PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PRACTITIONER'S GUIDE

A resource for practical public involvement guidance to ensure quality, consistency, and compliance throughout NCDOT public involvement efforts.

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Welcome

The Guide was developed as a supplement to the more detailed NCDOT Statewide Public Involvement Plan (PIP). The Guide was prepared by NCDOT's Environmental Analysis Unit (EAU), Public Involvement, Community Studies & Visualization Group (PICSViz) to advance public involvement practice for North Carolina transportation planning and project development.

Drawing from the Statewide PIP, the Guide answers who, what, when, where, and how to engage the public and gather useful insights for transportation decisions. The Guide specifically focuses on the project development phase. For information on other phases (i.e., planning and programming, final design, construction, operations, and maintenance), please refer to the Statewide PIP.

The levels of engagement and the public involvement tools included in the Guide were influenced by long-standing concepts produced by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) (**www.iap2.org**), as well as the rich experiences of NCDOT employees as they serve the public.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS UNIT
Public Involvement, Community Studies & Visualization (PICSViz)

How to Use this Guide

Welcome to the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Public Involvement Practitioner's Guide (Guide). This is an interactive PDF. To navigate, please turn the page by clicking on **Next** to advance or **Previous** to go backward (bottom right corner) or use the PDF up and down arrows.

The Guide is organized into two sections:

- Along the **right-hand** side are NCDOT's vision, goals, and guidance concerning public outreach.
- Along the **bottom** are resources for practitioners, such as requests, templates, checklists, and tools.

Not every tool will be used with every project; tools are not listed in this Guide in order of significance or chronological use.

Hyperlinks are found throughout this Guide. Some hyperlinks may require login information to access links hosted on the Connect NCDOT webpage. All hyperlinks are subject to change.

A handful of forms, templates, checklists, and examples may be downloaded from the Guide. If the item is available for download, the icon shown to the **right** will appear at the **top** of the page.

Download

Some sections consist of multiple pages. If multiple pages are present, please glance at the pagination icon to see which page of the section you are on. If present, it will be located **above**.

If an item can be requested in the Environmental Tracking and Coordination System (ETRACS), the button below will appear in the top left corner. Click the button to visit the ETRACS page online.

ETRACS
Environmental Tracking and Coordination System

Equity should always be a key consideration in public involvement. The equity icon to the **right** will appear when it is important to incorporate it during the planning process.

Equity

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Let's Get Started!

To continue, please click on "Overview" on the right.

What is Public Involvement?

The purpose of public involvement in the transportation decision-making process is to promote an understanding of transportation options and decisions made by NCDOT and to gather input from the potentially affected and general public that may refine a project or inform a decision. While federal and state requirements specify programs and outreach methods to key stakeholders, NCDOT's public involvement exceeds baseline requirements. The basic purposes of the NCDOT public involvement program are as follows:

- **Educate and communicate:** To provide essential and objective information for the public with regard to an issue, program, project, plan, or study. To establish a two-way, open dialogue by providing a variety of effective approaches to share information and listen.
- **Build relationships:** To earn trust and acceptance within local communities by working with those who like, dislike, or want to modify a proposal.
- **Gather timely input before decisions are made:** To ensure citizens have ample opportunity to share their knowledge, perceptions, concerns, and preferences in regard to a project.
- **Meet federal and state requirements:** To comply with laws, regulations, and executive orders for public involvement in transportation projects and retain federal and state funding.

Public Involvement Practitioner's Guide

PI During Environmental Review

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) both consist of processes that consider the potential environmental consequences of projects, document the associated analysis, and make this information available to the public for comment prior to implementation. Public comments can be used to refine and inform the project. While public input is encouraged throughout the NEPA and SEPA processes, it is targeted at key points during major phases. These key points include the following:

- Scoping (identifying issues, a project's purpose and need, and possible alternatives)
- Developing alternatives (refining and screening possible solutions and alternatives)
- Evaluating potential impacts and mitigation measures
- Reviewing of draft and final NEPA and SEPA documents
- Determining the preferred alternative

Table 1 provides an overview of when public involvement is required or recommended in the environmental review process. The state strives to meet or exceed federal standards of stringency for public engagement. For this reason, they have separate but similar requirements.

Public Involvement

What does Public Involvement Mean?

According to IAP2, public participation (public involvement) means to do the following:

- Involve those who are affected by a decision in the decision-making process.
- Promote sustainable decisions by providing participants with the information they need to be involved in a meaningful way.
- Communicate to participants how their input affects a decision.

When is Public Involvement Needed?

- When it is required by law.
- When public decisions have substantial impacts on communities and individuals.
- When the public has information, ideas, and/or concerns that should be considered by decision-makers who are serving as public representatives and have the responsibility to listen to their constituents and others before acting on their behalf.

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Table 1: NEPA/SEPA Public Involvement Requirements for Transportation Projects

	Public Involvement	FEDERAL & STATE DOCUMENTS: Categorical Exclusion (CE) / Minimum Criteria Determination Checklist (MCDC)	FEDERAL & STATE DOCUMENTS: Environmental Assessment (EA)	FEDERAL & STATE DOCUMENTS: Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
PROJECT INITIATION	Notice of Intent	NA	NA	■
PROJECT INITIATION	Scoping Notice(s)	▲	●	■ (30 days)
PROJECT INITIATION	Property Owner Notification	■	■	■
PROJECT INITIATION	Newsletter / Postcard	▲	●	●
PROJECT INITIATION	Public Meeting(s)	▲	▲	■
PROJECT INITIATION	Project Website(s)	▲	▲	●
ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT	Public Meeting(s)	▲	●	●
ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT	Newsletter / Postcard	●	●	●
ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT	Local Officials Meeting	▲	●	●
ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT	Public Hearing	▲	●	■
ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT	Availability of Environmental Document for Review / Notice of Availability	▲	■ (30 days)	■ (Draft: 45 days; Final 30 days)*
ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT	Notice of Final Environmental Document	●	●	■

Note: *The public comment period for a Draft EIS is 45 days with an option for 60 days or longer, if needed.

SYMBOLS ■ Legally Required ● Recommended ▲ Optional NA: Not Applicable

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Project Stakeholders

A key step in the public involvement process is identifying populations affected by the project. In addition to a project's core partners of state, county, and local governments, affected populations are critical stakeholders in planning and implementing a project.

A stakeholder, for the purposes of this Guide, is a person or group with an interest or concern in an ongoing or planned NCDOT activity or decision. Examples of stakeholders are presented in **Table 2**.

Federal regulations define some stakeholder groups in relation to recurring and disproportionate effects, but there are many other ways to identify stakeholders. NCDOT requires thorough research to ensure that outreach to affected populations occurs and that the potential for negative impacts is analyzed. A core component of NCDOT's work includes following federal non-discrimination regulations for affected populations, such as Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice (EJ). Please visit the **Statewide PIP** to learn more about state and federal regulations on public involvement.

Title VI "prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin in programs and activities receiving financial assistance" (NCDOT, Title VI Administration). NCDOT applies Title VI to all state projects whether or not it receives federal funding by promoting non-discrimination and equal opportunities. Identifying and including EJ and limited English proficiency (LEP) populations is critical to complying with Title VI and Executive Order 12898.

NCDOT offers an easy-to-use **Demographic Snapshot Tool** that allows users to access and summarize U.S. Decennial Census and American Community Survey data at the county, census tract, and block group levels. Users of the Demographic Snapshot Tool are able to quickly find demographic numbers that are useful to public involvement, which include information on high-speed internet access, poverty, race, Hispanic/Latino, minority, LEP populations, and the number of zero-car households.

For additional guidance on identifying affected populations, please consult with NCDOT's Community Studies Team.

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Table 2: Sample List of Stakeholders

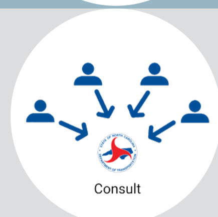
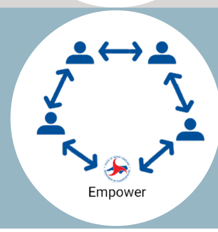
Examples of Common Project Stakeholder Groups	
Project Partners	**Affected Populations**
• NCDOT and appropriate divisions • Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) • Rural planning organizations (RPOs) • Boards of county commissioners • City or town councils and staff • Private consulting firms • Native American tribal governments • Federal resource agencies • Local/state agency partners	• Property owners • Renters/tenants • EJ communities • LEP communities • Minority populations • Students • Elderly/disabled • Transit-dependent people • Business owners/operators
Local Organizations	
• Community centers • Homeowners' associations • Religious organizations • Business groups or companies (e.g., Chamber of Commerce)	• Local schools, universities, and colleges • Special interest coalitions • Historic preservation boards • Emergency services

Levels of Engagement

Levels of engagement are an important aspect of stakeholder engagement and are presented on the following page in **Table 3**. According to IAP2, the levels are as follows: inform, consult, involve, collaborate, and empower. The icons in the middle of the table exhibit each form of engagement. To the right of the levels of engagement are examples of projects where these levels are best implemented. The extent of the levels increases as you move down the table.

Table 3: Determine Level(s) of Engagement

Increasing Levels of Engagement

Levels of Engagement		Sample Project Examples	
Inform To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the situation, alternatives, opportunities, and/or solutions.		• Pavement rehabilitation • Bridge inspection/ maintenance • Road maintenance • Facility maintenance	• Temporary road closure • Wet weather warnings • De-icing operations
Consult To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives, and/or decisions.		• Roadway upgrade • Installation of new signage • Road widening • Interchange improvements	• Roadway connector • Bridge rehabilitation • Bridge replacement • Rail improvement
Involve To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.		• Road widening • Safety improvements • New bridge • Roadway grade separation	• Bicycle and pedestrian plan
Collaborate To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.		• New roadway • New bypass • New facility siting/ construction • New light/commuter rail • Bus and rail station	location plan • Regional plan • State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) projects
Empower To place final decision making in the hands of the public.		Long-range transportation plan	

Source: IAP2

NCDOT Public Involvement Goals

The implementation of public involvement is best facilitated when goals and steps are clearly defined. This is an essential part of creating outreach that is successful and fully realized because it provides a clear set of expectations and steps for execution. NCDOT's goals for public involvement should be used when developing a plan for implementation. The plan should be in the form of a PIP. A PIP is a document that guides public involvement activities, roles, and timing. The details in the plan must achieve NCDOT's goals and be customized for a particular project.

NCDOT's goals for public involvement should guide the formulation of a PIP. Those goals are listed below:

- **Education**: Enhancing awareness and understanding of the project and the project development process to enable informed involvement and meaningful participation.
- **Inclusion**: Engaging stakeholders representing a full range of interests, values, and opinions, and ensuring compliance with federal requirements for Title VI, LEP, and EJ populations.
- **Transparency**: Providing information in a clear, open, and timely manner.
- **Accountability**: Being visible and accessible to the public and other project stakeholders and incorporating their input.
- **Responsiveness**: Responding to public inquiries in a timely manner.

Refer to **Checklist #1** for key steps to consider in public involvement.

Getting Started with Your PI Plan

It is customary for NCDOT to develop a project-specific PIP at the beginning of a project. The PIP outlines anticipated public outreach efforts for a project and shows NCDOT's conscientious efforts to include the public in project decision-making. Depending on the type and size of a project, the PIP can range from a brief summary to a full, stand-alone report. Generally, PIPs address the following topics:

- Goals and objectives for outreach on the project
- Stakeholders and interested groups, including special populations such as the elderly, college students, business owners, or EJ groups
- Potential communication methods and outreach tools to reach all stakeholders
- Key messages to be communicated to the public and any project-specific or potentially controversial issues
- Preliminary schedule for public involvement activities
- Measures for evaluating the success of the public involvement program
- Provides information to the public on the level of participation

The PIP is a dynamic document that should be updated throughout the project development process to reflect changes in the project scope and schedule, stakeholders, and issues. **Table 4** (right) outlines the sample table of contents for a PIP.

Table 4: Sample PIP Table of Contents

Sample PIP Table of Contents	
INTRODUCTION: PROJECT OVERVIEW	
• Background and related projects • Purpose and need • Process/decisions to be made	• Issues, concerns, and challenges • Responsibilities • Milestone schedule
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOALS	
Statement addressing education, inclusion, transparency, accountability, and responsiveness	
STAKEHOLDERS	
• Public agencies: local, state, and federal • Property owners and tenants • Civic and neighborhood organizations and social service providers • Special interest groups: environmental, recreation, and business groups • Traditionally underrepresented groups	
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES	
Postcards, newsletters, press releases, small group meetings, surveys, informational videos, information booths at local events, public meetings, and public hearings	
MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS	
Quantitative measures	Qualitative measures
PROPOSED DETAILED SCHEDULE	
Roles and Responsibilities • NCDOT EAU • NCDOT Communications Office	• NCDOT Division Staff • Consultant
PLAN UPDATES (when added)	
Appendices • Demographics • Elected/appointed officials • Community organizations	• Stakeholders/groups • Area media • Project team roster

Meeting Types

Public meetings are essential to the public involvement process because they introduce the project or issue to the community and allow stakeholders to provide input on the subject. In addition, successful meetings with stakeholders may strengthen community bonds. The type of meeting selected typically depends on the purpose of the project, size of the study area's community, and current phase of the project. The following four meeting types have traditionally been held in-person: public meetings, small group meetings, Local Officials Informational Meetings (LOIMs), and public hearings. New technologies also enable NCDOT to conduct these meetings virtually (online). Ensure that target participants have access to technology, such as internet access at the local public library, before conducting a virtual meeting.

On the following pages, **Table 5** lists the types of meetings, their purpose, and when it is appropriate to hold them during the project.

Checklist #2 provides information on materials and resources to bring to a meeting.

Checklist #3 provides key considerations for your next meeting, such as who to invite and where the meeting should take place.

Checklist #4 provides virtual meeting alternatives in lieu of or in addition to face-to-face meetings.

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Table 5: Meeting Types and Logistics

Meeting Type	Purpose	Timing
Public Meetings* (sometimes called Open Houses)	A public meeting provides information, updates, or opportunities for the public to comment on a proposed project. Public meetings aim to educate the public about a proposed project and gather public feedback on the purpose and need, use, and experiences in the project area and alternatives being considered. A public meeting that is a scoping meeting provides agencies, organizations, and individuals the opportunity to point out natural resources, public services, schools, religious institutions, historic properties, and other features of the community to include in the environmental study of the project. Public meetings may use the station concept format to allow the public to visit and learn about different aspects of the project.	• NCDOT usually holds public meetings on weekdays, but not on Wednesdays (a common night for church services), on or close to public holidays, on nights of town council meetings, or on nights of popular local events. This helps to maximize participation from the public. • Public meetings should be held when there is significant new information about the project, an imminent decision about the project, and a reason to gather public comment to inform decision-makers of public sentiment of the project. Some project managers feel that one public meeting per year reminds the public of a proposed transportation project. A newsletter mailed to area residents or stakeholders may also provide an informative project update. • Public meetings usually take place at the outset of a proposed project or project environmental studies, when new information or substantive developments in the project are available, or when the project team wishes to gather verbal or written comments from the public.

***Under NEPA and SEPA there is no requirement for a minimum number of public meetings except to present information about a proposed project prior to the official public hearing.

Table 5: Meeting Types and Logistics (continued)

Meeting Type	Purpose	Timing
Public Hearings	Public hearings are the official process of formally gathering public input, and depending on agency and/or environmental documentation requirements, may or may not occur at key milestones during federal or state-funded transportation projects. Environmental documentation that may or may not require public hearings includes an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The following are public meeting requirements: Objectives, notification, meeting, and record keeping.	Public hearings occur at the completion of an environmental document (i.e., EA or EIS), or a corridor hearing at the completion of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).
Local Officials Informational Meetings (LOIM)	Local officials should be informed of proposed projects and impact on their constituents, funding status, timeline, and PIPs. Notifying officials ahead of time will help prepare them to interact with their constituents in an informed manner, help promote upcoming public involvement activities, and make time on their calendars to participate in such activities.	A LOIM should be held two weeks in advance of a major public involvement launch or public meeting. Advertisements or invitations should be issued or arrive in mailboxes or email inboxes 14 days before the meeting. If local officials are already familiar with the project, a LOIM may be a briefing scheduled for the same day of a public meeting, two to six hours before the beginning of the public meeting.
Charrettes	A charrette is a meeting to resolve a problem or issue. Within a specified time limit, participants work together to reach a resolution. The sponsoring agency usually sets the goals and time limit and announces them ahead of time. A leader's responsibility is to bring out all points of view from concerned local residents as well as agency representatives and experts.	Charrettes may last for several days depending on the depth of the project and how many feedback loops are incorporated into the design process.

Table 5: Meeting Types and Logistics (continued)

Meeting Type	Purpose	Timing
Small Group Meetings	Meetings with small groups from within the local community allow people with specific interests and impacts to informally discuss the project and have their perspectives heard and documented. Public comments on the project may be collected at small group meetings.	Whenever timing is convenient for both the small group and the project team.
Business Owner Meetings	Business owners are often affected by roadway access, change in traffic patterns, construction, and new transit stations related to proposed projects. Business owners can get involved in a project and ask specific questions pertaining to their operations, employees, and customers.	Offering a meeting to business owners after study of project alternatives is well underway and before major decisions are made will clarify business owners' concerns. Some business owners are available to meet during the workday while others will prefer the early evening option. Business owners who are not near the project area may ask to participate by phone or online.
Virtual Engagement	Virtual engagement typically involves the use of PublicInput.com or MetroQuest to interact with the public. Both tools may be used on the same project if desired. Please visit the **Requests Page** for subscription information related to these two vendors.	Whenever timing is convenient for all parties involved.

Project Administrative Record

It is important to maintain current and detailed records for transportation projects. This allows staff to efficiently locate important documents and demonstrate ongoing compliance with applicable public involvement requirements and the details provided in a project's PIP. In addition, accurate project records must be included in a project's administrative record when one is required, and may be needed to address litigation and/or auditing if it occurs at any point during or after completion of a project.

A project's administrative record requires two components related to public involvement: records of correspondence and comment collection and a public involvement activities report. Please reference **Checklist #5: Project Administrative Records** for what to include and exclude.

Comment Collection

A systematic method for comment management should be defined early in a project process to ensure the team has the right tools to compile and track public input. Comment management tools can be simple or complex. Simple systems such as electronic or hard copy filing can handle relatively low quantities of comment forms and letters and other input. See **Checklist #6** for Comment Collection and Management.

Public hearings typically feature a hearing official, a facilitator, and a recorder who provides an official transcript of community comments that are entered as an official document. Some states hire stenographers at public hearings. NCDOT is required to prepare a post-hearing meeting summary and minutes.

Public Involvement Activities Report

A Public Involvement Activities Report regularly chronicles the results of public outreach efforts. This report may be part of regular project progress reports or be included in an overall public involvement process summary report. In both NEPA and SEPA documentation (i.e., EIS, EA, Minimum Criteria Determination Checklist (MCDC), and Categorical Exclusion), these reports may help create the required public involvement discussions or be included in an appendix. The report should compile and summarize all project activities and documents as they relate to public and stakeholder outreach efforts.

Measures of Success

Public involvement success measures are established, monitored, and reported because they reflect the difference between simple procedural compliance and actual compliance with the intent of the law, regulations, guidance, and standard protocol.

Legal and procedural public involvement requirements primarily focus on performing specific tasks that align with involving community members in collaborative decision-making efforts. While measures of effectiveness and their quantification are not typically provided in requirements or guidance material, they should be project-specific and not associated with a formula or standard.

Every project should consider customized measures for evaluating the effectiveness of the public involvement effort. These measures should be simple and straightforward for basic projects and should be more involved as project complexity and importance to the community increases.

Examples of measures for evaluating public involvement include:

- Number of participants
- Geographic distribution of participants
- Demographic diversity of participants
- Level of awareness of participants
- Level of responsiveness
- Level of satisfaction with engagement efforts

Measures of Success

Evaluating success can help you adapt your engagement approach and you may modify the PIP to engage a community more effectively in future efforts. Modifying the PIP can involve major and/or minor changes. Examples of minor changes include expanding the mailing list to add key individuals, stakeholders, and agency representatives; adding new outreach strategies; or modifying the schedule of activities. Examples of major changes could include addressing a modified project description that changes potential effects or the project's impact boundaries or adding new approaches to address emerging controversy. The goal of the modification effort is the delivery of an optimized public involvement program, not having a perfect PIP. Efforts to modify the PIP should be simplified as much as possible so that the focus is on public engagement rather than editing.

For more information, check out a publication from the National Academies of Sciences Engineering and Medicine's National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP): "Measuring the Effectiveness of Public Involvement in Transportation Planning and Project Development (2019)" (**https://www.nap.edu/read/25447/chapter/7**).

Why it is Important to Measure Success

- To ensure meetings and outreach methods are inclusive and support participation from all stakeholders.
- To validate and verify whether certain levels of effort and expenditures are effective and provide a reasonable benefit relative to the associated investments.
- To learn from and improve techniques over time.
- To demonstrate credibility and show value when and where it occurs.

Other Resources

Please click on the words below to access additional public involvement resources.

Resource	Link
Color Contrast Checker	[https://www.levelaccess.com/color-contrast-checker/]
ColorBrewer	[https://colorbrewer2.org/#type=sequential&scheme=BuGn&n=3]
Connect NCDOT	[https://connect.ncdot.gov/Pages/default.aspx]
Environmental Tracking and Coordination System	[https://connect.ncdot.gov/resources/Environmental/EAU/ETRACS/Pages/default.aspx]
IAP2.org	[https://www.iap2.org/mpage/Home]
MetroQuest	[https://metroquest.com/]
National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP)	[https://www.nap.edu/read/25447/chapter/7]
NCDEQ Title VI Policy	[https://deq.nc.gov/permits-regulations/title-vi-compliance]
NCDOT Communications Office	[https://apps.ncdot.gov/dot/directory/authenticated/UnitPage.aspx?id=14]
NCDOT Contact Page	[https://www.ncdot.gov/contact/Pages/form.aspx?UnitName=PIO&sourceUrl=/news/Pages/media-inquiries.aspx]
NCDOT Demographic Snapshot Tool	[https://connect.ncdot.gov/resources/Environmental/EAU/PICSViz/CSDocuments/2021%20Demographic%20Snapshot%20Tool.zip]
NCDOT Project Page Questionnaire	[https://connect.ncdot.gov/site/Website-Requests/Pages/default.aspx]
NCDOT Public Engagement Toolkit	[https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/toolkit/Pages/default.aspx]
NCDOT Social Media Policy	[https://connect.ncdot.gov/resources/Environmental/EAU/PICSViz/PIDocuments/NCDOT%20Social%20Media%20Policy.pdf]
NCDOT Statewide PIP	[https://connect.ncdot.gov/resources/Environmental/EAU/PICSViz/PIDocuments/NCDOT%20Statewide%20PI%20Plan.pdf]
PICSViz Contacts	[https://apps.ncdot.gov/dot/directory/authenticated/UnitPage.aspx?id=15687]
PICSViz Public Involvement Resource Folder	[https://connect.ncdot.gov/resources/Environmental/EAU/PICSViz/Pages/default.aspx]
Public Engagement Glossary	[https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/toolkit/Pages/Glossary.aspx]
Public Involvement Quick Guide	[https://connect.ncdot.gov/resources/Environmental/EAU/PICSViz/PIDocuments/PI_QuickGuide.pdf]
PublicInput.com	[https://publicinput.com/]
Title VI Frequently Asked Questions	[https://www.transportation.gov/civil-rights/civil-rights-awareness-enforcement/faqs]
Title VI Non-Discrimination Policy Statement	[https://www.ncdot.gov/initiatives-policies/access-for-all/nondiscrimination-program/Documents/nondiscrimination-policy-statement-english.pdf]

Requests

Please click on each item below to access forms for common public involvement requests and procedures.

- Request a Project Webpage
- Request Use of MetroQuest
- Contact Communications Office
- Mailing List
- Request a Public Meeting
- Request for Visualizations
- Request a Newsletter or Postcard
- Limited English Proficiency

This icon will appear to the right when you visit the **Request** section.

Project Webpages

There are two ways to post project information online (**Table 6**). Some projects may use both platforms, while others may only use one. To create a project website/public input site, complete the NCDOT Project Webpage questionnaire and submit to PICSViz via ETRACS. PICSViz will coordinate with the Division Communications Public Involvement Officer (PIO) on review and production of the webpage.

PublicInput.com

The PICSViz group can create and launch project information webpages on an interactive platform provided by a vendor, **Publicinput.com**. It is a multi-faceted community engagement tool that lowers the barrier of entry for citizens to learn about, follow, and comment on community plans and proposed projects. Please note for webpage/publicinput.com site updates, send an email to both the PICSViz staff and the Division PIO.

NCDOT Project Webpage

Project webpages may include maps, surveys, and sign-ups to project updates and make it easier for visitors to learn about projects and get engaged. Refresh project webpages at major milestones or as new information comes available, or at least every six months. Links to other sites should be clearly labeled and checked periodically. Please assign a person to maintain the webpage.

These webpages will use a public input site as a survey page to collect comments and feedback. The survey page will be linked on the NCDOT project webpage.

Table 6: Project Webpage Comparison

Project Webpage Comparison		
	PublicInput.com	**NCDOT Project Site**
Purpose/ Capabilities	• Comment collection and surveying • Informational • Share project documents	• Informational • Share project documents • Use PublicInput.com for surveys/ comment collection
Owner/ Site Editor	PICSViz Group	Communications Group
Information Needed to Start	• **Webpage request form** • Project description • Project milestone timeline • Project maps • Any relevant project documents	• **Webpage request form** • Project maps • Any relevant project documents
Creation Lead time	1-2 weeks	3-4 weeks
Updates	Send updates to PICSViz staff and to the Division PIO; 6 months and/or at major milestones.	
Update Lead Time	2-3 days	3-5 days
Example Page	**https://ncdot.publicinput.com/2431/**	**https://www.ncdot.gov/projects/asheville-i-26-connector/Pages/default.aspx**

MetroQuest

[MetroQuest](#) is a company that provides an online survey platform that is designed to maximize public participation. MetroQuest surveys help to gather public input about the public's priorities as they pertain to possible impacts from the proposed project. Survey questions should be designed to obtain input from the participants that will be useful for the planning process. NCDOT has a multi-use license to coordinate the setup of MetroQuest. Please contact the **PICSViz group** to request the use of MetroQuest.

MetroQuest Quick Facts

- Best used for large stakeholder audiences
- 12 activities to choose from
- Surveys take 20 – 40 hours to build (including approvals)
- Maps can be uploaded for interactive comment gathering
- MetroQuest team is on hand to help build the survey
- Easy to translate into other languages
- Results are collected in downloadable excel spreadsheets

Click on the link below to view a Transportation Safety Plan on MetroQuest:

https://demo.metroquestsurvey.com/?u=au4p4r#!/?p=web&pm=dynamic&s=1&popup=WTD

Contact Communications Office

NCDOT's Communications Office oversees the strategic development, integration, and implementation of public relations activities. Led by the Chief Communications Officer, the Communications Office has Communications Officers assigned to each division. The Division Communications Officers need to be included early in and throughout the life cycle of the project with project updates, methods of public outreach, messaging and meetings.

The Communications Office maintains the NCDOT newsroom and video channel, issues news releases, handles media inquiries, governs the NCDOT webpage, promotes the department brand, and oversees promotion of strategic initiatives. Divisions, project managers (PMs), or public involvement specialists should contact the Communications Office early in project planning and development so that the Communications Office is aware of projects, issues, and messaging.

The Communications Office supports NCDOT public involvement by:

- Creating and maintaining project webpages
- Issuing official NCDOT news releases
- Managing media inquiries about transportation issues and projects
- Developing key messages
- Responding to media while project team members are in the field, addressing a project, or being involved with other community events such as a public meeting
- Creating and reviewing public-facing materials, such as fact sheets, newsletters, graphics, and videos
- Attending public meetings, especially if a project is high profile and if media is anticipated

Media requiring an immediate response should contact the NCDOT Communications Office at (919) 707-2660 during and outside normal business hours for interview requests, information about projects, and other matters.

Members of the media can also reach the Communications Office by emailing the appropriate Division Communications Officer.

Contacts

Contact the Communications Officer who represents the division in which the project is located or work with the PICSViz group to inform the Communications Office as needed for your project. Contact information is provided in the link below.

https://apps.ncdot.gov/dot/directory/authenticated/UnitPage.aspx?id=14

Mailing List

A mailing list of potentially affected stakeholders (e.g., property owners) will be provided by PICSViz and must be updated by the consultant throughout the duration of the project.

When developing a mailing list, it is important to consider the study area. Pay close attention to developments (i.e., residential, commercial and/or industrial parks) adjacent to a proposed project to make sure you capture the entire development. As such, the mailing list study area is likely to be larger than the project study area. This is especially important when there is only one access to or from the proposed project. While all the properties and businesses may not be directly impacted, they will be indirectly due to construction activities.

The mailing list should also include neighborhood associations, civic and business groups, interested citizens, and local public officials for the purpose of providing the public with information concerning progress on the project and for notifying the public of future meetings and public hearings.

- For in-house or consultant managed projects, PICSViz will clean data and make labels (if needed).
- For consultant managed projects, the cleaned list will be sent for mailing processing by consultants.

Mailing list process:

- The consultant should place a shapefile or pdf of the study area and proposed mailing area on Connect NCDOT.
- The PICSViz Group will review the study area and make suggested area edits as needed.
- Following approval of the study area, the consultant should place a shapefile of the approved mailing area on Connect NCDOT for updating throughout the planning process.
- Visit ETRACS to request the mailing list from the approved study area. Please remember to include a link to the shapefile of the approved study area in your ETRACS request.

Postal Addressing Standards

For additional guidance on postal addressing standards, please visit **https://pe.usps.com/cpim/ftp/pubs/pub28/pub28.pdf**

Request a Newsletter or Postcard

To request a newsletter or postcard in ETRACS, follow these steps:

1. Log into ETRACS (Click the ETRACS button above to access ETRACS online.)
2. Select Project STIP No.
3. Create a Request
4. Select Public Involvement
5. Choose Newsletter (Create or Review)
6. Enter Request Details: Date, Link to Supporting Documents on the Preconstruction SharePoint Site
7. Add notes about content or what type of messages you wish to convey
8. Submit Request

For general guidance on newsletters, please click here.

Request a Public Meeting

To request a public meeting in ETRACS, follow these steps:

1. Log into ETRACS (Click the ETRACS button above to access ETRACS online.)
2. Select Project STIP No.
3. Create a Request
4. Select Public Involvement
5. Enter Request Details: Date, Link to Supporting Documents (i.e., maps and the meeting request form - download above) on the Preconstruction SharePoint Site
6. Submit Request

Request for Visualizations

Visualizations may be requested through the Visualization Request Form (click to download above). Once completed, forward the form to the PICSViz Group. The following are examples of visualization products that can be requested:

3D Models and Renderings

These products can range from simple objects to be included in illustrations to a complete and accurate model of a highway project. These models are built with specialized tools within a CAD package like MicroStation and with specialized modeling software such as 3D Studio Max. If the product is a highway project, the actual CAD design files and coordinate geometry will be used to create the model. These models can be used to take measurements to investigate design and construction issues. Renderings can be created from any angle to be used as illustrations for training manuals, design, construction, and public involvement.

Photosimulations

Photosimulations are the combination of proposed design elements with actual photographs from the site. This can sometimes be accomplished by simply painting the proposed elements over the photograph with an image editing program such as Adobe photoshop. Usually, these projects involve building a 3D model from design information and creating a rendering of only new elements. This rendering is then composited or layered with the existing site photograph in the image editing software. This process involves a trip to the project site to take the photograph possibly with the use of a drone for an elevated perspective. The camera placement must then be replicated in the modeling software and matched to the site photo. This process can be complicated by the presence of trees and buildings that will be removed, exposing elements not present in the existing photograph. After compositing, painting is done to blend the new elements with the existing.

Animations

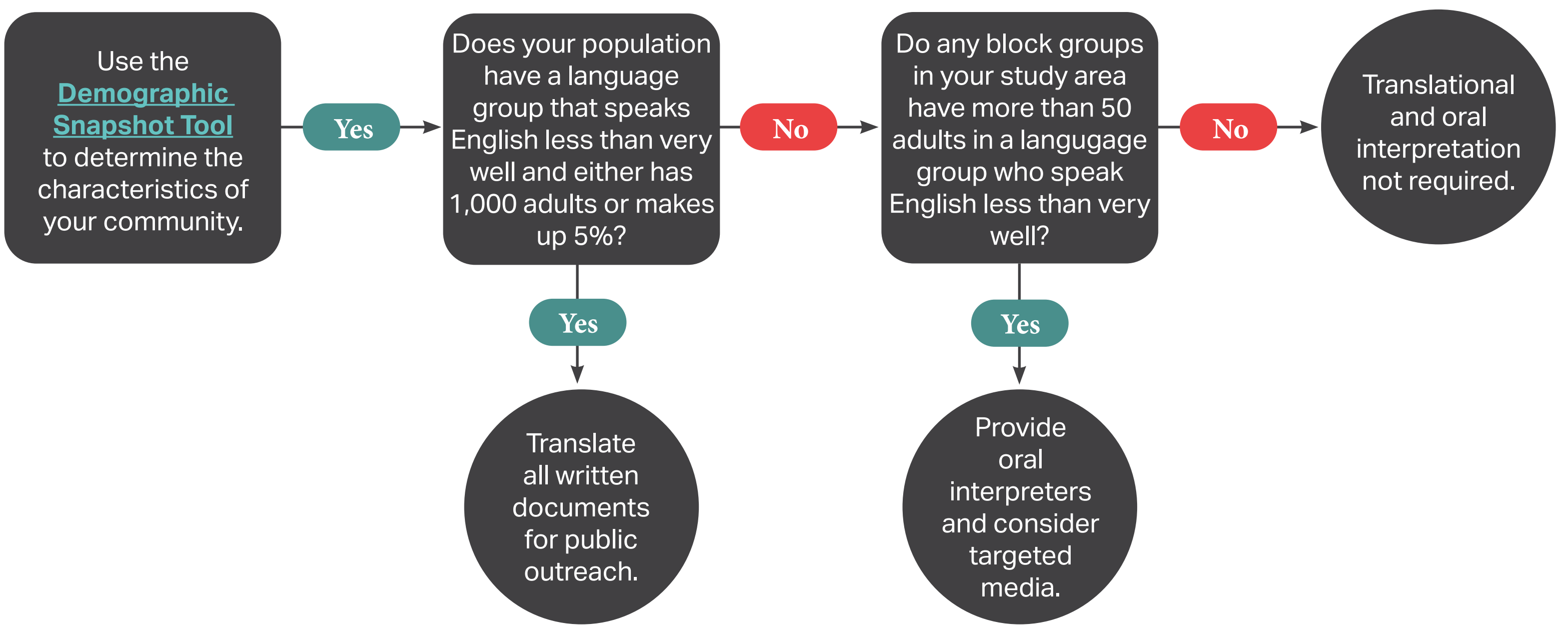
With a complete 3D model and virtual camera(s), multiple frames can be rendered and compiled to create a video animation. Video is normally produced at 30 frames per second. This means in order to create 1 minute of film, 1800 frames would need to be rendered. These frames are compiled in video editing software such as Adobe Premiere. Animations are typically the most costly product in terms of time and resources. The exception is when many photosimulations would be required to meet the goals of the project. If a complete model is required anyway, it is more efficient to render an animation than to create photosimulations from multiple locations.

Click on the Videos and Graphics form above to request items from the Communications Office. To access the request form, you must be an NCDOT employee or an embedded contractor with an NCDOT email address. External users must request access to the link.

Limited English Proficiency

NCDOT is required to provide "meaningful access" for people with LEP to the department's programs, information, and services, in accordance with Title VI and Executive Order 13166. If you do not have experienced translation and/or interpretation services in-house, please contact the PICSViz Group for translation and interpretation assistance.

When should you translate documents for your public involvement activities?



Source: Community Impact Assessment Guidance

Templates

Please click on each item below to access the corresponding template located on Connect NCDOT or in the Guide.

Public Notices

Every Door Direct Mail

Comment Forms

Title VI Form

Newsletters

Local Officials Informational Meeting

Standard Postcards

Project Fact Sheets

Landowner Contact Letter

Special Language

Click on the icon to learn more about special language to include on your postcard, Every Door Direct Mail (EDDM), or newsletter.

This icon will appear to the right when you visit the **Template** section.

Public Notices

Some form of public notice is required for all public hearings and meetings. A formal notice must be published in a newspaper. In addition, the notice will be published on the public meeting webpage and can be posted on or near the project site and/or be distributed online (webpage notice or message distribution). The PICSViz Group is responsible for developing the public notices and publishing them in newspapers. The Communications Office creates press releases. At a minimum, public notices should contain the following:

- Purpose of the hearing or meeting
- Meeting format
- Project description
- Date, time, and location
- List of places, dates, and times where the project documents are available for public review
- Non-discrimination statements, including statements in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and how to request language assistance
- NCDOT contact for additional information
- The webpage location to view or download maps
- How comments can be submitted

Click the download buttons above to view examples of public notices.

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Every Door Direct Mail

Every Door Direct Mail (EDDM) is a bulk mailing option offered by the U.S. Postal Service that delivers a postcard or flyer to every postal customer, including commercial and residential occupants, without knowing their names or address. By selecting the mailing routes where target audiences or stakeholders would receive mail, NCDOT or project mail pieces will be delivered to every active address on the designated route. EDDM is more cost effective per mail piece because postage is lower, and mail does not need to be individually labeled or stamped.

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
RALEIGH, NC
PERMIT #XXXX

*********ECRWSSEDDM****
POSTAL CUSTOMER

Instructions and notes:

- Provide the mailing list study area to the PICSViz Group
- The PICSViz Group will review the study area and select the appropriate mail routes
- Use an EDDM postcard that is a minimum of 7x9 inches
- EDDM postcards do not have individual mailing addresses
- EDDM postcards have special mailing stamps on one side required (see stamp example to the right)
- A mailing list is still required if EDDM is used (NCDOT will pull the mailing list) because EDDM does not include property owners of vacant/raw parcels and property owners who do not live at the property

How to use EDDM:

EDDM postcards must be separated by route, bundled in the correct number with a few extra per route, and delivered to the post office serving those routes. This may require a project team to go to more than one post office. Fortunately, most mail houses and printers are familiar with the EDDM service and can print, bundle, and deliver postcards to the right post offices and charge NCDOT and project for these related services.

Postal Addressing Standards

For additional guidance on postal addressing standards, please visit **https://pe.usps.com/cpim/ftp/pubs/pub28/pub28.pdf**

Every Door Direct Mail

Please include the following content towards the top of the EDDM:

- What are we doing that requires a meeting (e.g., adding medians, sidewalks, or looking at concepts)
- What is happening (a meeting)
- When is it happening (date)
- Where is it happening (location - do not include state / zip code information)

Make sure the reader is drawn to these items and be cognizant of color blindness (No blue on blue, gray on blue, or yellow on green).

Please include the following in the body of the postcard:

- What we are proposing to do.
- Who to contact with questions (i.e., name, role/ affiliation, email, and phone). One contact should be used, either the division or central contact. If a central contact is selected, then a consultant can be listed.

The **Right to Language Access (RTLA) Statement** should be easily found and eye catching. It should not be placed in the body text. Include the RTLA unless the EDDM is dual language.

Postal Addressing Standards

For additional guidance on postal addressing standards, please visit **https://pe.usps.com/cpim/ftp/pubs/pub28/pub28.pdf**

Comment Forms

Traditional comment forms are hard copy paper forms or cards handed to a member of the public at a community meeting/event or small group meeting. The comment form should contain the following information:

- Room for a participant to fill in their contact information
- Return address located on the back of the comment form to eliminate the need for returning the form in-person or purchasing an envelope for mailing

Other best practices to consider and optional information to include for comment forms are listed below:

- Comment forms should be developed to ask questions that assist us in making decisions. For example, what is it that we want to know?
- Questions for the participant to answer regarding the project. Questions may be influenced by the project stage.
- Online comment forms should mirror a paper form including maps, images, and logos so that the online form is an acceptable alternative to an in-person paper comment form.
- Every handout should contain a **Title VI form** and a comment form.
- The comment form should be the last sheet in the handout (for logical reasons).
- Ask how the public heard about the meeting.
- Add a checkbox for the public if they want to be added to the project mailing list.

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KINSTON BYPASS PROJECT
STIP Project Number R-2553

COMMENT FORM—AUGUST 2014—PUBLIC MEETING ROUND 4

Contact Information (Please Print)

Name: ______________________ Email Address: ______________________

Mailing Address: ______________________

Please check if you would like to be added to the project mailing list. ☐ Yes ☐ No

How did you hear of tonight's workshop?

☐ Newsletter ☐ Flyer ☐ Newspaper ☐ Radio ☐ Friend/Family ☐ Other

Please provide any comments that you have on the project below. If needed, additional space is available on the reverse side.

You can drop your comment form in the comment box or send it to the contact information provided below by *September 12, 2014.*

North Carolina Department of Transportation
C/O URS Corporation
ATTN: Chris Werner
1600 Perimeter Park Drive, Suite 400
Morrisville, NC 27560
christopher.werner@urs.com

Toll-Free Hotline: 1-800-233-6315 Website: www.ncdot.gov/projects/kinstonbypass/

Title VI PI Forms

NCDOT is committed to ensuring that no person – on the grounds of race, color, national origin, LEP, income status, sex, age, or disability – is excluded from participating in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under any NCDOT program or activity, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other related non-discrimination laws and authorities.

Title VI applies to NCDOT and any entities receiving federal financial assistance through NCDOT. Other non-discrimination laws also protect against discrimination, including:

- Section 162(a) of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1973 (sex or gender)
- Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (age)
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (disability)
- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (disability)
- Fair Housing Act (religion)
- Federal Aviation Administration 49 U.S.C. 47123 (religion)

Taken together with Executive Orders 12898 (EJ) and 13166 (LEP), these requirements define an overarching Title VI Non-discrimination Program that applies to everyone and is not limited to U.S. citizens.

NCDOT requires that the Title VI forms and boards (downloadable above) be present and easily viewable at all public meetings in order for NCDOT to be in compliance.

For further guidance and information, please reference the following links:

- **Title VI Non-Discrimination Policy Statement**
- **NCDEQ Title VI Policy**
- **Title VI Frequently Asked Questions**

Newsletters

During the study, a newsletter may be prepared by the consultant for distribution to persons on the project mailing list and to state officials. NCDOT and designated representatives (e.g., project manager, division project staff, division communications officer) approve the newsletter prior to distribution. Newsletters are best used when there is a long period of time between public meetings. In all other scenarios, postcards are preferred. They are also helpful when the public should be reminded of the project purpose and need, as well as schedule and project updates. The consultant will be responsible for the distribution of the newsletter.

Here are some key items to include in a newsletter:

- Project overview
- Project purpose
- Why the project is needed
- Project updates
- Next steps
- Project assistance hotline

A sample newsletter is provided to the right. Additional information is provided on the **PICSViz Connect webpage**. Download a newsletter template above.

December 2018 | Issue No. 3

Cape Fear Crossing Project

State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)
Project No. U-4738

Brunswick County
New Hanover County

Project Updates p. 1
What's Next? p. 1
Project Maps p. 2
Remaining Alternatives p. 3
Project Timeline p. 3

What is the Project?

A roadway project from U.S. 17 and I-140 in Brunswick County to U.S. 421 in southern New Hanover County, including a new crossing of the Cape Fear River, involving either improvements to existing roads or improvements to existing roads in combination with a new location roadway, depending on the alternative selected.

What is the Project's Purpose?

To improve traffic flow and enhance freight movements beginning in the vicinity of U.S. 17 and I-140 in Brunswick County across the Cape Fear River to U.S. 421 near the Port of Wilmington in southern New Hanover County.

Why is the Project Needed?

This project is needed to address:
- Traffic Capacity Deficiencies
- North Carolina Port Access

Project Assistance Hotline 1.800.233.6315

Project Updates

The Cape Fear Crossing project is being developed following the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)/Section 404 Merger Process, which is established to streamline project development and permitting. By following this process, local, state, and federal agency representatives (i.e. the "Merger Team") meet to discuss the project and make decisions at major milestones during project development. The purpose of this is to allow for collaborative decision-making in order to avoid, minimize, or mitigate for impacts to the human and natural environment, while meeting the safety and mobility needs of the traveling public.

The Merger Team met in August 2017 to discuss eliminating several alternatives due to residential and business relocations, impacts to historic resources, and impacts to natural resources. The Merger Team concurred to eliminate Alternatives F, P, C, G, J, and V-F. The remaining alternatives for study, Alternatives B, M Avoidance, N Avoidance, Q, T, and V-AW, are shown on page 2 and described in detail on page 3.

What's Next?

A Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is being prepared for the Cape Fear Crossing project. NEPA requires federal and state agencies to prepare environmental impact statements (EIS) for major federal actions that significantly affect the quality of the human environment. An EIS is a full disclosure document that details the process through which a transportation project was developed, includes consideration of a range of reasonable alternatives, analyzes the potential impacts resulting from the alternatives, and demonstrates compliance with other applicable environmental laws and executive orders. The DEIS will be made public when published, which is anticipated for early winter 2019. A public hearing will be held in spring 2019 to gather public input on the corridor designs presented in the DEIS. After the public hearings, the next step in the planning process will be to review and summarize the comments received on the DEIS and choose the Preferred Alternative. Your comments and recommendations will be part of the public record and will be considered when choosing the Preferred Alternative.

Connecting people, products and places safely and efficiently with customer focus, accountability and environmental sensitivity to enhance the economy and vitality of North Carolina.

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Standard Postcards

NCDOT uses postcards to provide public notice to businesses, residents, and other stakeholders in a project area. Newsletters are typically used when there is a long period of time between public meetings.

Postcards must be in mailboxes of recipients by two weeks in advance of the meeting. Plan accordingly with printers and postal services accounting for delays.

Most important things to include:

- What NCDOT is doing (project title and STIP #)
- Date and time of an outreach activity
- Location including street address and building/ room name, but do not list the state or zip code
- Who to call with questions about the project (NCDOT contact)
- Who to contact about Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) assistance (sign language, mobility access)

Download a postcard template above or visit the **PICSViz Connect webpage** for more options.

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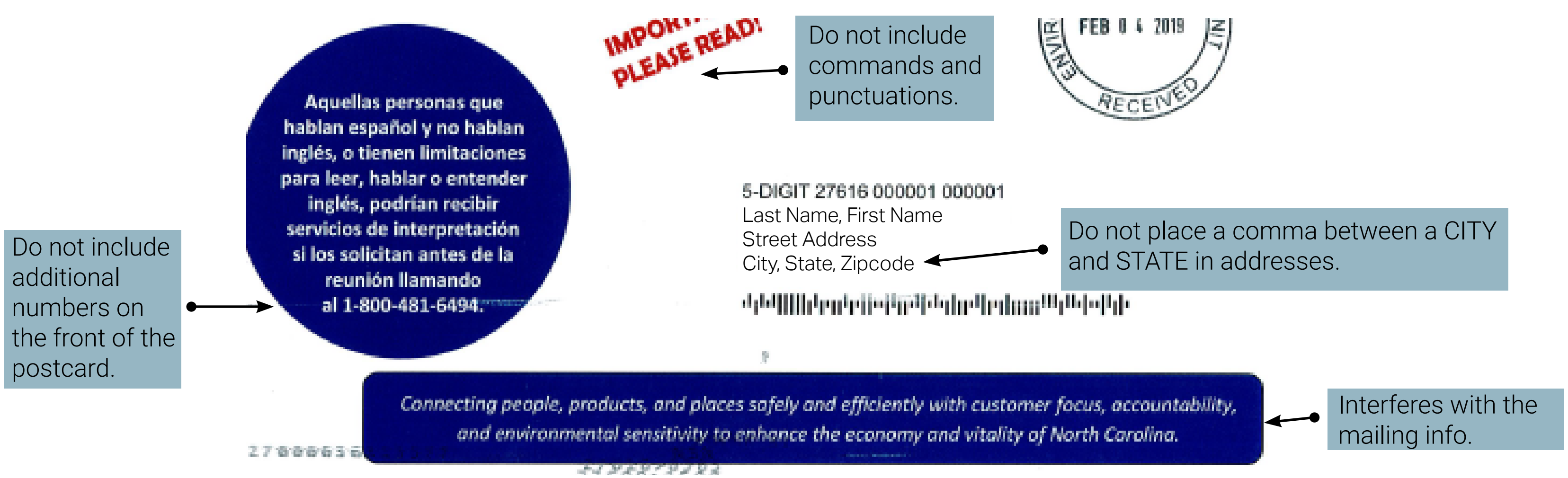
Standard Postcards

Other considerations for postcards are listed below:

- The mailing address should be 14 pt font per USPS. Other text should be at least 11 pt font or greater for readability.
- Return address should be smaller font than rest of the postcard text.
- Use high contrast colors and be cognizant of colors commonly mistaken with color blindness issues. Access an online color contrast checker **here**.
- Use abbreviations (e.g., St. instead of Street).
- Refer to the **Associated Press Style** when writing
- Include **RTLA** on front where it is quickly seen if needed. Remove it if the postcard is dual language. The RTLA phone number cannot be below addressee name. Placing numbers near or below the zip code line can result in misread and thus return of postcards.
- Contact PICSViz for assistance with translations.
- Return address should go to a person who will be responsible for updating the project mailing list with returns. One contact should be used – division or central contact – if central contact then the consultant can be listed.
- Nothing should be printed below the address area on the postcard – Postal machinery cannot process.

Download a postcard template on the previous page or visit the **PICSViz Connect webpage** for more options.



Local Officials Informational Meeting

Local Officials Informational Meetings (LOIMs) are held at periodic stages throughout the transportation planning process and often occur prior to a public meeting. Following the meeting, informational material and a summary of meeting comments should be prepared.

Please reference the following best practices when initiating an LOIM:

- Ask the PM to reach out to local officials prior to the given outreach effort on any particular project to see if they would prefer: (a) a LOIM, (b) a special meeting, or (c) to have the information emailed to them. Following these steps will help streamline the process.
- The Division Administrative Support Office should distribute the LOIM Invite letter. Each division has the most up-to-date list of local officials for their given regions, knowledge of who to involve on what projects, and how best to contact them. For instance, some prefer to be notified via their personal emails.
- PICSViz staff assigned to the project will draft the LOIM letter.
- Once approved and signed, the PM or PICSViz member will send to the Division Administrative Support Office for distribution to the appropriate local officials.

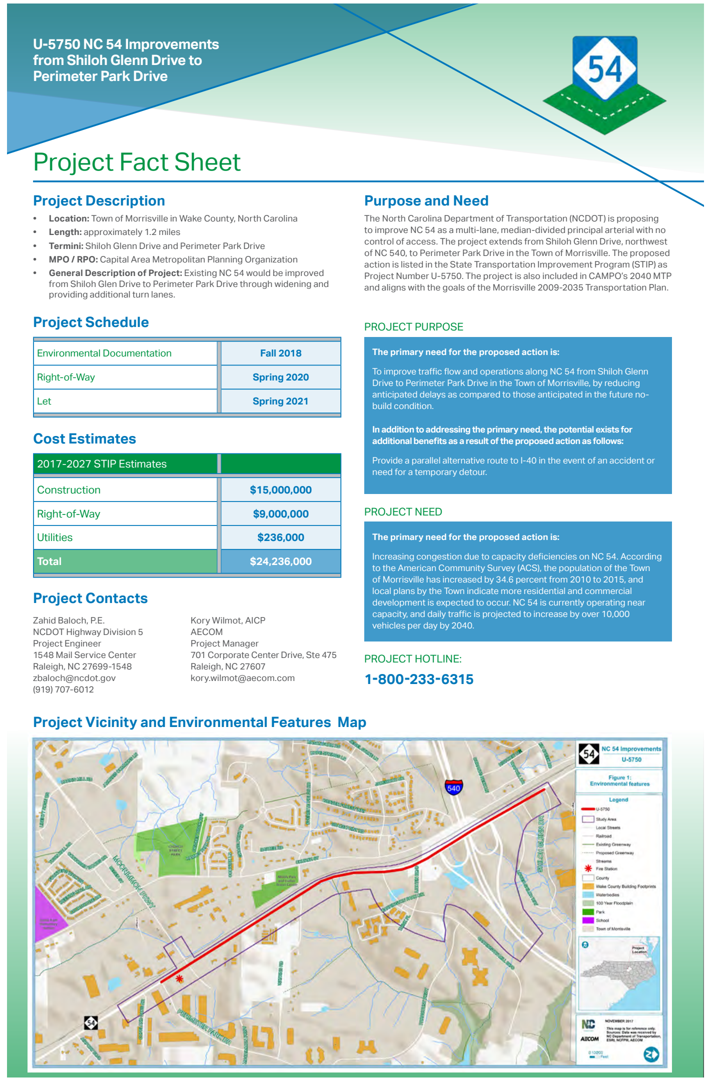
Project Fact Sheets

A project fact sheet is a one-to four-page summary of a project for a public audience. Fact sheets are useful for outreach channels including public meetings, pop-up events, a project webpage, and sometimes as an enclosure in correspondence. Project fact sheets are ideal for Project Update Meetings, which are normally held prior to construction once the contractor has been selected. The purpose of these meetings is to introduce the final design, the contractor, and the resident engineer as the new point of contact for the project. Fact sheets with project updates are especially useful at times when a project has been on hold for a period of time. Like other materials produced and distributed by the NCDOT, a project fact sheet should be visually appealing, use plain language, and use accurate and properly labeled tables, maps, or other images. Submit a fact sheet to PICSViz for review and approval before sending it to the public.

Project fact sheets should include the following elements:

- Project description
- Project's purpose and need
- Contact information
- Project hotline
- Webpage information
- Maps
- Schedule
- Cost estimates

The image to the right is an example of a one-sided project fact sheet.



U-5750 NC 54 Improvements from Shiloh Glenn Drive to Perimeter Park Drive

Project Fact Sheet

Project Description

- **Location:** Town of Morrisville in Wake County, North Carolina
- **Length:** approximately 1.2 miles
- **Termini:** Shiloh Glenn Drive and Perimeter Park Drive
- **MPO / RPO:** Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
- **General Description of Project:** Existing NC 54 would be improved from Shiloh Glen Drive to Perimeter Park Drive through widening and providing additional turn lanes.

Project Schedule

Environmental Documentation	Fall 2018
Right-of-Way	Spring 2020
Let	Spring 2021

Cost Estimates

2017-2027 STIP Estimates	
Construction	$15,000,000
Right-of-Way	$9,000,000
Utilities	$236,000
Total	$24,236,000

Project Contacts

Zahid Baloch, P.E.
NCDOT Highway Division 5
Project Engineer
1548 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1548
zbaloch@ncdot.gov
(919) 707-6012

Kory Wilmot, AICP
AECOM
Project Manager
701 Corporate Center Drive, Ste 475
Raleigh, NC 27607
kory.wilmot@aecom.com

Purpose and Need

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) is proposing to improve NC 54 as a multi-lane, median-divided principal arterial with no control of access. The project extends from Shiloh Glenn Drive, northwest of NC 540, to Perimeter Park Drive in the Town of Morrisville. The proposed action is listed in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) as Project Number U-5750. The project is also included in CAMPO's 2040 MTP and aligns with the goals of the Morrisville 2009-2035 Transportation Plan.

PROJECT PURPOSE

The primary need for the proposed action is:

To improve traffic flow and operations along NC 54 from Shiloh Glenn Drive to Perimeter Park Drive in the Town of Morrisville, by reducing anticipated delays as compared to those anticipated in the future no-build condition.

In addition to addressing the primary need, the potential exists for additional benefits as a result of the proposed action as follows:

Provide a parallel alternative route to I-40 in the event of an accident or need for a temporary detour.

PROJECT NEED

The primary need for the proposed action is:

Increasing congestion due to capacity deficiencies on NC 54. According to the American Community Survey (ACS), the population of the Town of Morrisville has increased by 34.6 percent from 2010 to 2015, and local plans by the Town indicate more residential and commercial development is expected to occur. NC 54 is currently operating near capacity, and daily traffic is projected to increase by over 10,000 vehicles per day by 2040.

PROJECT HOTLINE:

1-800-233-6315

Project Vicinity and Environmental Features Map

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Landowner Contact Letter

Please click the download button above to access the Landowner Contact Letter. These letters are typically written on NCDOT letterhead and are sent to homeowners, landowners, and potentially affected parties. Translated letters can also be provided along with the English version if required based on study area demographics. Contact the Environmental Coordination and Permitting (ECAP) Group Leader and/or the ECAP PM with questions.

The ECAP Environmental Coordinator should prepare the blind carbon copy (BCC) list. The Consultant should distribute the Landowner Letter via email to BCC recipients.

BCC List:
NCDOT PM (contact from letter)
Division Engineer
PICSViz Group Leader
Division ROW Agent
County Sheriff
City Police (if in municipality)
USACE Representative
L&S Area Locating Engineer
ECAP Environmental Coordinator

Special Language

The Right to Language Assistance Statement (RTLA) and accessibility language are commonly displayed on a postcard, EDDM, or newsletter. The RTLA Statement should be easily found and eye catching. It should not be placed in the body text. Both the RTLA Statement and accessibility language should be provided in English and Spanish.

RTLA Statement

NCDOT LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE

LA ASISTENCIA EN SU IDIOMA ESTÁ DISPONIBLE

Persons who do not speak English, or have a limited ability to read, speak, or understand English, may receive interpretive services upon request prior to the meeting by calling 1-800-481-6494.

Aquellas personas que no hablan inglés, o tienen limitaciones para leer, hablar o entender inglés, podrían recibir servicios de interpretación si los solicitan antes de la reunión llamando al 1-800-481-6494.

Accessibility Language

DOES NCDOT NEED TO PROVIDE SPECIAL SERVICES OR ASSISTANCE AT THE MEETINGS? - ¿NECESITA SERVICIOS O ASISTENCIA ESPECIAL PARA VENIR A LAS REUNIONES?

NCDOT will provide auxiliary aids and services under the Americans with Disabilities Act for disabled persons who wish to participate in these meetings. Anyone requiring special services should contact Diane Wilson at pdwilson1@ncdot.gov or 919-707-6073 to make arrangements.

El NCDOT proporcionará ayuda y servicios auxiliares conforme a la Ley sobre Estadounidenses con Discapacidades para personas discapacitadas que deseen participar en estas reuniones. Cualquier persona que requiera servicios especiales debe comunicarse con Diane Wilson en pdwilson1@ncdot.gov o al 919-707-6073 para hacer los arreglos.

Checklists

1. Public Involvement Key Steps
2. Meeting Materials and Resources
3. Key Considerations for Public Meetings/Hearings
4. Virtual Meeting Alternatives
5. Project Administrative Record
6. Comment Collection
7. Accessibility

This icon will appear to the right when you visit the **Checklist** section.

Public Involvement Key Steps

1. Clearly Define the Project:

- For internal and public involvement planning, define the project's purpose and need, study area, timeframe, scope, and potential impact. Public involvement must be an essential element in the project itself, not an afterthought or tangential activity.
- For the public, define the message and what input NCDOT wants from the public and how that input will be used by decision-makers.
- Different environmental reviews (CE, EA, EIS, and MCDC) will require by law or necessitate best practices in public involvement.

2. Identify the Project Stakeholders:

- Use resources from NCDOT's Community Studies Group to determine affected property owners, businesses, students, and travelers affected by transportation and proposed projects in the area.

3. Determine the Level of Engagement:

- Using the **IAP2 spectrum**, determine whether the project will require informing, consulting, involving the public, or collaborating with stakeholders.

4. Prepare and refine a PIP that includes the following:

- Goals and objectives for outreach on the project
- Stakeholders and interested groups, including special populations
- Potential communication methods/outreach tools
- Project-specific key messages to be communicated to the public
- Preliminary schedule for public involvement activities
- Measures for evaluating the success of the public involvement program

A PIP demonstrates NCDOT's conscious efforts to engage and consider public perspective. The PIP is updated as new stakeholders, key messages, and public involvement opportunities emerge on a project.

5. Conduct Public Involvement using a combination of the PI tools offered in this guide.

6. Collect Comments
(See **Checklist #6**).

7. Document PI efforts and findings:

- Document the public involvement methods, comments, and responses.
- Along with the PIP and the tactical actions taken, the comments collected, analysis of those comments and a summary of the interactions with various stakeholders will constitute a large part of the public involvement summary for a project document.

Adjust your PIP if the outreach and/or engagement effort is not working as planned.

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Meeting Materials and Resources

Preparation and organization are required before a meeting commences. Below is a list of suggested materials and resources to gather for your meeting:

- ❑ Sign-in sheets (electronic and paper)
- ❑ Slide deck for digital presentation
- ❑ Flash drive to hold slide deck
- ❑ Laptops
- ❑ Monitors
- ❑ Map of project area
- ❑ Pens and markers
- ❑ Removable stickers
- ❑ Notepads
- ❑ Handouts
- ❑ Boards and signs: sign-in, project information, steps in the project development process, right-of-way and relocation, existing conditions, proposed designs, comment boxes, areas for children, and directional signage
- ❑ Board and map set up: adhesive tape, push pins to hang maps, easels, tables, or stands from PICSViz
- ❑ Mobile internet hotspot (if internet access is required for an online video, visualization, or survey)
- ❑ Comment forms or online surveys (comment forms should be part of the handout)

The following concepts and information should also be effectively conveyed in the materials or presentation at the meeting:

- ❑ Proposed project elements
- ❑ Major decisions to be made
- ❑ Potentially impacted areas
- ❑ Project cost information
- ❑ Economic development
- ❑ How public input will be used by decision makers

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Key Considerations for Public Meetings/Hearings

Consider the following questions before holding a public meeting/hearing:

- ❑ ***Why*** are we holding a public meeting/hearing? What is the current phase of the project? What project information needs to be shared with the public? What information does the project/project staff need to obtain from the audience?
- ❑ ***Who*** needs to attend?
  - Who will be directly affected, indirectly affected by the project?
  - Who can affect the project?
  - Who has the legal or political ability to affect the project?
  - Who wants to be involved?
  - Who needs to be involved and is typically underrepresented?
  - Who will be upset if they are not included?
- ❑ ***Where*** should a public meeting/hearing take place? Day of week, time of day, window of dates based on NCDOT staff, Federal Highway Administration engineer for federal projects and local official calendar.
- ❑ ***Will*** a LOIM be needed? It is important to note that this meeting is not typically advertised.
- ❑ ***Where*** should the public meeting/hearing be held? Prospective facilities include community centers, churches, temples, and schools in the project area that are ADA-compliant, have sufficient parking and meeting space for meeting materials, the project team, and expected crowd.
- ❑ ***Which*** meeting format or combination of formats suit the meeting purpose? Drop-in session, charrette/workshop, station concept, repeating presentations, virtual meeting, or facilitated meeting and small group meeting (e.g., alternative language meeting).
- ❑ ***How*** is the public meeting/hearing publicized? Public meetings must be advertised a minimum of **14** days prior to the meeting date using email, social media, radio, postcard/newsletter delivery to home/business address, and newspaper notices.

Public Hearings

- Notice for public hearings must be posted **30** days in advance of the hearing. This includes:
  - Newspaper advertisements
  - Postcards/newsletters in the mail
  - NCDOT public meetings website
  - Project website
- Notice of public hearings posted **5** working days in advance:
  - Radio advertising
  - Social media

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Key Considerations for Public Meetings/Hearings

Public Meetings

- Notice of public meetings whether virtual or in-person must be posted **14** days in advance of the meeting, this includes:
  - Newspaper advertisements
  - Postcards/newsletters in the mail
  - NCDOT Public Meetings website
  - Project websites
- Notice of public meetings posted **5** working days in advance:
  - Radio advertising
  - Social media

❑ ***How*** do we submit a public meeting/hearing request via ETRACS to inform and involve the right NCDOT staff?

- You must have a North Carolina Identity Service (NCID) account to access ETRACS. There is no fee for an NCID account. Initiate an ETRACS entry for the project 6 to 8 weeks prior to a public meeting, to the PICSViz Group Leader.
- Once the ETRACS request has been received and assigned to a PICSViz Staff, an email notification will be sent back via ETRACS. If this is not received within one week, call the PICSViz Group Leader.
- The PICSViz Staff assigned to the public meeting will work collaboratively until the date of the public meeting.

❑ ***What*** happens after the public meeting/hearing?

- The PM or consultant should prepare a meeting/hearing summary. The summary should include the number and nature of the participants, comments submitted along with responses, and number and general nature of comments received. Review comments submitted and prepare responses to comments and questions received using the **Standard Responses to General Public Comments** document.
- Coordination with the subject matter experts is recommended for review of responses, especially when a specialized response is needed.
- Draft comment responses should be received by the project team at least 1 week (minimum) prior to the post meeting.
- All comments and responses should be included in environmental review documentation.

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Virtual Meeting Alternatives

NCDOT has introduced three alternatives in addition to or in lieu of face-to face meetings. You can pick the alternative best suited for the project and your community's needs:

- ❑ Newsletter with pertinent information, along with a project webpage, such as PublicInput.com or MetroQuest so people can ask questions and submit feedback online or call/email a PM.
- ❑ Recorded video - The PIO, the Communications Officer, or the PM should do the following when developing a recorded video meeting:
  - ❑ Introduction of PM(s)
  - ❑ Explain the project, where we are in the process, purpose of outreach, and the project schedule
  - ❑ Describe the display boards, maps, and other materials
  - ❑ Post the video to the project webpage and the Communications Officer will promote it on social media
  - ❑ The public would provide feedback online
  - ❑ Mail flash drives or hardcopies to citizens who do not have broadband access
- ❑ Host live, virtual public meetings using GoToMeeting, GoToWebinar, Microsoft

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Project Administrative Record

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) **Order 1324.1B** issues revised FHWA policy, responsibilities, and procedures to assist FHWA employees and contractors in the management of Federal records in all formats, including paper and electronic. The Project Administrative Record is the paper trail that documents the agency's decision-making process and the basis for the agency's decision. The Administrative Record consists of all documents and materials directly or indirectly considered by the agency decision-maker in making the decision. It is not limited to documents and materials relevant only to the merits of the agency's decision. It includes documents and materials relevant to the process of making the agency's decision.

Include the following:

- ❑ Documents and materials, whether or not they support the final agency decision.
- ❑ Documents and materials that were available to the decision-making office at the time the decision was made.
- ❑ Documents and materials considered, or relied upon, by the agency.
- ❑ Documents and materials that were consulted by the agency at the time of the decision, even if the final agency decision-maker did not specifically consider them.
- ❑ Documents and materials that are privileged and/or non-privileged.
- ❑ All documents and materials prepared, reviewed, or received by agency personnel and used by or available to the lead agency even though the final decision-maker did not review or know about the documents and materials.
- ❑ Policies, guidelines, directives, and manuals.
- ❑ Articles and books.
- ❑ Information or data, results, survey information, engineering reports, or studies.
- ❑ Decision documents.
- ❑ Meeting summaries and telephone records.
- ❑ Communications the agency received from other agencies and from the public and any responses to those communications.
- ❑ Documents and materials that contain information that supports or opposes the agency decision.
- ❑ Generally, include all draft documents that were circulated for comment either outside the agency or outside the author's immediate office if changes in these documents reflect significant input into the decision-making process.

Exclude the following:

- ❑ Documents and materials that were not in existence at the time of the agency decision.
- ❑ Internal "working" drafts of documents, whether or not they were superseded by a complete, edited version of the same document.

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#5

Comment Collection

A carefully planned and well-written comment card/form is a great tool to allow stakeholders to express their opinions and provide valuable feedback on a project. The following represent several ways to handle the comment collection process:

- ❑ Collect comments through the public involvement tools selected (public meetings and online surveys). These tools track responses, provide reports, and Excel spreadsheet(s), including participants, email addresses, and comment responses. This eliminates the need to document comments separately.
- ❑ Document and manage comments.
- ❑ Analyze comments by sorting comments into substantive and non-substantive issues, find new insights and common perspectives, and categorize comments by examining the geographic sources to ensure that all affected stakeholders have had the opportunity to provide comments. Project webpages (including PublicInput.com) may have these features (surveys and comment pages) readily available.
- ❑ Acknowledge all comments collectively or individually depending on the context or preference of the project team. Regardless of the method used to respond, a record should be kept that documents how the comments were addressed.
- ❑ Remove personal identifying information such as address, phone number, or email (via webpage, public meeting, report, or summary) from comments and responses before posting.
- ❑ Record public involvement efforts and any adjustments or PIP revisions to gather more accurate data.
- ❑ In general, public comments will be considered in the decision-making process.

Helpful Tips

You can use your geographic source method to determine the level of success.

View standard responses to general public comments at **https://connect.ncdot.gov/resources/Environmental/EAU/PICSViz/PIDocuments/NCDOT%20Standard%20Responses%20to%20General%20Public%20Comments%209-21-21.pdf**

COMMENT COLLECTION PROCESS

Step 1
Comment Collection

Step 2
Comment Documentation and Management

Step 3
Comment Analysis

Step 4
Acknowledge and Respond to Comments

Step 5
Display of Comments and Distribution of Responses

Step 6
Documenting Public Involvement

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Accessibility

All forms of public engagement should be designed for equitable access by individuals with disabilities. Project teams should consider potential barriers of access and the unique needs of those with visual, auditory, speech, motor, cognitive, photosensitivity, and other disabilities when designing public engagement materials and activities. Oftentimes, the design of accessible materials benefits the broader public by improving clarity, legibility, and ease of understanding.

Throughout the transportation decision-making process, a variety of information and communication technology (ICT) is made available to the public, often via project webpages. Common ICT for transportation projects includes the publication of environmental documents and other reports, newsletters, maps, interactive activities, photos, videos, and other visualizations. By considering the needs of color blind and low vision individuals, as well as individuals using screen readers and other assistive technology devices early in the project, materials can be designed for an inclusive and equitable inline experience for all users.

The globally-recognized standard for accessible ICT is the World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C's) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG): (**http://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/**). The best practices outlined in this checklist are largely based on the WCAG, which have been incorporated by reference throughout. By implementing these best practices, project teams will help ensure all members of the public have equitable access to information and the ability to fully participate in the transportation decision-making process.

The following page provides best practices for ensuring accessibility and 508 compliance.

Federal Compliance

For projects with federal involvement, Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (codified at 29 U.S.C. § 794 (d)) establishes specific requirements for electronic and information technology developed, maintained, procured, or used by the Federal Government. Section 508 compliance requires conformance to WCAG 2.0's Level A and Level AA Success criteria, available at **https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/**.

Helpful Tips

Additional information and resources can be found at the following links:

- Section 508.gov (**https://www.section508.gov/**)
- AbilityNet: Producing accessible materials for print and online (**https://abilitynet.org.uk/accessibility-services/digital-accessibility-resources**)
- Web Accessibility Tutorials (**https://www.w3.org/WAI/tutorials/**)
- Microsoft Word Guidance (**https://support.office.com/en-us/article/make-your-word-documents-accessible-d9bf3683-87ac-47ea-b91a-78dcacb3c66d**)
- Adobe Guidance (**https://www.adobe.com/accessibility.html**)

Accessibility

Best practices for ensuring accessibility and 508 compliance (when applicable) are as follows:

Color and Contrast

- ❑ Color is not used as the only visual means of conveying information, indicating an action, prompting a response, or distinguishing a visual element (WCAG 2.0, 1.4.1).
- ❑ Ensure sufficient contrast (WCAG 2.0, 1.4.3). Color contrast can be tested using: **https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/** or **https://perma.cc/59WQ-VPY6**
- ❑ Color schemes are accessible to color blind individuals. **Color Brewer** can be used to develop color schemes for maps and other graphics; Adobe Illustrator can mimic the appearance of content for both protanopia and deuteranopia color blindness.

Text

- ❑ All fonts are embedded.
- ❑ Text formatted using defined paragraph and character styles; avoid manual formatting.
- ❑ Use section headings to organize content in a logical manner.
- ❑ The content of scanned pages (such as signature pages, completed public comment forms) is accessible to assistive technology devices. This can be accomplished via optical character recognition or the use of alternative text.

Tables

- ❑ Tagged row header, column headers, and data cells.
- ❑ Tables properly scoped to ensure table regularity and the correct relationship between table data cells and header cells.
- ❑ Table title or descriptive text not within the table itself.
- ❑ For multi-page table, table rows do not break across pages, table headers repeat at the top of each page.

Figures

- ❑ Enter alternative text for images, charts, diagrams, buttons, and other interface elements to convey information and purpose textually.

Webpages

- ❑ Make webpages appear and operate in predictable ways.
- ❑ Structure content to allow efficient navigation and processing, including the use of page regions, labeling regions, headings, and meaningful content structure.
- ❑ Any blinking, moving, scrolling, or auto-updating information can be paused, stopped, or hidden; flashing elements minimized to avoid causing seizures.

Audio and Video Files

- ❑ Synchronized captions used to provide equivalent information for the hearing impaired.
- ❑ Audio tracks and audio descriptions used to provide equivalent information for the visually impaired.

Forms

- ❑ Form controls correctly identified in the coding/structure of the form to accommodate assistive technology users.
- ❑ Instructions provided to help users understand how to complete the form.
- ❑ Functionality that validates inputs and communicates progress to the user.
- ❑ Divide long forms into smaller forms that constitute a series of logical steps.
- ❑ Whenever possible, do not include time limits on form completion.

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Public Involvement Tools

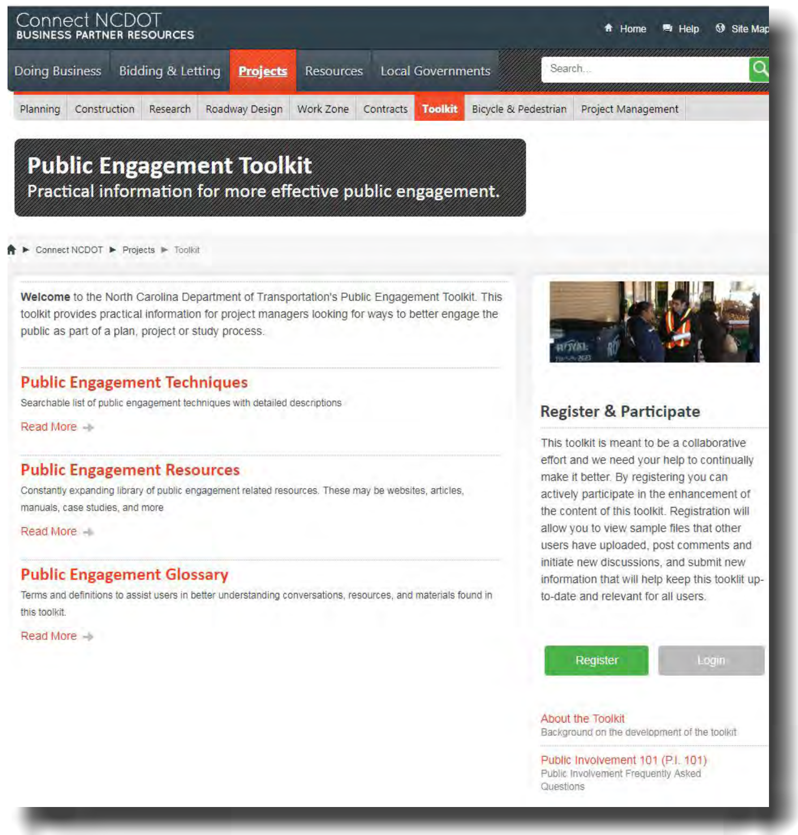
New tools for outreach are constantly being developed and are increasingly focused on real-time, collaborative interaction with the public. When selecting the types of NCDOT approved public involvement tools used during a project, it is important to focus on how the tools can be used to reach a wide audience most effectively and inclusively. A list of public involvement tools shown in the Statewide PIP appears in **Table 7** as a comprehensive list of options.

In addition, NCDOT provides a **Public Engagement Toolkit** online (shown in **Figure 1** to the right). This toolkit provides practical information for PMs looking for ways to better engage the public as part of a plan, project, or study process. Specifically, the NCDOT Toolkit covers the following:

- **Public Engagement Techniques:** Searchable list of public engagement techniques with detailed descriptions.
- **Public Engagement Resources:** Constantly expanding library of public engagement related resources such as webpages, articles, manuals, or case studies.
- **Public Engagement Glossary:** Terms and definitions to assist users in understanding conversations, resources, and materials found in the NCDOT Toolkit.

A handful of the tools in **Table 7** are highlighted in blue. This means more information is available in the online Toolkit.

Figure 1: NCDOT Public Engagement Toolkit



This icon will appear to the right when you visit the **PI Tools** section.

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Table 7: Standard Public Involvement Tools

Tool	Description and Function	Resource Needs		
		Cost	Time	Skills
Advertisements	Newspaper, display, or legal notice to distribute important project and/or meeting information	Low	Low	Low
Brochures	Information tailored to a specific aspect of a project or plan for the public to review as either hardcopy or electronically	Medium	High	Medium
EDDM	Utility bill stuffers, surveys, newsletters, or progress bulletins to distribute important project and/or meeting information	Medium	Medium	Low
Email/Text Messages	Messages to large groups to distribute important project and/or meeting information	Low	Low	Low
Fact Sheets/ Newsletters	Summary information to facilitate understanding and generate comments usually distributed during a meeting or online	Low	Medium	Medium
Frequently Asked Questions	Common questions and helpful answers used to clarify key aspects of a project and to reduce confusion in complex or controversial situations	Low	Low	Low
Flyers and **Posters**	Focused written and graphic items to convey information about key issues and/or upcoming meetings, events	Low	Medium	Low
Public Service Announcements	Public service announcements include announcements on the radio or television to disseminate important project and/or meeting information	Medium	Low	Low
Signs	Signs posted along a roadway or at a project site typically used to announce a project and convey information about upcoming meetings and/or project events	Low	Low	Low
Social Media	Web-based technology platforms that encourage users to interact electronically with individuals, groups, and/ or organizations. Popular social media platforms include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn.	Low	Low	Low

Table 7: Standard Public Involvement Tools (continued)

Tool	Description and Function	Resource Needs		
		Cost	Time	Skills
Virtual Meetings/ Workshops	Web-based public involvement innovations reach a wider audience and gather relevant information for earlier project consideration: online surveys for home or mobile device use, telephone town halls, real-time polling during webinars, or public meetings.	Medium	Medium	Medium
Web Announcements	Used on web platforms related to the project to post brief information about upcoming meetings, events, or important project details. See "Project Webpage" tool in this table.	Low	Low	Low
Repeating Presentation	Used to provide a brief overview and introduction to a project. The presentation can be placed at the entrance of a public meeting before the public visits individual stations.	Low	Low	Low
Face-to-Face Interaction				
Agency Advisory Committee	Interactive workshop tailored to engage the public and facilitate conversations about design issues, alternatives, and creative solutions. **Useful when:** Addressing specific community concerns or issues requiring creative solutions. **Target(s):** Key community representatives and stakeholders.	Low	Medium	Medium
Charrettes	Meeting to convene a group of individuals serving as singular representatives of various public agencies to address issues or provide overall guidance on project decisions. **Useful when:** A project is contentious and there are several agencies from which input is needed. **Target(s):** Key agency decision makers and/or resource managers.	Low	Medium	Medium

Table 7: Standard Public Involvement Tools (continued)

Tool	Description and Function	Resource Needs		
		Cost	Time	Skills
Face-to-Face Interaction				
Community/ Technical Advisory Committees/ Working Groups	Advisory groups made up of community representatives and stakeholders who provide input and guidance on a focused set of topics with a predetermined role and responsibilities. **Useful when:** A project is contentious and there are several communities or stakeholder groups with different and important perspectives. **Target(s):** Key community stakeholders.	Medium	Medium	Medium
Interviews/ One-on-One	Direct dialogue to facilitate in-depth discussions between individuals. **Useful when:** There are specific individuals who can provide insight about current conditions to help project staff make informed project decisions. **Target(s):** Targeted meeting.	Low	High	Medium
Open Houses	Informal meetings that allow project-related materials to be displayed to the public. Allow project team members to answer questions and openly accept comments. Avoids “grandstanding” and formal public hearing testimony issues. **Useful when:** Interaction between the public and the team is needed or beneficial. **Target(s):** General public.	High	Medium	Medium

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Table 7: Standard Public Involvement Tools (continued)

Tool	Description and Function	Resource Needs: Cost	Resource Needs: Time	Resource Needs: Skills
Face-to-Face Interaction				
Public Hearings	Formal meetings designed to meet federal and state requirements, such as specific legal notifications, transcripts from a court reporter, and a designated, formal comment period. See section 7.2.2 of the Statewide Public Involvement Plan for more information. **Useful when:** Public hearings are required when projects are financially supported by federal and state funds. See section 7.2.2 for more detail. **Target(s):** Key stakeholders, general public.	Medium	Medium	Medium
Public Officials Briefing	Helps generate dialogue with decision-makers and provides accountability for public processes and expenditures. **Useful when:** Project milestones are met and to provide project updates. **Target(s):** Key public officials, local city councils, planning commission members, other local and regional decision makers.	Low	Medium	Medium
Small Group Meetings	Meetings with specific groups such as homeowner associations, special interest groups, civic associations. **Useful when:** A project requires in-depth input from a particular stakeholder in a non-confrontational setting. **Target(s):** Key community stakeholders.	Low	Medium	Medium

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Table 7: Standard Public Involvement Tools (continued)

Tool	Description and Function	Resource Needs		
		Cost	Time	Skills
Face-to-Face Interaction				
Speaking Engagements	May include sending speakers to conferences, community meetings, civic group meetings, schools, or other events and locations to convey project information, encourage involvement, and obtain input. **Useful when:** There is a need to disseminate information directly to stakeholder groups in settings convenient for their members. **Target(s):** Key stakeholders.	Medium	Medium	Medium
Virtual Public Involvement				
Project Webpage	Whether a host for project documents, information only, or interactive, a project webpage typically provides comprehensive, continuous, online access to the information about a specific program or project. It can be set up to receive and organize public comments and develop a project's key contacts lists.	Low	Low	Medium
Online Survey or Polling	Online surveys that duplicate or replace a paper survey can have broader reach. Today's online survey tools can include geographically coded answers and mapping tools. Usually, survey responses provide a snapshot of public knowledge or sentiment. Sometimes, the survey questions alone disseminate project information without getting responses.	Medium	Medium	Low
Telephone Town Hall	A telephone town hall reaches stakeholders or the affected public via a phone number asking questions and recording responses.	Medium	Medium	Medium

Table 7: Standard Public Involvement Tools (continued)

Tool	Description and Function	Resource Needs		
		Cost	Time	Skills
Virtual Public Involvement				
Video Techniques	Tablets and mobile phones allow project staff to record "do-it-yourself" videos to be posted to YouTube or shared by project webpages and other social media. Personalized greetings or invitations, project descriptions, or visualizations and other digital content are more likely to be viewed by the public.	Low	Low	Low
Geo-fencing and Geo-targeting	Geo-fencing is a process in which online ads or messages can be sent to people within a defined area. This can be done through a personal device or through the IP address on a personal computer. Geo-targeting is a process in which online ads or messages are targeted to people of a specific demographic group.	Low	Low	Low
Facebook Live	Facebook can host a real-time video of an open house or public meeting, shot with a smartphone or higher quality video camera. Offering visuals of the exhibits and showing people at the public meeting can encourage the public to drop in as well as record public engagement. A recording of each exhibit explained or narrated by project staff offers a summary of information made available at the open house.	Low	Medium	Low
Social Media	Use social media to post photos, recordings, staff observations, or public responses/sentiment during a public meeting to promote additional public outreach and engagement.	Low	Medium	Medium
Visualizations	Visualization techniques are methods used to show information in clear and easily understandable formats such as maps, pictures, or displays. The results can be simple or complex and include graphs, charts, photo composites, photo-simulations, renderings, wire-frame illustrations of three-dimensional forms, interactive maps, and animations that walk or drive through a project study area.	High	High	High

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Public Involvement Implementation Tips

- Solicit public involvement feedback as early as possible.
- Develop PIPs tailored to the affected parties and complexities of the project.
- Confirm that interested and/or affected populations are being informed of the proposed action and are involved in public input sessions. Populations that may require additional outreach and engagement include low income, minority, LEP populations, seniors, people with disabilities (physical or learning), and transit-dependent, to name a few.
- Update mailing lists. These lists may be composed of neighborhood associations; religious, civic, and cultural groups; environmental organizations; citizen advisory committees; employers; organizations or associations with special constituents; and others.
- Go where citizens go - schools, churches, retail stores, festivals, etc.
- Communicate with the public in a two-way, continuous, and consistent manner.
- Provide clear and timely information about how to comment and how public input ties into decision making by NCDOT and other entities like MPOs or federal agencies.
- Use NCDOT approved innovative tools to help improve communication with the public and enhance transportation outcomes by improving decision-making, operations, and safety.
- Use smaller settings such as small group meetings as an effective way of engaging underserved and underrepresented communities (e.g., EJ and LEP), business groups/companies, and special interest groups.
- Document, in a thorough manner, public involvement efforts completed for each project including subsequent results.
- Document all comments and concerns shared as part of the public involvement process for consideration during decision-making.

Tool Links

Please click on the links below to access the standard public involvement tools online. Please visit the **Public Engagement Toolkit** to view additional tools and techniques.

Resource	Link
Advertisements	[https://connect.ncdot.gov/site/toolkit/Pages/TechDetails.aspx?Title=Advertisements]
Brochures	[https://connect.ncdot.gov/site/toolkit/Pages/TechDetails.aspx?Title=Brochures]
Charrettes	[https://connect.ncdot.gov/site/toolkit/Pages/TechDetails.aspx?Title=Charrettes]
Email	[https://connect.ncdot.gov/site/toolkit/Pages/TechDetails.aspx?Title=Email]
Factsheets/Newsletters	[https://connect.ncdot.gov/site/toolkit/Pages/TechDetails.aspx?Title=Information%20Materials]
Flyers	[https://connect.ncdot.gov/site/toolkit/Pages/TechDetails.aspx?Title=Fliers]
Interviews (one-on-one)	[https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/toolkit/Pages/TechDetails.aspx?Title=Key%20Person%20Interviews]
Open Houses	[https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/toolkit/Pages/TechDetails.aspx?Title=Open%20Houses/Open%20Forum%20Hearings]
Posters	[https://connect.ncdot.gov/site/toolkit/Pages/TechDetails.aspx?Title=Posters]
Project Webpage	[https://connect.ncdot.gov/site/toolkit/Pages/TechDetails.aspx?Title=Websites]
Public Hearings	[https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/toolkit/Pages/TechDetails.aspx?Title=Public%20Meetings/Hearings]
Public Service Announcements	[https://connect.ncdot.gov/site/toolkit/Pages/TechDetails.aspx?Title=Public%20Service%20Announcements%20(PSAs)]
Small Group Meetings	[https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/toolkit/Pages/TechDetails.aspx?Title=Small%20Groups]
Social Media	[https://connect.ncdot.gov/site/toolkit/Pages/TechDetails.aspx?Title=Social%20Media/Social%20Networking]
Video Techniques	[https://connect.ncdot.gov/site/toolkit/Pages/TechDetails.aspx?Title=Video%20Techniques]
Virtual Meetings/Workshops	[https://connect.ncdot.gov/site/toolkit/Pages/TechDetails.aspx?Title=Virtual%20Meetings/Workshops]
Visualizations	[https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/toolkit/Pages/TechDetails.aspx?Title=Visualization%20Techniques]

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