

Performance Measures to Evaluate the Effectiveness of Public Involvement Activities in Florida

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INTRODUCTION

In 2006, the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) at the University of South Florida completed a comprehensive assessment of public involvement practices and processes in Florida for the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). The assessment considered public involvement practices at all phases of transportation decision making and included practices of the FDOT Central Office, FDOT District Offices, and Florida metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs).

The study resulted in a series of generalized observations, lessons learned, and suggestions to improve the practice of public involvement in Florida (*see* Appendix A). Among the findings was that, with few exceptions, FDOT and Florida MPOs have no formal methods to measure the effectiveness of their public involvement activities. In addition, many of those interviewed felt that the effectiveness of their public involvement efforts could be improved through the creation of formal public involvement evaluation methods.

The CUTR research report recommended that FDOT develop a systematic method for evaluating the effectiveness of public involvement activities for transportation. The report also emphasized the need to develop public involvement performance measures that focus on desired outcomes, as well as outputs, and that advance the strategic objectives and business plan of the transportation agency.

To that end, FDOT asked CUTR to develop a systematic method, based on defined performance measures, to evaluate the effectiveness of public involvement processes and practices. The project objectives include:

- Documenting current performance measure practices, both generally and as they relate to public involvement;
- Developing a systematic methodology to evaluate the effectiveness of public involvement processes and practices based on defined performance measures; and
- Coordinating the evaluation methodology with established FDOT performance management processes.

The first phase of the study involved a comprehensive literature review to identify related efforts on performance measures both generally and as they relate to public involvement. A scanning survey of state transportation agencies and MPOs was also conducted to identify existing efforts to systematically evaluate the effectiveness of public involvement processes and practices using performance measures. Survey respondents indicating the use of public involvement performance measures are noted in Appendix B. In addition, the FDOT business plan and customer surveys were reviewed to facilitate coordination between the findings of this project and FDOT's established performance management processes. A technical memorandum detailing the findings of these research activities is available at www.cutr.usf.edu.

BACKGROUND

Performance measurement is a process of defining and monitoring objective indicators to assess and report organizational performance on a regular basis. More simply, indicators are defined as “things that we measure in order to evaluate progress toward goals and objectives.”¹ Therefore, a logical first step in developing a performance methodology for public involvement is to identify appropriate goals (or what the agency wants to achieve) and objectives (how the agency proposes to achieve the goal) that could provide an effective framework for performance measurement. To do so, the project team developed a list of typical public involvement goals and objectives and vetted these with a Technical Working Group, comprising representatives of the Florida Department of Transportation and Florida metropolitan planning organizations. Through an iterative process of ranking and refinement, the group decided on the following performance measurement framework for public involvement.

Goal: Ensure that all interested parties have an opportunity to participate fully in the transportation decision-making process and that public input is carefully considered.

Objectives:

1. Provide equitable access to transportation decision-making.
2. Inform the public early, clearly, and continuously.
3. Use a variety of methods to involve and engage the public.
4. Carefully consider public input in transportation decisions.

After establishing the objectives of the public involvement performance measurement system, the research team began the process of defining appropriate indicators and targets that might be realistic for an agency to achieve. Considerable variation in terminology was observed with regard to performance measurement in public involvement. For consistency with the FDOT Business Plan and to achieve common understanding of results, the following terms and definitions were selected for use:²

- Performance Indicator: a variable selected and defined to measure progress toward an objective; and
- Target: a specified, realistic, measurable criteria for evaluation of the performance indicator.

To guide this process, the project team looked for direction from the literature. In a checklist for communities on evaluating indicators, for example, Hart noted that indicators should be both relevant to the community’s definition of the item being evaluated – in this case public involvement – and understandable to the community at large.³ This theme repeats throughout the literature and highlights the importance of indicators that can be easily understood by the public and within the agency and that are also intended to be widely communicated. A related theme is that often a *set* of indicators, rather than a single indicator, is needed to gain adequate understanding of agency progress.

¹ T. Litman, “Developing Indicators for Comprehensive and Sustainable Transportation Planning,” *Transportation Research Record: Journal of the Transportation Research Board* No. 2017, 2007, pp.10-15.

² H. Gudmundsson, “Indicators and Performance Measures for Transportation,” *Environment and Sustainability in North America*. National Environmental Research Institute, Roskilde, Denmark, 2001, as cited in T. Litman, TRR 2017, 2007 op. cit.

³ M. Hart, *Evaluating Indicators: A Checklist for Communities*. Johnson Foundation, Racine, Wis., 1997.

The performance measurement literature advises agencies to look for ways to measure *outcomes* (the results), and not just *outputs* (products and services delivered). Although output indicators do provide insight into agency efforts, an understanding of public involvement *performance* also requires indicators aimed at measuring outcomes related to those outputs. For example, although notices may have been distributed through a variety of methods, did people understand the information they received? Were those affected made aware of the action? And ultimately, how satisfied were participants with the involvement process and did they understand how their input was used?

Measuring outcomes is particularly challenging for policy and planning actions, as these activities are often subject to influences outside the control of the agency. In addition, agency policy or planning activities may not produce outcomes for many years. For example, a road widening project that is strongly opposed by a neighborhood may reduce that neighborhood's satisfaction with the agency's public involvement process, regardless of the quality of that process or the efforts made to address public concerns. The potential for various types of bias in monitoring public involvement performance reinforces the importance of using sets of indicators to measure effectiveness, rather than relying on any single indicator.

The literature further advises that indicators should rely on data that is cost-effective to collect or already routinely collected by the agency. Our review of transportation agency practices in Florida discovered that few, if any, are engaged in routine data collection on public involvement. One exception was the use of customer satisfaction surveys both for statewide and District construction activities. Rather, most tended to gather data sporadically through participant surveys, comment forms or by internal observation of results.

The relative importance of both cost-effectiveness and measurement of outcome creates a certain tension in performance measurement for public involvement. Measuring the outcome of public involvement activities typically will require agencies to engage in additional data collection activities, some of which will incur additional costs. It is important, therefore, that the cost of data collection for monitoring proposed indicators be warranted in light of the value of the information to the agency's effectiveness and that the number of indicators be limited accordingly. This determination can only be made by agency management and reinforces the importance of management support for any performance measurement process.

The literature advises that a good indicator is one that lends itself to establishing usable performance targets.⁴ Because targets tend to be specific to the characteristics of an action or area, the team developed examples for illustration purposes only. A baseline study of actual experience will be needed to determine the appropriate numeric targets and ranges for the various indicators. The sample targets appear under each defined indicator below.

⁴ H. Gudmundsson, op. cit.

OBJECTIVES AND INDICATORS

Four key objectives of public involvement form the basis for performance measurement:

- Equity: Provide equitable access to transportation decision-making.
- Information: Inform the public early, clearly, and continuously.
- Methods: Use a variety of methods to involve and engage the public.
- Responsiveness: Carefully consider public input in transportation decisions.

One or more performance indicators are provided under each objective, along with a description of the indicator, a discussion of data needs and measurement, and sample targets for monitoring. Information provided in [brackets] for the targets is a sample number or percentage and not necessarily a recommended numeric target.

EQUITY - Provide equitable access to transportation decision-making.

As indicated in FDOT public notices: “Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability or family status. Persons who require special accommodations under the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) or persons who require translation services (free of charge) are asked to contact the [person listed in the notice] at least seven days before the meeting.”⁵ Also FDOT staff will generally, upon request, provide appropriate aids and services leading to effective communication for persons with disabilities so they can participate equally in FDOT programs, services, and activities. This includes qualified sign language interpreters, documents in Braille, and other ways of making information and communications accessible to people who have speech, hearing, or vision impairments.⁶ FDOT further requires all meetings to be held in ADA compliant meeting facilities.

This set of indicators seeks to ensure that all interested parties have the opportunity to participate fully in the transportation decision-making process. They include:

- Access to information and participation opportunities by persons with disabilities
- Convenience of meetings and events to public transportation, where available
- Geographic dispersion of involvement opportunities
- Convenience of meeting or event time
- Convenience of meeting or event location
- Diversity of participants in public involvement events
- Diversity of project committee representation
- Availability of information in languages other than English

Indicator E-1: Access to information and participation opportunities by persons with disabilities

Target: [100%] of disabled persons that requested accommodations were satisfied with efforts made to accommodate their needs

⁵ http://www2.dot.state.fl.us/publicsyndication/default.aspx?location=publicmeetings_district

⁶ FDOT ADA Notice, <http://www.dot.state.fl.us/structures/ada/memos/ADA%20Notice.doc>

Target: [100%] of meetings, events and project-related information sources are accessible to persons with disabilities

Description: This indicator addresses the desire of the Florida Department of Transportation to ensure that persons with disabilities have an opportunity to participate fully in the transportation decision-making process. It tracks the level of satisfaction among persons with disabilities who requested special accommodations. Such efforts may include providing transportation information, presentations, surveys, and comment forms in a format that is accessible to those with visual and/or hearing impairments. It also tracks efforts made to ensure that public meeting and event locations, as well as project-related information sources, are fully accessible to persons with disabilities.

Data and Measurement: This information could be tracked by noting the number of requests received for special accommodations for each meeting location or related to project information and the number of events (meetings, hearings, workshops) involving a public notice by the agency that provided special accommodations during a given year. A survey or comment form would need to be completed by people who required accommodation to assess their satisfaction with agency accommodations. A report by the project-manager would be required to determine if meetings, events and project-related information sources were accessible to persons with disabilities.

Indicator E-2: Convenience of meetings and events to public transportation, where available

Target: [60%] of public involvement events are within [1/8 mile] of a transit stop.

Target: [60%] of public involvement events are within paratransit service areas.

Description: This indicator tracks whether persons who rely on public transportation or paratransit have access to public meetings and transportation events. It is also an indicator as to whether the general public could use public transportation to attend public involvement events. Although many resources point to a quarter-mile as the maximum walking distance, it is suggested that a shorter distance be used as a target to accommodate elderly or disabled individuals who may have difficulty walking longer distances. In addition, the availability of paratransit service will help ensure that the elderly or disabled population can attend.

Data and Measurement: This information could be easily tracked by locating transit stops in relation to public meeting and event sites. Progress would be tracked annually and the target would be set to encourage a majority of meetings or events to be within walking distance of transit, unless no transit service is available within the affected area.

Indicator E-3: Geographic dispersion of involvement opportunities

Target: At least one meeting or opportunity is located in each affected neighborhood within the study area.

Note: this target pertains to corridor or area specific projects or actions.

Target: At least one meeting or opportunity is located in each county and each municipality with a population over [25,000].

Note: this target pertains to Districtwide or countywide transportation planning or policy projects or actions.

Description: This indicator tracks whether public involvement opportunities have been reasonably distributed across the affected area. For example, are meetings always held in a central location or is the location alternated to capture higher rates of localized neighborhood participation?

Data and Measurement: This could be tracked through a GIS analysis of meeting or event locations in relation to projects or actions. It would vary according to the type and nature of the transportation action. For roadway improvement projects, the objective would be to alternate meeting locations along the corridor. For transportation plans and work program meetings, the objective would be to alternate meeting locations across the community. Results could be aggregated to the District level to track progress for the District as a whole over the course of a year.

Indicator E-4: Convenience of meeting or event time

Target: At least [75%] of participants and invitees felt the meeting or event was held at a convenient time.

Description: This indicator tracks whether those participating or invited but not participating feel that the public involvement opportunities of the agency were offered at a convenient time. By examining this issue, the indicator can help the agency achieve a better understanding of participant needs regarding timing of public meetings. For example, evening meetings may be perceived as less convenient in areas with a high proportion of retirees, but may be preferred in areas with a high percentage of daytime workers. Meetings held at staggered times help to increase overall opportunities for participation and would therefore presumably result in a high percentage of positive responses.

Data and Measurement: The primary data source would be responses to questionnaires that are administered at the meeting or distributed via the web or by mail. If only those attending the meeting (i.e., participants) are surveyed, then this could bias the result as those not attending may have found the time to be inconvenient. Invitees would include those specifically notified or invited and whose name appears on the agency's mailing list. Identifying and surveying those invited through broader public notices would be impractical. Questions would assess public reaction to the meeting time and responses could be used to determine if changes need to be made in scheduling meetings in certain areas. Assessments should be reviewed annually at a Districtwide level.

Indicator E-5: Convenience of meeting or event location

Target: At least [75%] of participants and invitees felt the meeting or event was held at a convenient location.

Description: This indicator tracks whether stakeholders feel that public involvement opportunities have been held at a convenient location. It relates to Indicator E-3 and supplements

agency understanding of whether the locations selected were perceived as convenient by the invited and participating public.

Data and Measurement: As with Indicator E-5 above, the primary data source would be responses to questionnaires that are administered at the meeting or distributed via the web or by mail. Questions could assess public reaction to meeting or event location and the responses could be used to determine if changes need to be made. If only those attending the meeting (i.e., participants) are surveyed, then bias could result as those not participating may have found the location to be inconvenient. Invitees would include those specifically notified or invited and whose name appears on the agency's mailing list. Identifying and surveying those invited through broader public notices would be impractical. Assessments should be reviewed annually at a Districtwide level.

Indicator E-6: Diversity of participants in public involvement events

Target: Percent of participants by age, racial/ethnic, income, gender and employment characteristics reflects demographics of affected population.

Indicator E-7: Diversity of project committee representation

Target: Percent of participants in project committees by age, racial/ethnic, income, gender and employment characteristics reflects demographics of affected population.

Description: These indicators track progress in achieving participation by a cross section of individuals that are representative of the broader public. They also aim to promote greater involvement by those groups traditionally underrepresented in the transportation decision-making process. Which groups qualify as "traditionally underrepresented" may vary across the state, but typically this would include persons of low income and minority status.

Data and Measurement: The indicators may be tracked by collecting information on the demographic characteristics of persons who attend transportation-related meetings, are members of established committees, or otherwise participate in the transportation decision making process. The data source is information collected through other collection instruments, such as in-person questionnaires, follow-up surveys, or staff head counts. Important data to collect include race, ethnicity or national origin, age, gender, income, education, and occupation. A crucial piece of information is the participant's address or ZIP code. Geographic Information Systems can be used to compare Census data for each area to the characteristics of participants. Florida's Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) process can also serve as an information platform for this purpose.

Targets would focus on ensuring that participants adequately reflect the demographic makeup of affected communities and/or on achieving increased participation by groups that appear to be underrepresented in the process. This data can be challenging to collect, due to personal privacy concerns, and is best collected through anonymous survey methods and included as a subset of a broader survey. Results could be aggregated to the District level to track progress for the District as a whole over the course of a year.

Indicator E-8: Availability of information in languages other than English

Target: Information is provided in languages other than English where the affected population comprises a high proportion of non-English speakers

Target: Translators are available at public meetings in areas where a high proportion of the affected population comprises non-English speakers

Description: This indicator tracks the availability of information in languages other than English. It is particularly important in areas with large immigrant populations who speak English as a second language. In these populations, some persons, such as the elderly or women who do not work outside the home, may have little or no understanding of English. In Florida, the most typical need is for Spanish translation. However, in some areas, there may be a need for translation into other languages.

Data and Measurement: This indicator first requires a determination of whether an affected area contains a high proportion of non-English speakers that will likely require information in another language or potentially need translation services. Florida's Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) process or a general analysis of census demographic data can provide baseline data on demographics of affected populations and languages spoken by each group to aid in this determination. After a need is identified, then it will be necessary to track whether written materials and media announcements related to transportation projects and actions in these areas were translated into languages other than English. The data would be aggregated annually and reported to illustrate efforts to provide information in other languages where a need has been demonstrated.

INFORMATION - Inform the public early, clearly and continuously.

Effective public involvement requires open sharing of information. To participate effectively, people must be kept informed early and continuously throughout the decision-making process. Public information materials must also be clear and understandable to the majority of persons.

This group of performance indicators and targets aims to ensure that the public is adequately notified about a potential transportation action and all those interested in participating in the decision-making process are kept informed. They include:

- Clarity and adequacy of project information
- Response time to inquiries from the public
- Affected parties are aware of the proposed transportation action
- Affected parties feel that ample notice was provided of public meetings
- Affected parties feel that ample notice was provided of construction projects

Indicator I-1: Clarity and adequacy of project information

Target: At least [75%] agree that the information provided by the Department was clear.

Target: At least [75%] agree that the information provided by the Department was adequate.

Description: This indicator helps to inform the agency as to the clarity and adequacy of public information. It supports the Governor's Plain Language Initiative by helping to track whether most people understand the information they have been provided. It also addresses whether the information was sufficiently informative and that the appropriate level of detail was provided.

Data and Measurement: The primary data source would be responses to questionnaires that are distributed to participants at meetings, via the web or by mail. Questions could assess public reaction to the clarity and completeness of information provided on public notices, fliers, newsletters, and agency presentations. This data could be used to determine if improvements need to be made in various forms of agency communications with the public. Assessments should be reviewed annually at a Districtwide level.

Indicator I-2: Response time to inquiries from the public

Target: Responses to public inquiries are made within [2 working days] of the day of receipt.

Target: Responses to media inquiries are made within [1 working day] of the date of receipt.

Description: Response time to public inquiries is one indicator of agency responsiveness. This indicator tracks whether the agency is responding to public requests for information in a timely fashion. The appropriate target would need to be consistent with any existing standards or guidelines of the public information office. For example, the Florida Department of Transportation Customer Service Review (March 6, 2007), suggests varying response times depending upon the nature of the correspondence. The sample targets are for a first response to public inquiries, as opposed to a resolution of those inquiries. A response may include requests for information, submission of comments, or requests for appropriate contacts. A separate target is established for responses to media inquiries as these responses are generally expected in a shorter timeframe, due to the media's short deadlines.

Data and Measurement: This indicator can be readily tracked by noting the time and date of public requests for information and the time and date of agency responses. E-mail to the agency automatically includes this information. Telephone calls and other forms of contact will need to be logged. An appropriate turnaround time will need to be established and typically would not exceed two days for a general response. Comment tracking systems, like FDOTracker, can be used to collect information needed to track this indicator. Districtwide results should be tracked annually.

Indicator I-3: Affected parties are aware of the proposed transportation action

Target: At least [75%] of those directly affected by the transportation action are aware of the action.

Description: This indicator tracks the outcome of the agency's public information efforts. If the agency has provided proper public notification and has made information widely available through the media and other methods to those potentially affected by the transportation action, then the percentage of those aware should be relatively high. This indicator encourages efforts to ensure advance public awareness of actions, ranging from planning initiatives and major projects to small localized actions and construction or resurfacing activities. The type of action selected may require modifying the target and measurement approach.

Data and Measurement: To track this indicator the agency first must identify the subset of the population most directly affected by each transportation action. With road improvement projects, for example, this would include those who live or operate businesses or service agencies within the study area, as well as those who commute regularly on the affected roadway from outside the study area. Data could be collected through a representative survey of the study area collected by

mail or telephone. Alternatively, the agency could focus the survey effort on specific sites along the corridor with high numbers of employees or shoppers (major employers, grocery stores, major retail, etc.). To include regular commuters in the analysis, an option is to do a random sample of households within the appropriate traffic analysis zones (TAZs). The appropriate TAZs may be determined through professional judgment or in some cases, may require a more specific select link analysis. For transportation plans or work programs, the affected population would include the entire community. In such cases, a representative subset of the affected community will need to be identified. This may include key community organizations (e.g., Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, other), neighborhood associations, local elected officials, and local special interest groups (e.g., bicycle advocates, environmental organizations, other). Results should be tracked annually at a Districtwide level.

Indicator I-4: Affected parties feel that ample notice was provided of public meetings

Target: [90%] of affected parties feel ample notice was provided of public meetings.

Indicator I-5: Affected parties feel that ample notice was provided of construction projects

Target: [90%] of affected parties feel ample notice was provided of construction projects.

Description: These indicators seek to identify whether affected parties feel that they had adequate notice of a public meeting or construction project. Each indicator could be tracked generally, Districtwide, or tailored to focus on specific types of meetings (e.g., work program, long range planning, project development and environment [PD&E] project meetings, other).

Data and Measurement: The primary data source would be responses to questions in a follow-up survey that is distributed to affected parties, which could be defined as those who were previously notified or otherwise requested information on the meeting or construction project at issue. The survey could be administered at meetings, via the web, or by mail. It may be difficult to track the notice given for long-term projects. Therefore, notices should be focused on key steps, meetings, and hearings. Results should be aggregated at the District level on an annual basis. *NOTE: FDOT construction offices annually survey businesses and individuals impacted by construction projects on this and related issues with at least two on-going and two recently completed construction projects in each district. Questions used in the survey are below.*

A. I was provided advance notification of the FDOT construction project.
B. Information I received prior to the construction project was easy to understand and accurate.
C. I was notified in advance when construction activities would begin.
D. I was provided with the names and phone numbers of contact people for questions about the construction project.
E. When contacted, FDOT personnel satisfactorily answered my questions.
F. I was provided timely notice of lane closures / restrictions.

METHODS - Use a variety of methods to involve and engage the public.

An effective public involvement process involves affected groups early and often in the decision-making process so their concerns can be considered in proposed alternatives. Public meetings are a versatile involvement technique, but they should be used in combination with a number of activities. It is important to tailor the methods of public involvement to the particular context of the local environment – opportunities other than public meetings should also be provided. Many Districts find that one-on-one meetings and project websites or newsletters are highly effective methods of informing or involving the public.

This group of performance indicators and targets aim to assess the diversity and relative effectiveness of methods used to involve the public. They include:

- Participants are involved using multiple techniques
- Affected parties feel they had an adequate opportunity to participate
- Perception of the value of methods used

Indicator M-1: Participants are involved using multiple techniques (e.g., general public meeting, open house meeting, charette, one-on-one meeting, coffee group, agency presentation at community meeting, project website, on-line comment submission, newsletter mailings)

Target: At least [3] separate techniques are used to involve/engage the public in decision making.

Target: At least [25%] of those directly affected by the transportation action are involved/engaged using more than one technique.

Target: [technique] held with/used to involve [___%] of [specific subgroup] (e.g., one-on-one meetings held with 40% of business owners on the affected corridor; coffee groups held with 20% of residents in the study area; agency presentation on plan done for 50% of neighborhood associations in affected community)

Description: The focus of this indicator and its supporting targets is on methods of involvement, rather than notification (e.g., media announcements), although newsletter mailings are included as these can be passive methods of involvement. The above measures seek to track (1) whether the agency is using multiple techniques to involve or engage the public, (2) relative percentage of affected individuals involved or at least (as in the case of newsletters) passively engaged via various involvement techniques, and (3) the percentage of subgroups or individuals involved through specific techniques.

Using a variety of methods for public involvement accommodates the different levels of desired involvement and different ways that people prefer to be involved. For example, some people, particularly those less directly impacted, may still want to participate indirectly by monitoring project information via a website or newsletter. In this way they can stay abreast of the activity and determine whether to contribute ideas or become more actively involved. Providing only public meeting opportunities may exclude this group and reduce public awareness of the issues and needs surrounding the project. Others, particularly those most directly impacted, may want to be more directly involved from the beginning and may prefer a one-on-one discussion with the

agency. In sum, providing a variety of participation opportunities both acknowledges these different levels of desired involvement and is more likely to engage a broader public in a meaningful way.

Data and Measurement: This indicator and its targets can be readily tracked by noting the number of involvement techniques used per project or action and the number of people that were engaged through that technique. The number of participants that attend meetings can be easily determined by head counts and sign-in sheets. For mailing, the number “involved” would be the number that receive the newsletter mailing. To identify individuals reached via more than one technique, it will be necessary to document and cross check names. In addition, data collected for Indicator M-2 could be used to determine whether more than one technique was used to involve those directly affected by the transportation action. That data could be further grouped according to whether the individual is a resident, business owner/proprietor, etc. to evaluate techniques targeted to specific subgroups. For example, if there are 100 business owners/proprietors in the affected area and one-on-one meetings were held with 40 of those individuals, then a target of 40 percent would be achieved. Note that this is simply for example; the appropriate target will need to be determined by the agency based upon agency objectives and a baseline analysis of current practice.

Indicator M-2: Affected parties feel they had an adequate opportunity to participate

Target: [90%] of affected parties feel they had an adequate opportunity to participate.

Description: This indicator would identify the relative percentage of affected parties within the project or planning study area that feel the agency provided adequate opportunities for their participation in the decision-making process. Affected parties would include those previously notified by the agency of a transportation action, invited to meetings, or who otherwise requested information during that calendar year. The indicator is a measure of the relative reach and general public awareness of the public involvement process.

Data and Measurement: The primary data source would be responses to questions in a follow-up survey distributed to the agency’s project mailing lists. The survey could be administered at meetings, via the web, or by mail either on a project by project basis or annually for all projects. Results should be aggregated at the District level on an annual basis.

Indicator M-3: Perception of the value of methods used (e.g., public meeting, one-on-one meeting, coffee group, agency presentation, on-line, mailings, other.)

Target: [60%] of participants agree [insert technique] was of value in capturing their input.

Target: [60%] of participants agree [insert technique] was of value in conveying project information.

Target: [60%] of FDOT project managers agree [insert technique] was of value in capturing public input.

Target: [60%] of FDOT project managers agree [insert technique] was of value in conveying project information.

Description: This indicator would be used to track how those who participated felt about the various methods used by the agency to obtain their input. It would provide a relative indicator as to which of the methods used were perceived by the public as the most versus the least valuable. The survey could be constructed to obtain insight into what aspects of each method are preferred or not preferred. Recording the opinions of project managers will help uncover any differing perceptions between the public and FDOT on the value of methods used to capture public input.

Data and Measurement: The primary data source would be responses to questionnaires that are distributed to participants at meetings, via the web or by mail. This data could be disaggregated to determine if improvements need to be made in various agency methods of involving or informing the public. Results would be collected at a project level and tracked annually at a District level. A standard reporting format should be adopted for FDOT project managers to use in evaluating public involvement techniques.

RESPONSIVENESS - Carefully consider public input in transportation decisions.

Public involvement implies a role for the public in agency decision-making. It goes beyond informing the public or allowing an opportunity to comment. It also requires a mechanism for responding to public concerns and ideas. These indicators track the extent to which those individuals participating in the transportation decision-making process feel that their comments were adequately considered and addressed. They include:

- Agency partners feel that their input was considered

Indicator R-1: Agency partners feel that their input was considered

Target: [75%] of government units feel that their input was considered.

Target: [75%] of organizations feel that their input was considered.

Target: [75%] of user groups feel that their input was considered.

Target: [75%] of individuals feel that their input was considered.

Description: This indicator will help determine generally whether participants feel that they were “heard” by the agency and that their input was considered. Responses are a reflection of the degree of participant satisfaction with the comment process, such as ease of submission or nature of the acknowledgement. Results are also a measure of how well the agency has communicated with the public regarding its response to public comments and suggestions received. Typical ways this is accomplished are through comment and response summaries posted in newsletters, project reports, or on the web and more directly, through responses in writing or e-mail to those that commented.

Data and Measurement: This indicator would be tracked separately for participants categorized as government units (e.g., local governments, water management districts, metropolitan planning organizations, regional planning council) organizations (e.g., neighborhood associations, Chamber of Commerce, environmental groups, bicycle/pedestrian organizations), user groups

(e.g., freight movers, commuters) and individuals (a person expressing his/her opinion separate from any organization). The primary data source would be responses to questionnaires that are distributed when a transportation action or project reaches the public hearing milestone. Participants surveyed would be obtained from the agency's mailing list of participating partners, organizations and individuals. Results would be aggregated at the District level on an annual basis.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This report provides a performance measurement framework for the Florida Department of Transportation to monitor the effectiveness of its public involvement activities. It includes multiple performance measures and targets that, when taken collectively, will indicate whether public involvement activities and programs are achieving agency objectives.

The performance measures were selected based on their relevance to selected public involvement objectives and the extent to which they are understandable and of interest to the public, including policymakers. The indicators and targets also strive to measure outcomes of public involvement activities, including participant satisfaction with methods used and with agency responsiveness. The resulting performance data compared over time to demonstrate trends and allow management to make changes to enhance agency effectiveness. Results should also be readily available to the public. Allowing public access to the data helps to convey the agency's commitment to effective public involvement and highlights those areas where the agency is already excelling.

Measuring the outcome of public involvement activities will require additional data collection and standardized surveys. Therefore, data sources and measurement methods are defined for each indicator to facilitate uniform reporting from each District. A survey tool will be needed to further standardize the data collection process. It will be important that data needs and measurement tools be cost-effective and anticipated in the budgeting process. Management will also need to assess trade-offs between the quality of performance indicators versus the cost of collecting the data, and refine the system over time as necessary. A baseline study will be needed to determine appropriate numeric targets and ranges for the various indicators based on actual agency experience.

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APPENDIX A: HIGHLIGHTS OF FDOT PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT STUDY

- **Kramer, J., Williams, K. Seggerman, K. and Hopes, C. (2006). “Assessing the Practice of Public Involvement in Florida.” *Florida Department of Transportation Report No. BD544***

This report provided a comprehensive assessment of public involvement practices of the FDOT and Florida’s MPOs during all phases of transportation decision making and suggested research recommendations for the future development of public involvement performance measures. General observations that resulted from interviews with FDOT District and Central Office included:

- When Districts make extra efforts to involve the public, the results are generally, but not always, productive.
- FDOT Districts have a decentralized organizational structure for providing public involvement, with primary responsibility for public involvement resting with project managers.
- The FDOT Central Office has a broad oversight role in statewide public involvement and a direct role in providing public involvement for the Florida Transportation Plan and the Strategic Intermodal System.
- The majority of District public involvement activities appear to occur during the PD&E phase. Later phases place somewhat more emphasis on public information, versus public involvement.
- Districts are working to improve public involvement in design, but design still appears to be a weak link in the public involvement process.
- Right-of-way staff are proactive in their efforts to reach out to the public early and often, beginning in the PD&E phase.
- District construction staff are actively seeking to engage the public and to improve customer satisfaction. Nonetheless, issues occasionally fall through the cracks.
- FDOT relies heavily on consultants for providing public involvement, although the role of consultants varies across Districts and project phases. A concern is whether staff cutbacks and resource constraints are impacting the role of FDOT project managers as lead contacts for the public.
- Districts do not conduct formal evaluations of the effectiveness of their public involvement efforts; however, the Construction Office conducts an annual public satisfaction survey. MPOs are required to periodically evaluate their public involvement efforts, but most seem to rely on informal feedback methods.
- Key challenges faced when involving the public included balancing the needs and desires of all citizens, poor meeting attendance, managing the timing of public input, maintaining continuity of involvement in light of changing public expectations, and encouraging FDOT staff and the public to remain open-minded throughout the transportation decision making process.
- Many thought that the effectiveness of public involvement efforts could be improved by creating formal public involvement evaluation methods, increased public education and outreach, and increased communication and coordination across functional units and agencies.

The report offered recommendations to help address issues in current practice identified during the comprehensive assessment of the public involvement practices of FDOT and Florida’s MPOs.

The suggestions provided below are a combination of ideas conveyed by MPO and FDOT staff in the report, as well as observations of the research team.

Involvement and Outreach

- Maximize opportunities for one-on-one or small group dialogue.
- Create opportunities for staff to build relationships with the public and to provide education on transportation issues, both within and outside of project development.
- Provide opportunities other than public meetings for people to have input into project decision making.
- Look for ways to coordinate and communicate with other agencies on public involvement or outreach activities.

Continuity and Commitments

- Establish a process for passing project information on public concerns and comments from phase to phase.
- Increase communication between functional units within FDOT Districts on project development issues of importance to the public. Consider instituting regular cross-functional debriefing meetings and cross-functional area attendance at key project meetings.
- Consider a project management approach or a single point of contact for the public who has the necessary technical knowledge and would follow a project from planning or project development through to construction.

Training and Information Exchange

- Provide regular public involvement training and target the training, where appropriate, to specific topics of interest or concern and to specific functional units or responsibilities.
- Provide organized opportunities for FDOT Districts, as well as MPO staff, to share experiences, ideas and best practices in working with the public.

Performance Measures and Evaluation

- Develop a systematic method, based on defined performance measures that can be used by the FDOT functional units and MPOs for evaluating the effectiveness of their public involvement process.
- Develop performance measures that focus on desired outcomes and that correspond with and advance the business plan of that functional unit.

APPENDIX B: RESPONDENTS USING PIPMS

State Level Organizations

Idaho Department of Transportation
<http://www.itd.idaho.gov/>

Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development
<http://www.dotd.state.la.us/>

Missouri Department of Transportation
<http://www.modot.org/>

Montana Department of Transportation
<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/>

Local or Regional Level Organizations

Atlanta Regional Commission (Georgia)
<http://www.atlantaregional.com/cps/rde/xchg/>

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (Massachusetts)
<http://www.bostonmpo.org>

Brevard Metropolitan Planning Organization (Florida)
<http://www.brevardmpo.com/>

Broward County Metropolitan Planning Organization (Florida)
<http://www.broward.org/mpo/>

Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (North Carolina)
<http://www.dchcmo.org/>

East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (Wisconsin)
<http://www.eastcentralrpc.org/AppletonMPO/index.htm>

Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission (Florida)
<http://www.hillsboroughmpo.org>

Lake Sumter Metropolitan Planning Organization (Florida)
<http://www.lakesumtermo.com/>

Lexington Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (Kentucky)
<http://www.lexareampo.org/>

Lima-Allen County RPC (Ohio)
<http://www.lacrpc.com/>

Maricopa Association of Governments (Arizona)
<http://www.mag.maricopa.gov/display.cms>

METROPLAN Orlando (Florida)
<http://www.metroplanorlando.com>

Metropolitan Transportation Commission (California)
<http://www.mtc.ca.gov>

Miami-Dade County Metropolitan Planning Organization (Florida)

<http://www.miamidade.gov>

Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (Illinois)

<http://www.nipc.org/>

New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (New York)

<http://www.nymtc.org>

Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (Indiana/Kentucky/Ohio)

<http://www.oki.org>

Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization (Florida)

<http://www.pinellascounty.org>

Sacramento Area Council of Governments (California)

<http://www.sacog.org>

Sarasota-Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization (Florida)

<http://www.sarasota-manateempo.org>

South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (Alabama)

<http://www.sarpc.org>

Southwest Florida RPC (Florida)

<http://www.swfrpc.org>

Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (Illinois)

<http://www.tricountyrpc.org/>

Wasatch Front Regional Council (Utah)

<http://www.wfrc.org/cms/index.php>