



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT POLICY

APRIL 2012

State of Hawaii
Department of Transportation
Aliiimoku Hale
869 Punchbowl Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Aloha,

The public's involvement in the State Department of Transportation's airport, harbor and highway programs and infrastructure development projects provide valuable insights to the everyday concerns of the community.

The Department is traveling in a new direction - on a path that includes the affected public as partners in the development of the programs and projects that are meant to serve the public.

The DOT must be in the business of partnering with the public to build communities, rather than intruding upon them. Our facilities are just one aspect of our way of life, though a very important one, but we must provide our services in the manner that the public can appreciate and coexist. The way to achieve this goal is to ask, listen, and take the necessary actions.

It is important to incorporate effective public involvement strategies when dealing with every project at every phase, from planning to project implementation. This extra effort will result in the development of meaningful effective transportation facilities because the projects will be shaped and supported by Hawaii's communities.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Glenn M. Okimoto". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

GLENN M. OKIMOTO, Ph.D
Director of Transportation

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT POLICY

The State of Hawaii Department of Transportation (HDOT) recognizes the value of public involvement as a programmatic measure that strengthens and solidifies its transportation programs. HDOT thus encourages the integration of public involvement activities within its projects, beginning with the development of project plans and continuing throughout the life of the projects.

The HDOT Public Involvement Policy supports and encourages broad-based public involvement in the conception, development and enhancement of transportation plans, programs and projects. The policy is directed at the implementation of activities that solicit the involvement of the appropriate target communities. These citizen involvement activities should be open, honest and non-threatening, providing timely public notice, full public access, comprehensive project information, as well as the requisite schedule for early, continuous and active involvement.

This policy encourages partnerships between HDOT and the communities affected by its projects. The partnerships formed by properly implemented public involvement activities produce comprehensive community concerns, thus enabling project managers' informed decision-making. Citizens benefit by the timely dissemination of program requirements, restrictions, budgets, alternatives and the consequences of each alternative. Traditionally underserved and silent populations are provided the opportunity to voice their vital concerns. The partnerships are envisioned as enhancing the public's sense of project ownership and the establishment of vocal, community-based project proponents (i.e., support for the projects).

This public involvement policy is in effect for all programs operating under the auspices of the department.

HDOT project and program managers will encourage and maximize public involvement through awareness and implementation of the following (as appropriate):

- *Devise public involvement strategies*
 - *Identify target audiences*
 - *General public*
 - *Specific communities*

- *Public agency representatives*
- *Private transportation service providers*
- *Freight shippers*
- *Transit riders*
- *Traditionally underserved populations*
- *Title VI/Environmental Justice populations (low-income, minority, individuals with disabilities, individuals with limited English proficiency, elderly, children)*
- *Other interested parties*

- *Select notification methods and media*
 - *Telephone surveys*
 - *Mailed surveys*
 - *House-to-house personal interviews*
 - *Stakeholder interviews*
 - *Special events booth*
 - *Focus groups*
 - *Neighborhood board meetings*
 - *Community association meetings*
 - *Meetings with influential community leaders (business leaders, clergy, legislators, kupuna, etc.)*
 - *Meetings with special interest groups*
 - *Meetings with public officials*
 - *Use of the STP Planning Process*
 - *Posters*
 - *Fliers*
 - *Radio announcements*
 - *Television announcements*
 - *Newspaper announcements*
 - *Public meetings*
 - *Websites*
 - *Blogsites*
 - *Social networking (informational technology) forums*
 - *Other activities to encourage public involvement*

- *Consider various meeting formats*
 - *Teleconferences*
 - *Videoconferences*
 - *Agency Meetings*
 - *Focus Group Meetings*

- *Task forces/Working groups*
 - *Public Meetings*
 - *Public Hearings*
- *Utilize various visualization techniques*
 - *Project specific maps*
 - *Digital photography*
 - *High resolution graphic displays*
 - *GIS map overlays*
 - *PowerPoint presentations*
 - *Aerial photographs*
 - *Photo simulations*
 - *Technical drawings*
 - *Charts and graphs*
 - *Newsletters*
 - *Display ads*
 - *Large print documents*
- *List requisite resources*
 - *Meeting locations and facilities*
 - *Access and accommodations for individuals with disabilities*
 - *Foreign language interpreters*
 - *Sign-language specialists*
 - *Facilitators*
 - *Hearings officers*
 - *Court reporters*
 - *Advocates (sympathetic community leaders, technical experts, legislators, etc.)*
 - *Equipment*
- ***Provide timely notification throughout the transportation planning and programming processes***
 - *Early notification, preferably at the official announcement of the start of the project*
 - *Regular, periodic meetings, as applicable*
 - *Formal public involvement opportunities at appropriate phases of the project, including key decision points and the culmination of the project*

- *Explain the importance of public input, opportunities for submittal of comments, and methodologies for consideration/incorporation of public comments*
- *Provide status updates of submitted comments, as well as explanations for acceptance or dismissal of comments*
- ***Enable reasonable public access to technical and policy information via the offering of auxiliary aids and services and use of informational technologies***
- ***Document public involvement efforts and proceedings***
 - *Participants*
 - *Dates*
 - *Events*
 - *Opportunities for involvement*
 - *Comments received*
 - *Effectiveness of public involvement activities and strategies*
 - *Recommendations for improvement*
- ***Review and update public involvement strategies to adjust to evolving trends***
 - *Modify the process via the use of different strategies*
 - *Modify the process via the use of new technologies*
 - *Modify the process to involve new target audiences*
 - *Continue to provide full and open access*

The following attachments are being provided as public involvement activity resources for project and program managers:

Attachment 1 – General Information on Public Involvement
Attachment 2 – Public Involvement Scoping Form (Sample)

General Information on Public Involvement

I. BACKGROUND

Public involvement in transportation decision-making is not a new concept. Societal changes over recent decades have increased demand for more openness in government and transparency in decision-making.

Recognizing that transportation investments have far reaching effects on the public, metropolitan planning and state transportation agencies, consider a wider assortment of impacts including land use and the overall social, economic, energy, and environmental effects of their transportation decisions. Incorporating these often hard to quantify facets in their various programs has increased the importance of having a dialogue with the community about what the community actually values.

Transportation officials and professionals face a continuing critical challenge of how to accommodate the increasing demand for public involvement in policy making, planning, and project implementation. This demand for an expanded and more meaningful role in public participation is based on both philosophical and pragmatic considerations.

Philosophically, these include the general expectation in a democratic society that individuals have the right to be informed and consulted, and to express themselves on matters relating to and affecting themselves and their communities. Pragmatically, involvement by the public can lead to public support in developing ideas, promoting plans, and implementing these actions and subsequent projects.

The public expects that they will have a role in transportation decision-making. The difficulty for transportation planning agencies arises in determining how best to address public involvement in actual practice.

In the past, transport planning agency outreach entailed the agency presenting their decisions in a “hearing” or other single-direction presentation format to the public, expecting minimal to no feedback from the public. This led to citizens citing a common frustration that they felt the decisions had already been made by the agency and the purpose of the public involvement program was simply to get the public to “rubber stamp” the decision. These outreach efforts were invariably identified as insincere, producing negative public relations and causing frustration and public ire toward the agency.

Current practice in public involvement is to seek out and provide for proactive, broad based, early and continuing public participation in decision-making for Hawaii’s transportation programs, plans, and projects. A public involvement process establishes consistent minimum procedures to accomplish this. However, procedures beyond this basic level are encouraged as warranted. This citizen outreach process provides for complete information relating to decision-making criteria, timely public notice, and opportunities for continuous public participation/involvement.

Additionally, special emphasis must be placed on including traditionally underserved members of the community. This includes groups such as minorities, persons with disabilities, and low-income households which may face unique challenges meeting basic needs and obtaining services (employment, health and educational facilities, shopping opportunities) due to lack of or inadequate transportation alternatives.

II. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

What is Public Involvement?

Public involvement can mean different things to different people and organizations. For the purposes of this public involvement guide, the following general definition is used to describe public involvement:

Public involvement includes all activities used by public transportation agencies to inform and educate the public about the agencies' transportation activities, and/or to gather information from the public to include public input in making transportation decisions. It's the active, deliberate engagement of a specific set of audiences in a proposed program, plan, development, idea, concept, or project.

For public involvement to be successful there needs to be a focus on 'why' and 'how' to develop public involvement programs and plans. Engagement as used in the context above means that, unlike a public relations, marketing, or public information program, public involvement is deliberately focused on obtaining feedback, ideas, comments, criticisms and values from these audiences. To achieve this, it is important to provide genuine opportunities for public involvement early enough in the process to ensure that there is time to adequately listen and respond to citizen concerns.

Why Do It?

The purpose for public involvement is:

- To build knowledge about the transportation process including its programs, plans and projects;
- To identify public concerns and values;
- To gather information, develop consensus, resolve conflict, and produce better decisions;
- To gain fresh perspectives from the public which can lead to innovative approaches never thought possible;
- To enhance the accountability of government decisions through increased opportunities for citizen participation;
- To reduce later delays and costs from not having involved the public; and
- To build credibility and trust.

As part of the effort to undertake a public involvement program, it is also important to understand the beliefs and attitudes that must be embodied by the transportation agency staff towards public involvement. Involving the public is an attitude as much as it is a

process. It is important for the agency as a whole, from top management down, to do an internal evaluation of the attitudes and beliefs concerning public involvement. These attitudes and beliefs often determine the extent to which an agency will make efforts to cultivate public consensus and support.

III. ROLES IN PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Transportation activities, from planning to project implementation, are most effective in communities where active citizen involvement is part of these efforts. Successful public involvement exists where officials, citizens and agency staff work together, with each group understanding and playing its specific role in these activities.

Role of elected officials and agency administrators:

- Assuring that citizens will receive adequate opportunities to be involved.
- Assuring that information presented to citizens is clear, complete and timely, using visual imagery wherever relevant. Listening attentively and with respect to citizen's views.
- Being responsive to the concerns, comments and recommendations of citizens and staff.
- Working towards consensus and making final decisions.

Role of citizens:

- Taking the time and effort to be involved.
- Learning about the transportation planning and project implementation process and the needs of all sectors in the community.
- Contributing from their special knowledge of the community.
- Identifying problems and concerns and sharing their ideas and values.
- Working toward consensus.

Role of agency staff:

- Accessibility.
- Visibility.
- Keeping informed.
- Presenting information in a clear, complete, and timely manner, using visual imagery wherever relevant.
- Giving full consideration and response to citizens' concerns, comments, and recommendations.
- Responding to public requests for information in a timely and courteous manner.
- Alerting elected officials and agency administrators to issues.
- Working toward consensus.

IV. GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The Goal is to use public involvement to make the best possible transportation decisions to promote and enhance the quality of life in Hawaii and to engender greater public trust in the actions and activities of the department.

The Objectives in this public involvement effort are:

- To proactively seek early and continuing public input and involvement so that HDOT and its sub-recipient agencies: Pursue appropriate plans, programs, and projects that meet the transportation needs and concerns of the stakeholders and public.
- Be responsive and accountable to stakeholders and the public.
- To enhance transparency in the transportation decision-making process through improved communication and dialog with stakeholders and the public.
- To enhance understanding and awareness of the transportation process to build consensus amongst stakeholders and the public on the type and priority of plans, programs, and projects pursued by HDOT and its sub-recipient agencies.
- To use stakeholder and public input to positively influence funding decisions.



Public Involvement Scoping Form

*(Note: This **sample form** is intended for use in developing public involvement efforts and can be modified as necessary.)*

Project/Study Name: _____

Project/Study Number: _____

Type of Project/Study (Planning/Regional/Corridor/Environmental/Design/Etc.): _____

Project/Study Location (Statewide/Island/Region/Facility/Etc.): _____

Project/Study Contact: _____ Agency/Division/Branch: _____

Phone #: _____ Fax #: _____ Email: _____

(The following section should be explained/documentated via the scoping process.)

1. Project/Study Scope
2. Intent and Need for Project/Study
 - A. Justification (Need/Priority/Urgency/Etc.)
 - B. Complexity
 - C. Phasing and Costs
 - D. Utility (How will it be used?)
 - E. Anticipated Benefits (Improvements/Remedies/Etc.)
 - F. Consequences of No Action
3. Anticipated Impacts/Issues/Concerns
4. Identify and List Potential Stakeholders and Participants that Need to Be Involved for Public Outreach Efforts for this Project/Study.
5. Title VI & Environmental Justice (EJ): Identify any minority, Native Hawaiian, low-income, limited English proficient (LEP), or other under-represented population with special needs affected or impacted by this Project/Study?
6. Briefly Describe Public Involvement Effort for the Project/Study.

- A. General Description/Scope of Public Involvement Outreach Effort
 - 1. What are the goals and objectives of the public involvement for this activity?
 - 2. What results do you expect from this outreach effort?
 - 3. How is input to be utilized?
 - 4. What techniques will be utilized?
 - 5. How will outreach effort be evaluated?

- B. Schedules (Major Milestones/Key Decision Points) and Costs (if available) of this Public Involvement Effort

- C. Checklist of Internal Review of the Public Involvement Effort
 - 1. Branch Head
 - 2. Division Head
 - 3. Administrator/Deputy
 - 4. HDOT Director

- 7. Related Project(s)/Study(ies) and Status (Completed/Underway/Anticipated)