings

Stakeholder focus group meetings are held to solicit feedback, comments, and recommendations. The stakeholder focus groups will be held at two intervals, each consisting of a series of workshops held over a multiday period. The workshops are structured to include stakeholders with certain common objectives or affinities, thereby allowing greater ability to deliberate on specific topics and providing for evaluation at higher levels and with greater specificity. NDOT will structure the stakeholder focus groups in ways that correspond with organizations and groups recruited during the stakeholder identification process. Each stakeholder focus group interval will be composed of several workshops organized as follows (potential aggregation of stakeholder groups include but not limited to):

- Multi-Modal/Commercial Interests (railroads, freight, trucking companies)
- Economic Development Authorities/Chambers of Commerce/Trade Associations
- Multi-Cultural Community Groups
- Native American Tribes
- Utilities and Renewable Energy Interests and Companies
- Gaming and Tourism Entities
- Conservation/ Environmental Groups
- Local and Regional Government Agencies
- State and Federal Government Agencies

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Public Involvement Activities

Public Information Meeting

Public information meetings are intended to gather input from community stakeholders throughout the planning, environmental, design and construction processes. A public meeting can be formal or informal. They are tailored to address specific issues for the community such as homeowner associations, service groups, minority groups and the disadvantaged. A formal presentation with a comment session following the presentation is required. The presentation and comments during and after the formal presentation are recorded by a court reporter. Individual comments to the court reporter are encouraged during the open house portion of the meeting. Each guest attending the public information meeting will receive a handout describing the proposed project or study, how they may submit their comments and a comment sheet. The comment period will remain open for no less than two weeks after a public information meeting. All public meetings are a minimum time frame of three hours. NDOT strives to make transportation accessible to everyone using Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) tools and resources. All public meeting locations are ADA compliant and anyone needing assistance with disabilities or limited English proficiency will be accommodated by contacting NDOT's public hearings officer.

Public Hearing

Public hearings are held during planning studies, environmental processes, project design changes, enacting new regulations and before final decisions are made. Comments are encouraged and gathered from all interested citizens and stakeholders for public record and considered in the decision making process. A formal presentation with a comment session following the presentation is required. The presentation and comments during hearing presentation are recorded by a court reporter for the public record for each project or planning study. Individual comments to the court reporter are encouraged during the open house portion of the public hearing. Each guest attending the public hearing will receive a handout describing the proposed project, instructions on how they may submit their comments and a comment sheet. The comment period will remain open for no less than two weeks after a public hearing. All public hearings are a minimum time frame of three hours.

Open House

A transportation open house can feature presentations, slide shows and one-on-one discussions between attendees and agency staff. Attendees are encouraged to attend anytime during the open house at their convenience. When applicable, NDOT has added the multi-project concept to a public open house. By doing this, the department is making better use of our public outreach budget and increasing community understanding on related projects in their neighborhoods and how they will affect their daily lives.

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Other outreach efforts may include but are not limited to:

- Elected Official Briefings
- Tribal Community Outreach and Communication
- Multi-Cultural Community Outreach
- Senior Centers
- Citizen Advisory Groups
- Homeowner Associations
- Service Organizations
- Minority Community Committees
- Community Advisory Boards
- Local High Schools and Colleges
- Public Service Announcements

Public Involvement Tools

NDOT will make every effort to ensure that the public is receiving accurate, timely, consistent and relevant information during all phases of NDOT's planning and transportation project phases, in addition to the tools mentioned below. Requests for information submitted by stakeholders and the general public will be responded to in a timely manner.

Public Speaking Engagements

NDOT will develop a series of community presentations and speaking opportunities for the purpose of proactively educating organizations, groups, and agencies about a proposed project or study. The community presentations and speaking opportunities may be framed as a program which is the time period between the two stakeholder focus group intervals that culminates immediately before a public information meeting. This is intended to function as a targeted approach to public involvement, engaging unique constituencies in formats that are familiar to them, such as trade association luncheons, membership meetings, homeowner associations (HOA), etc.

Information Materials

NDOT will compose informative materials such as FAQs, fact sheets, e-briefs, meeting packets for stakeholder focus groups and public meetings, and other materials as necessary to support the public involvement activities. Collateral materials composed for stakeholder focus groups will be drafted in accordance with the technical and informational needs of each session. Collateral materials compiled for the purpose of public hearings or information meetings will be clearly and succinctly articulated so as to resonate with a general public audience. NDOT will submit detailed subscriptions of collateral materials to be shared for the

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purpose of the proposed plan, project or study website, stakeholder focus groups, and public hearing or information meeting for review and comment by the public.

Website

NDOT will construct plan, study and project websites. A website will be of a user-friendly design and will include an overview, meeting information, working papers, and other informational materials to help educate stakeholders and the general public. A website will also include methods to facilitate two-way information exchanges with stakeholders and the general public, and contact information for agency representatives, links to social media feeds, and links to community speaking engagements and presentation opportunities. Tools such as the plan, study or project website and social media ensure that stakeholders and the general public have the opportunity to stay engaged and up-to-date in between public meetings and events.

Media Outreach

NDOT will compose and distribute media advisories and press releases for public meetings and support content development as needed for major project milestones. The NDOT project manager and/or public information officer (PIO) will identify media outreach opportunities during the life of a project.

Social Media

The concept of leveraging social media is consistent with the desire to develop innovative and meaningful ways to communicate sophisticated and complex planning or project processes with stakeholders and the general public. NDOT will work to leverage emerging technology to engage and educate the public at key intervals throughout a plan, study or project schedule. For example, social media platforms will be developed to share important developments, meeting announcements, and provide opportunities to submit comments and feedback. The social media feeds may contain interesting facts, images, or updates related to a study or project. An emphasis will be placed on generating awareness of speaking engagements and presentation opportunities through social media announcements. NDOT's project manager and Public Information Office will distribute social media updates over the course of a study or project schedule via NDOT's existing Facebook and Twitter pages.

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Snapshot of the Public Participation



Increasing Level of Public Impact

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public Participation Goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
Promise to the public	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public influenced the decisions.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how the public input influences decisions.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will consider all alternatives and recommendations by the public.
Example Techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fact sheets • Web Sites • Open house 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public comments • Focus groups • Surveys • Public Meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops • Community advisory boards • Business owners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi agency partnering • Citizens advisory • City Council • Participation decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens input • Analyze data • Delegate decisions