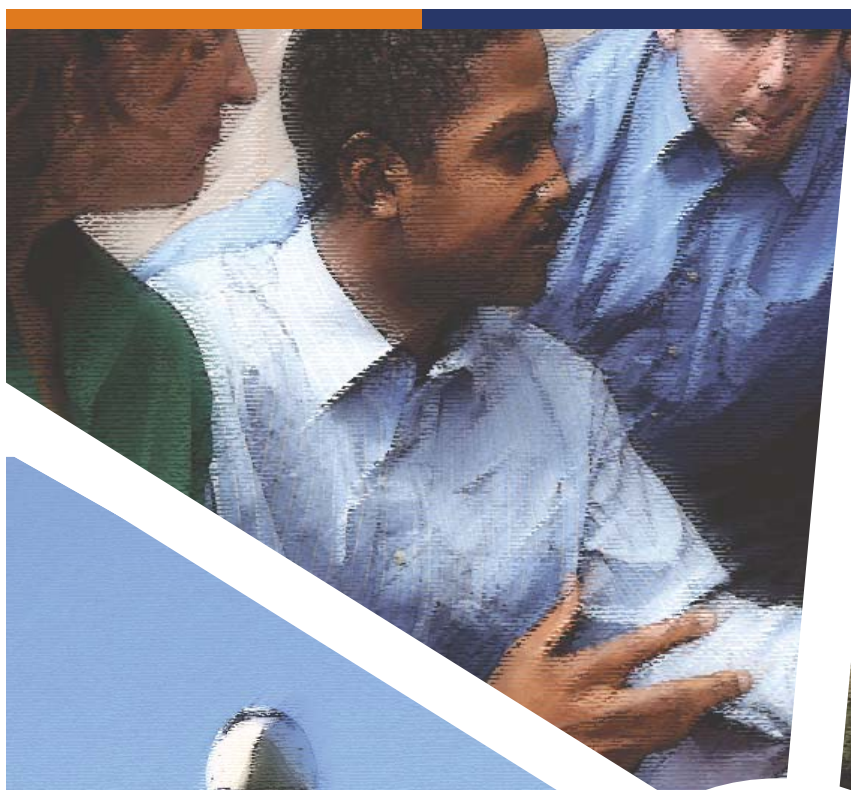


MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

# Guidelines

## FOR STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



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## Acronyms

AASHTO .....	American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
ADA .....	Americans with Disabilities Act
BR REPL .....	Bridge Replacement
BR CPM.....	Bridge Capital Preventative Maintenance
BR CSM.....	Bridge Capital Scheduled Maintenance
CE .....	Categorical Exclusion
CFP .....	Call for Projects
Road CPM.....	Road Capital Preventive Maintenance
CSS .....	Context Sensitive Solutions
EA .....	Environmental Assessment
EIS.....	Environmental Impact Statement
FHWA.....	Federal Highway Administration
ITSOM .....	Integrated Transportation Systems Operations Management
MDOT.....	Michigan Department of Transportation
MPO.....	Metropolitan Planning Organization
NEPA .....	National Environmental Policy Act
NR/IC.....	New Roads/Increased Capacity
RPA.....	Regional Planning Agency
Road R&R.....	Road Rehabilitation and Reconstruction
TSC .....	Transportation Service Center

## Definitions

Facilitator – A person(s) responsible for leading or coordinating the work of a group.

Local Plan – Transportation, Zoning, Master, or Land Use plans created and implemented by a local agency of jurisdiction

Partnership – A relationship between individuals, groups, or entities that is characterized by mutual cooperation and responsibility for the achievement of a specified goal.

Stakeholder – A person, group, or entity that has an investment, share, or interest in an MDOT project, program, or policy.

Customer – An internal or external individual or group who uses or pays for our products and services, or is dependent on MDOT to deliver their products or services.

# I. Introduction

These guidelines will help program and project managers encourage and benefit from stakeholder participation while developing transportation facilities for a community. This guidance specifically describes how to engage stakeholders early, what to expect, and how to get the best possible input on projects.

Stakeholder engagement is a key aspect of practicing Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS). The State Transportation Commission Policy on CSS defines it as:

“...a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach involving stakeholders for the development of a transportation facility that fits its physical setting and preserves scenic, aesthetic, historic, cultural, and environmental resources, while maintaining safety and mobility.”

There are many good reasons to seek stakeholder input including:

- minimizing late changes to projects
- developing partnerships
- better customer service
- timely conflict resolution
- incorporation of multi-modal considerations and
- improved community fit.

Stakeholder input is valuable information that will improve your project.

These ideas are not foreign to MDOT. Our decentralized organizational structure promotes interaction with stakeholders. However, it is important to know when to seek more formal input, how to go about getting it, who to include, and how to follow-up. If you have ever wondered whether you need to have a public hearing with a court recorder for your resurfacing project, relax and take a look at this guidance. It provides some practical choices for you to consider when planning your program or your project. The key is to have a plan, pursue genuine dialogue, keep things moving, and be flexible.

MDOT’s commitment to Integrated Transportation Systems Operations and Management (ITSOM) broadens our efforts to collaborate with stakeholders as we strive to provide seamless movement of people, goods and services across all modes of transportation. The Department’s strategic planning initiatives require the same commitment to stakeholder engagement as we develop partnerships, resolve conflicts and work together to develop a broader range of projects that fit into and serve communities. Appendices D and E present examples of the correlations between ITSOM and CSS. The Metro Region provided these examples of applying the principles of CSS and ITSOM to all of our business processes and work items, not just highway construction projects.

The next section presents key concepts concerning effective stakeholder engagement and will help explain why stakeholder participation results in better decisions, why early and continuous public involvement is so important, when to ask for help, and how to combine good engineering judgment with stakeholder input to find the best solutions to transportation needs.

These guidelines represent collaboration among MDOT staff including planners, engineers, landscape architects and environmental staff. An external stakeholder group also gave helpful advice.

## II. Key Concepts

Several key concepts provide the foundation for effective stakeholder engagement. Better decisions often result when people with diverse interests and areas of expertise collaborate to solve problems. However, collaboration takes time and effort, and the payoff may not be apparent at first. Not all projects will require the same level or style of interaction with stakeholders. Understanding the key concepts described in this section will help you plan for and get the most out of your efforts to provide the best transportation facilities and services to meet the needs of communities.

### ***Effective Decision-making***

Project planning and development requires constant decision-making. For each decision there can be trade-offs and diverse opinions about how to proceed. Project planners weigh the pros and cons internally for their decisions. Is there enough time to get more information? What are the risks of proceeding with plan A vs. plan B? Will I be passing a problem along to someone else and how much will it cost to fix it later? Good project planners learn to diagnose which decisions require more input. They use stakeholder engagement to solve problems and make better decisions.

Effective decision-making recognizes today's realities of developing transportation projects:

- Project managers need to sort out what is most important (needs vs. wants).
- The media are watching.
- Stakeholders have expectations.
- Needs may exceed funds.
- We need partners.

Practicing effective decision-making involves associating technical milestones with related opportunities for stakeholder outreach. It ensures that dialogue with stakeholders affects decisions and integrates public involvement with overall project management.

None of this means that MDOT staff relinquishes control to stakeholders. We, as transportation professionals, are charged with making safe, efficient, useful facilities. Our organization has mission, vision and values statements confirming our role as the providers of "...the highest quality integrated transportation services." Effective decision-making charges us to move beyond deciding and defending to deciding with input.

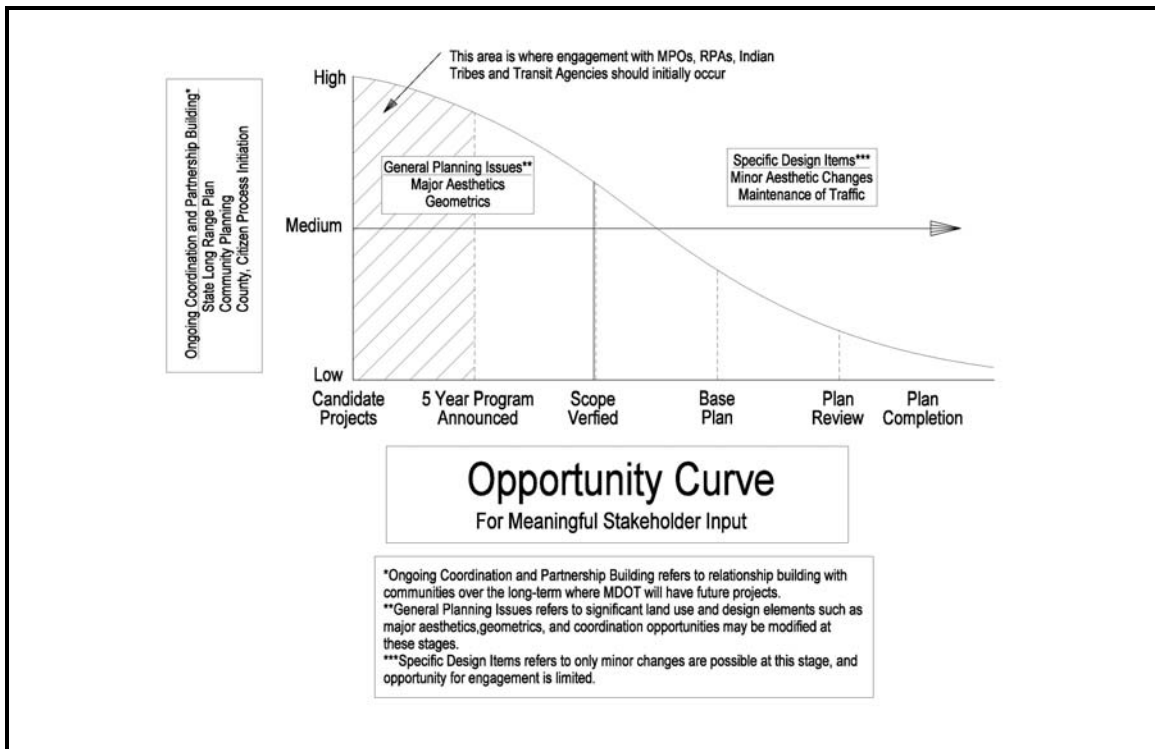
Each project presents opportunities and constraints. Effective decision-making occurs with two-way communication between MDOT and its stakeholders. Dialogue improves understanding on both sides. Neither MDOT nor the stakeholders have limitless resources and we all have regulatory and legal frameworks guiding our activities. It is important to help stakeholders understand our objectives and limitations so they can

provide more informed input. At the same time, it is important to find out what is important to the stakeholders so that genuine dialogue can occur.

Effective decision-making relies on a clearly defined process that is clearly communicated to all stakeholders at the outset. As the owner charged with management and operation of the transportation facility, MDOT is the project sponsor and is responsible for making wise investment decisions that support the overall public good and represent sound engineering judgment. Stakeholders need to know what decisions will be made and by whom and how their input will be used in the decision process. Stakeholders must have a clear understanding of which decisions can incorporate public input and which ones rely solely on engineering expertise and judgment.

### **The Opportunity Curve**

One cornerstone of good stakeholder engagement is to start early and plan for continuous input. Opportunities to make changes diminish as project design nears completion. The Opportunity Curve shown below illustrates the relationship of stakeholder engagement to the life-cycle of a generic project. We recognize that some projects may have shorter or longer life cycles. Aeronautic projects, for example, usually have a very different process for fulfilling federal, state and local requirements, than a typical road or bridge job. This may require adjusting the curve to a different schedule.



The annual Call For Projects (CFP) process provides opportunity for stakeholders to have input at the earliest stages of project development. Many Regions and TSCs have creative ways of seeking input at this stage including listening sessions, legislative briefings, MPO meetings, summit meetings, or more informal contacts. By obtaining



stakeholder input during the conceptual stages of a project, mutual benefits are derived that lead to better results. Project planners can adjust schedules accordingly. For example, one community may have a sewer separation project planned for a trunkline with funding identified for a certain year. An MDOT System or Project Manager could match trunkline improvements with the local project and look for cost-saving partnering to combine activities.

The Opportunity Curve is a clear illustration that can help educate stakeholders about our business process. If stakeholders don't understand our project and program development process, they can't provide their best input. Use the Opportunity Curve to explain to stakeholders that the best time for input is early in the project development process. By the time a project moves past Scope Verification, the budget is set and we have committed hours of design time to refining the concepts identified in Scope Verification. After that point in time, change becomes a more serious exercise in trade-offs – such as shortening a project length in exchange for the cost of having to accommodate more traffic control. When we ask for input before the scope and budget are set, we show stakeholders that we take their concerns seriously. It is also fair to ask them for commitment with dollars, political support or time if they want things added to the scope. Early involvement gives them time to raise the funds, conduct their own public involvement and develop political support.

Table 1, Stakeholder Engagement Opportunities shown on the following page is a companion to the Opportunity Curve. Notice how the opportunities for stakeholder input diminish as project development milestones are reached.

**Table 1**  
**Stakeholder Engagement Opportunities**

<b>CFP Candidate Projects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MDOT identifies transportation needs</li> <li>• Work with MPOs and RPAs to determine their needs and priorities</li> <li>• Identify both local and MDOT project issues that could or will influence the development of the scope, and possible ways to address these issues.</li> <li>• Develop project scope and begin early stakeholder engagement for scope input.</li> <li>• Solicit feedback on proposed projects</li> <li>• Develop partnerships and funding opportunities at a high level</li> <li>• Estimate project costs</li> </ul>
<b>After 5 Year Program Announcement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify stakeholder concerns and strategies to resolve them</li> <li>• Develop a stakeholder engagement plan if needed</li> <li>• Refine project scope</li> <li>• Continue to identify and develop partnerships</li> <li>• Fine tune funding</li> </ul>
<b>Scope Verification</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minor budget and scope modifications only</li> <li>• Finalize funding responsibilities and schedules</li> </ul>
<b>Base Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finalize partnerships and funding commitments</li> <li>• Develop concepts/sketches</li> </ul>
<b>Plan Review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present detailed project solutions</li> <li>• Minor changes possible</li> </ul>
<b>Plan Completion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little or no opportunity for changes</li> </ul>

The duration of a project also affects the window of opportunity for stakeholder engagement. The following table shows the average duration of various types of projects in relation to the Five Year Program and major project milestones.

**Table 2  
Milestone Time-Frames by Project Type\***

<b>Type of Project</b>	<b>Prior To 5 Year Program Announcement</b>	<b>After 5 Year Program Announcement</b>	<b>Scope Verification</b>	<b>Base Plan</b>	<b>Plan Review</b>
<b>NR/IC</b>	6-10 years	3-5 years	2-3 years		
<b>Road R &amp; R</b>	5-7 years	3-5 years	2-3 years	2 years	1 year
<b>Road CPM</b>		1.5 years	1 year	6 months	N/A
<b>BR REPL</b>	5-7 years	3-5 years	2-3 years	2 years	1 year
<b>BR REHAB</b>		3-5 years	2 years	1.5 years	1 year
<b>BR CSM/CPM</b>		1.5 years	1 year	6 months	N/A
<b>Safety</b>	5-7 years	3-5 years	2-3 years	1-2 years	1 year

\* The 0-5 year designation is within the approved 5 Year Program and the 6+ year designation is defined as the years beyond the 5 Year Program.

### ***Design Flexibility***

Projects can accomplish their transportation objectives and still fit within the physical and social context of the community. Where achieving design standards will result in significant impact to the environment or community, the use of a design exception may be appropriate to reduce those impacts. The design exception process is well-documented with guidance and examples on the Design Division's web site. Design exceptions should be considered early in the project development to ensure that design is proceeding with an approved alternative.

### **Benefits**

MDOT can benefit from effective use of design flexibility. At many locations rebuilding roadways or bridges to the highest value of current standards can be costly and have significant impacts to the community and the environment. By being flexible with design standards, we can reduce costs and show consideration for what is important to the host community. Showing consideration has the added benefit of building local trust for the next project. The process of developing and reviewing alternatives may initially require additional time early in the development process, but likely will save redesign and changes to the plans later in the plan development process.

## ***Stakeholder Engagement and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)***

NEPA's emphasis on public involvement and transparent decision-making make it compatible with context sensitive solutions principles. MDOT's NEPA program relies heavily on stakeholder engagement to identify environmental concerns, determine their intensity and plan for avoiding, minimizing and mitigating them. There are three levels of NEPA classification and documentation:

- Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) – Highest level of environmental harm requiring planning to minimize and mitigate for adverse effects (about 5% of projects).
- Categorical Exclusion (CE) – Lowest level of impact (about 90% of projects).
- Environmental Assessment (EA) – Significance of impact is unknown, so further investigation is needed (about 5% of projects).

NEPA requires varying amounts of stakeholder engagement depending on the classification level and the nature of the affected resources. Remember that the environment includes natural, social and cultural components. Other environmental laws may require specific outreach. For example, the historic preservation law requires outreach for all projects adversely affecting historic properties regardless of their NEPA classification. Other areas of environmental study that may require outreach include:

- Environmental justice
- Lakes and streams
- Parks and recreational sites
- Traffic noise
- Social concerns involving relocations or pedestrian/bicycle access

This guidance document primarily focuses on MDOT's most common project type – the CE, with only some discussion of more complex situations which could apply to an EA or EIS. In the case of an EA or EIS, in addition to CSS activities, MDOT follows more formal procedures for stakeholder outreach not completely documented here. Both an EA and an EIS require formal public hearings.

During the NEPA process, those responsible for stakeholder outreach accumulate contact information from various public meetings along the way. Frequently, promises are made to those involved that there will be further opportunities for involvement through post-NEPA CSS efforts tied to design. Keeping these commitments is crucial to building and maintaining public trust. Be sure to include stakeholders who have previously participated in the NEPA process for your project. Stakeholder involvement records are available from the Public Involvement and Hearings Officer, who also can assist with preparing postcard invitations to CSS public meetings. For further information, please

contact the Public Hearings Officer in the Project Planning Division of the Central Office.

## ***Levels of Stakeholder Engagement***

All projects will have some stakeholder engagement, but the level of stakeholder engagement will vary from project to project. Tailor your engagement activities to the characteristics of your project and the expected extent of impacts to the host community. This section provides guidance on the level of stakeholder engagement that would typically occur on projects. Smaller projects such as Capital Preventive Maintenance (CPM) projects may only need engagement activity at the local government level on an informal basis. Larger projects such as an urban bridge reconstruction on a main street may need years of engagement before construction begins and even during construction and into maintenance. Engagement will also vary by geography. For example, engagement for a CPM resurfacing job in Superior Region may differ from one in Metro Region because the stakeholders have different expectations and the project context will differ. (Note: The engagement process should be consistent within each region and TSCs. For example, all CPM fixes in Superior Region should follow very similar levels of engagement activities in relation to this type of proposed work.)

The five levels of engagement are defined below. Table 3, the Stakeholder Engagement Activity Matrix on the following page, correlates these levels of engagement with types of projects based on our primary template categories and the type of community the project will serve (urban, small town or rural). Although engagement levels will differ based on site-specific issues, using the Stakeholder Engagement Activity Matrix will help you plan a reasonable approach for your projects.

The matrix covers a range of project types from Capitol Preventative Maintenance projects to the very extensive New Roads/Increased Capacity project that could take many years to develop and would require extensive coordination and documentation to meet the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements. It is important to note that even a minor project could require significant engagement if it is controversial or is perceived as having significant impact.

## **Levels of Activity**

Engagement activities range from basic communications such as phone calls in a Level I engagement to a formal public hearing in Level V required for major impact projects that require an environmental impact statement. Engagement levels are cumulative, meaning that each successive level necessary for a project includes the activities of the previous level(s) as well. The following information describes the primary purpose for the engagement and also the tools used and types of activities associated with each. There are no prescribed activities. Project managers must determine what methods are most appropriate for each project.

### **Level I**

- Inform and communicate project information/scope/schedule.
- Majority are informal, including emails, phone calls and letters.

- Incidental communication at a meeting.

**Level II**

- Informal project meetings to gain input, share information and coordinate activities.
- Schedule project meetings with select stakeholders.

**Level III**

- Inform/communicate/problem solving/seeking opportunities/schedule.
- MDOT is an invited presenter at scheduled stakeholder meetings (i.e., council/commission/rural task force meetings).
- Special interest groups.

**Level IV**

- Maximum stakeholder engagement to inform, communicate, schedule, incorporate, coordinate and respond to stakeholders' needs/plans/issues.
- Requires multiple activities: media announcements, MDOT hosted open houses and/or presentations, meetings, workshops. May include: fliers, mailers, visualization, and formal documentation of issues and concerns.

**Level V**

- Formal public engagement (i.e., public meetings with visualization, formal public notice, court reporters, advisory councils, and Web sites).

**Table 3  
Stakeholder Engagement Activity Matrix**

Project Type	Activity Level														
	Rural					Small Town					Urban				
	I	II	III	IV	V	I	II	III	IV	V	I	II	III	IV	V
NR/IC				•	?				•	?				•	?
Road Reconstruct, Bridge Replacement, & Safety		•	?					•	?					•	?
Road & Bridge Rehabilitation/Repair		•	?				•	?				•	?		
Road & Bridge CPM	•	?				•	?				•	?			
Bridge CSM, Road & Bridge Routine Maintenance	•	?				•	?				•	?			
BR CPM		•	?				•	?				•	?		
Enhancement Grants			•	?				•	?				•	?	

**Key:** • = Minimum Activity Level Necessary      ? = Possible Activity Level Needed  
*Note: Each Engagement Level is cumulative*

### III. Understanding Your Skills and Interdisciplinary Teams

Am I the right person to perform stakeholder engagement? To answer this question, think about the following:

- The nature of the project and its context. What is the size of the project and expected level of controversy? Where does this project fit within the Stakeholder Engagement Activity Matrix?
- Your own training and experience.

Courses on stakeholder engagement are not likely to be included in the curriculum at an undergraduate engineering school. Like many technical degrees, civil engineering focuses on the expertise it takes to produce a viable design and not on the people skills that come in handy when you have to discuss the technical aspects of your work with non-technical people. However, anyone can improve their skills with training and experience. The first step is to assess your own skills and the second step is to know when to ask for help and from whom.

Some of the skills and abilities that help with stakeholder engagement include:

- Good listening
- Flexibility
- Strong facilitation
- Clear communication
- Conflict resolution
- Openness
- Integrity
- Creativity

These skills can help regardless of the project size; however, they become essential when you start working on a more complex project with multiple stakeholder concerns. In those situations, you need to consider building an interdisciplinary team. The size of the team will depend upon the size and complexity of the project.

To help develop an interdisciplinary team, consider the disciplines that would contribute the most to the project goals. A recent survey of state Departments of Transportation came up with the following list of disciplines important to a core team on a large, complex project, such as a new road or a capacity improvement project requiring an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS):

- Transportation planners
- Highway and traffic engineers
- Environmental and social scientists

- Land use planners
- Cultural resource managers
- Urban designers and architects
- Landscape architects and urban foresters
- Construction and maintenance engineers, and
- Public involvement specialists

Even though most of our work is focused on preservation, we can apply some of the same principles to smaller-scale projects. For example, if you have a reconstruction project planned on a main street in a 10-block rural downtown with sidewalk replacement, a non-motorized facility and landscaping, you can build a small interdisciplinary team with MDOT staff and some external assistance from the community and other state agencies. While it may seem risky to invite someone from the community or a resource agency to join the team, doing so helps boost the team's credibility with the community, provides a communication link to other stakeholders and adds a different perspective.

Appendix B lists the types of expertise available at MDOT and at other agencies for establishing an interdisciplinary team. Appendix C provides information on possible roles and responsibilities for team members.



## IV. Identifying and Working with Stakeholders

A successful CSS process is dependent upon early and continuous stakeholder engagement. Common questions and concerns on how this is to be accomplished include:

- When do you begin the process and who should be contacted?
- How do we establish a clear and consistent process that can be evaluated?
- How do we determine staffing and skill set needs?
- How do you budget the necessary time required without jeopardizing the project schedule?
- How do we fund the process?

The CSS process should begin during the initial planning stages for the project. The Stakeholder Engagement Activity Matrix on page 15 indicates suggested levels of contact with stakeholders. In addition, the matrix gives examples of the types of engagement that may be appropriate at each level.

### ***Identify Stakeholders***

Many different techniques can help identify stakeholders. Your level of effort should depend on who would be affected by the proposed activity and the magnitude of the impact. The more emotional you expect people to be about project impacts, the more time and effort will be required.

If you aren't sure whether or not someone is a stakeholder, refer to the definitions page at the front of this guide. Appendix A has a checklist to help you compile a stakeholder list. The People section of Table 4, Resources and Activity Level Matrix, will also help you to identify stakeholders. Remember to be inclusive. If you always work with the Department of Public Works staff and your project has a park entrance needing re-design, ask your community contacts who to go to in the parks department. It is important to ask known stakeholders at the beginning of the project, whether others might also have a stake in the project, but don't assume that your engineer counterpart in another agency is reaching out to any other stakeholders on your behalf. The invitation to participate should be extended by MDOT staff.

One of the most difficult things to do is to identify stakeholders who are not as obvious. Let your project scope lead the way to getting other MDOT staff experts involved. If you have water body impacts, contact the water quality staff or the Region Resource Specialist who may know the local watershed group. Certain types of communities faced with a reconstruction project will usually want broad-based involvement in project development. For example, projects affecting university or college towns usually encounter high expectations from stakeholders. Small town projects on the main street usually have a high degree of community interest.

Be wary of a stakeholder who claims they represent others. When talking to potential stakeholders try to find out whether or not they have an official role assigned to them from their organization. Do they truly speak for that group? They also need to understand their responsibilities to take information back to their organization. See the section on Building and Keeping Relationships with Stakeholders for more information about the responsibilities of stakeholders.

Be inclusive rather than exclusive. It may feel like asking others to get involved, especially those who you know may not agree with the project, is overwhelming or risky, but your project is better off taking its lumps early than waiting for controversy to erupt later. Also, it may be necessary to host separate meetings to address individual issues of interest.

How do you know you've got everyone? Ask the stakeholders you've already identified and ask other MDOT experts. Keep asking as the project design evolves. New issues may require new stakeholders.

### ***Plan Engagement Activities***

Effective stakeholder engagement takes advanced planning to ensure we obtain the appropriate input to our program and projects. The amount of effort required to plan engagement activities will vary significantly depending upon the level of engagement needed for your project. Typically Level I and II engagement activities do not take detailed planning and are generally brief sessions with specific individuals. Level III-V engagement activities require more detailed planning. In these cases, allow adequate time to ensure the highest potential for a successful meeting or other event. For large meetings or events, you will need to:

- Determine meeting location
- Plan the agenda
- Invite stakeholders
- Determine facilitation needs
- Identify desired/expected outcomes
- Identify methods for receiving input

### ***Select convenient locations, dates and times***

When planning a meeting with stakeholders, determine the requirements before selecting the meeting location. Consider these factors when selecting a location:

- Meeting format — Facility requirements will depend on whether the meeting will use an open house format, round table discussion, or presentation with a speaker/podium format.
- Appropriate days/times for activities — Consider stakeholder schedule constraints such as work schedules, night driving restrictions or public transit run times. To determine the best date and time for the engagement activity, consider the ability

of the stakeholders to attend. Often multiple meetings or events are needed to accommodate work schedules.

- Facility requirements — Meeting facilities must be accessible according to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards and should meet the needs of all stakeholders. Does the facility need to be close to transit facilities? Will the activity require computer, network or internet connections? How many people will attend? Will you need special accommodations? Will you need translators? Will others provide a meeting facility or do you need to reserve an off-site location?

### ***Plan the Agenda***

Understand what you are trying to achieve when planning the agenda. The section on Building and Keeping Relationships with Stakeholders includes tips for creating a productive meeting environment and encouraging stakeholder participation. One way to build trust with stakeholders is to share a draft agenda with them. Allow them to have input into the agenda topics. The agenda may differ based on where you are in the project. Other factors influencing agenda development may be:

- The level of controversy.
- Your desire to solicit partnerships.
- The level of experience stakeholders have in working with MDOT – plan for more educational materials about our business when working with less experienced stakeholders.
- How much dialogue you wish to generate.
- Project schedule.

### ***Invite Stakeholders***

Your project is competing for attention in a busy world. Sometimes people don't respond at first because they are very busy and your inquiry doesn't give them a sense of their importance in the project development process. Provide opportunities for stakeholders to learn about the project, ask questions, and increase their understanding of the transportation need. This helps you identify issues and concerns that may be critical to the success of the project. If you have key stakeholders, a phone call may pay off more than an ad in the newspaper or a letter. The table in next section provides a menu of ideas for engaging stakeholders effectively based on the expected level of activity.

**Table 4  
Resources and Activity Level Matrix**

Tools	Activity Level				
	I	II	III	IV	V
Banners			•	•	•
Billboards				•	•
Charettes/Workshops				•	•
Construction map	•	•	•	•	•
Corridor study				•	•
E-mail	•	•	•	•	•
Family/Word of Mouth	•	•	•	•	•
Flyers/ Brochures		•	•	•	•
Internet website					•
Letters	•	•	•	•	•
Magazine articles				•	•
Maps	•	•	•	•	•
Newspaper			•	•	•
Phone	•	•	•	•	•
Press releases			•	•	•
Radio			•	•	•
Refreshments				•	•
MDOT/Community Initiated	•	•	•	•	•
Television			•	•	•
Social Media (text messages, internet forums, podcasts, wikis, weblogs)	•	•	•	•	•
Written Invitations				•	•

People	Activity Level				
	I	II	III	IV	V
Advisory councils			•	•	•
Churches	•	•	•	•	•
Citizen groups	•	•	•	•	•
Corridor interest groups				•	•
FHWA staff	•	•	•	•	•
Foundations			•	•	•
Industry leaders		•	•	•	•
Legislators and other government officials	•	•	•	•	•
Local staff and elected officials (mayor, city manager, planner, engineer, etc.)	•	•	•	•	•
Major Employers		•	•	•	•
MDOT staff	•	•	•	•	•
MPOs/RPAs	•	•	•	•	•
Neighbors	•	•	•	•	•
Other local, state and federal agencies	•	•	•	•	•
Permit and coordination managers	•	•	•	•	•
Property owners	•	•	•	•	•
Public Safety Officials	•	•	•	•	•
Rural Task Force		•	•	•	•
School District officials	•	•	•	•	•
Utility Companies	•	•	•	•	•

Activities	Activity Level				
	I	II	III	IV	V
Annual legislative briefings			•	•	•
Church meetings	•	•	•	•	•
Community meetings		•	•	•	•
County meetings		•	•	•	•
Daily Communication	•	•	•	•	•
Design oriented meetings		•	•	•	•
Door-to-Door notification		•	•	•	•
Incident Driven	•	•	•	•	•
Listening session				•	•
Local government meetings		•	•	•	•
Meetings-(large open house meetings; small informal)		•	•	•	•
MPO/RPA meetings		•	•	•	•
Neighborhood meetings	•	•	•	•	•
NEPA process					
Project Meetings		•	•	•	•
Public Meetings - formal and informal		•	•	•	•
Public safety meetings/forums		•	•	•	•
Regular meetings with maintenance agencies	•	•	•	•	•
Rural Task Force meetings		•	•	•	•
Scoping meetings/Van tours	•	•	•	•	•
Small Groups of elected officials	•	•	•	•	•
Speaking engagement			•	•	•
Special events			•	•	•
Special interest group meetings			•	•	•
Studies (ex. Access management)			•	•	•
Summits			•	•	•
Trade shows				•	•
Workshops		•	•	•	•

## ***Building and Keeping Relationships with Stakeholders***

Once stakeholders have been identified, keeping them involved in a meaningful way can be challenging. If you succeed, then expectations will align with project deliverables to lead to a successful outcome. Success rarely means making everyone happy. There may be too many conflicting interests to reach a perfect solution. Consider success in a different way. Your project will be a success if you meet the transportation need while being responsive to stakeholder input.

Here are some ideas for how to create an environment for productive stakeholder input:

### **Attitude is everything**

- Be open to interaction and dialogue, even though you, as a professional, may have more technical knowledge than the stakeholders.
- Come to meetings prepared to participate; complete follow-up items in time for the next meeting.
- Show stakeholders their input is valuable through both your words and your actions.

### **Talk about the structure of the decision-making process**

- Discuss roles and responsibilities of both MDOT staff and stakeholders.
- Explain MDOT's mission and vision to the stakeholders.
- Explain how stakeholder input can affect the decision.
- Tie the proposed project into the Department's goals.
- Remind stakeholders that, ultimately, MDOT is responsible for making the final decision.

### **Discuss the status of the project**

- Explain the project history and the need for action.
- Include opportunities and constraints.
- Explain the objective of the proposed project.
- Share information on scope, budget, project type, schedule, and funding restrictions with stakeholders.
- Consider displaying the Opportunity Curve and anything that helps stakeholders understand the project development process.
- Provide education regarding roads and bridges, understanding trades-off, mixes of fixes, the level of difficulty, and costs involved with alternatives.

### **Ask stakeholders about their expectations**

- Solicit information regarding community values and visions.
- Ask if there are stakeholders missing from the process.
- Seek input on priorities.
- Request copies of adopted community plans (including transportation, non-motorized, transit, and recreation plans) and ordinances.
- Identify multi-modal considerations.
- Gather information regarding community-wide initiatives.

### **Establish communication protocols**

- Ask for the best methods of communication and make sure everyone understands how future communications will occur.
- Ask stakeholders about the best times, locations and formats for meetings.
- Explain the project schedule and key milestones.

Feelings of indifference towards the proposed project and/or negative perceptions of the Department's agenda can all lead to poor stakeholder engagement. Inadequate notification/advertising for project meetings can further aggravate stakeholder apathy towards a project. Therefore it is important to identify at the outset of scoping the majority of stakeholder groups affected by the proposed project. This will help define the number and type(s) of meetings/activities to schedule and the best time of day to schedule them.

Once you have the proper number and times for your engagement meetings/activities for stakeholder groups, how do you facilitate the activities? Keeping a large gathering of stakeholders on track during a meeting is challenging. Strong facilitation skills may be

necessary to make sure the meeting is as productive as possible. Most meeting participants appreciate a strong facilitator who keeps attendees focused on the objective of the meeting, seeks input from all participants and exhibits fairness.

Stakeholders have a responsibility to provide timely and reasonable input into the project development process. Active participation is necessary. Communicate this to them along with the project schedule and milestones so there is a common understanding of each step in the decision-making process. Document decision milestones that serve as “freeze points” that will not be revisited to ensure project schedules are maintained. Don’t just document the decision, document why you made it. Should stakeholders come into the process later, you will have a way to bring them up to speed on what has already been done.

Stakeholders also have a shared responsibility for helping the collaborative development process succeed. Addressing community concerns may require local participation due to legal restrictions, budget concerns or any number of other factors.

All projects will have a range of wants, needs and desires. The team needs to help stakeholders align expectations with time and budget constraints. As your project develops, difficult issues may emerge. Acknowledge their existence and consult with the MDOT team to consider changing your timeframe to address the issues. Remaining flexible in the face of controversy may build credibility and result in a better project. It is difficult to teach anyone how to know when to delay vs. keep to the schedule. This comes with experience and input from the interdisciplinary team.

## ***Delivery and Implementation***

As you progress to project delivery and implementation it is important to remember that stakeholder engagement does not end at the conclusion of the design phase. Engagement during construction is just as important and can greatly impact the success or failure of your previous engagement activities. At this stage, stakeholder engagement takes on a more communication and informational form, aimed at the public and facility users, rather than the collaborative interaction of previous stages. Few, if any design changes are possible at this stage in the project. Typical engagement activities at this stage include such items as:

- Informational meetings on construction activities and schedule.
- Maintenance of traffic during construction activities and coordination with local agencies.
- Anticipated business interruption and access plans.
- Access for pedestrians, non-motorized vehicles and transit vehicles.

Coordination with public and private utility companies, transit agencies, and municipalities is very important at this stage in order to minimize potential conflicts between coinciding construction or maintenance activities and public events. Letting the public know where and when MDOT will be working in their community can greatly improve public relations and build trust on future projects.

With any project, field changes and schedule delays can occur for a variety of reasons. Communicating these occurrences to the stakeholders is very important to maintain credibility. When a field change is necessary, make sure that the change or changes are communicated clearly to the project design team before they are constructed. Failure to do so could result in compromising design intent and/or commitments that have been made to the stakeholders. Once these changes are clear to the design team, explain them clearly to the stakeholders so there are no surprises. This is equally true of schedule adjustments and delays. Problems due to weather conditions, site conditions, accidents, material shipments, etc. are normal occurrences and most stakeholders will understand the need for changes if they are informed of the reason. They will be less tolerant if they are kept out of the communication loop.

### ***Follow-up***

In order to maximize a positive stakeholder engagement effort, it is critical to follow-up with stakeholders throughout the project process. Typically this involves three situations:

- Questions asked and/or information requests during the project
- At critical decision points that impact the project schedule
- After project construction

#### Questions Asked and/or Information Requests During The Project

Inevitably at some point during stakeholder engagement you will either ask (or be asked) a question, or receive a request for information that you or the stakeholder do not have the immediate ability to answer or provide. At such times, the typical response may be, “I’m sorry we do not have that information or cannot answer that question right now. We will be happy to get back with you on that.” While this is an acceptable response, MDOT has a responsibility to make sure that this follow-up takes place. This is still valid if MDOT is asking the questions or requesting the information. In either case you need to cover three key points:

1. *Make sure that the information requested, or the question asked, is clearly understood by both parties.*

For example, MDOT may need to briefly meet a stakeholder after a presentation to obtain contact information to answer their question or send requested information. A considerable amount of time may have passed during the presentation before they can speak to the stakeholder. In this time the meaning of the question or information request might have been lost or misunderstood. Make sure to restate the question or request so both parties understand clearly.

2. *Make sure that the timetable for receiving the information is agreed to by both parties.*

It is just as important to not only agree on what is requested, but to agree on when a response can be expected. Expectations on response time will vary greatly by



individuals. For example, one stakeholder may be fine with an answer in a week to ten days, while another will think this is being evasive or non-responsive. Verify that the time for a response is acceptable to both parties, before concluding your engagement with the stakeholder. If a response will take time to prepare, explain why.

3. *Make sure that information was actually received and both parties understood responses.*

Stakeholders or MDOT may not like the answers received necessarily, but accurate communication of the response is crucial to meaningful engagement. If conducted correctly, it can spark additional questions or requests that may have been missed if the original communication was not two-way, and clearly understood.

#### Critical Decision Points in the Project Schedule

Maintaining the project schedule is a crucial part of any MDOT project. It is imperative that we clearly communicate the critical points in the project schedule where stakeholder input and decisions are needed, in order to progress on time. As previously noted however, there are instances where delay in the project may be warranted if an issue arises that may result in a greater loss of overall project schedule or budget if the issue remains unresolved. Any additional time should be negotiated with the stakeholders. When you are depending upon a stakeholder for information or a decision, follow up and offer assistance to make sure the project stays on schedule.

#### Follow-up after Project Construction

Stakeholder engagement does not end when design or construction end. Stakeholder engagement is an ongoing process of communication and relationship building. At some future time MDOT will be coming back to work in a community again and past experiences will influence initial reactions to new projects. A positive past experience with MDOT may foster an easier atmosphere of cooperation and sharing of ideas and information. Conversely, a negative experience may create barriers to engagement and/or other complications for new projects. Therefore following up with stakeholders after a project is completed, and maintaining positive relationships in a community are critical for success on future projects.

The method for project follow-up can vary greatly based upon the scope and type of project. For a road CPM project, follow-up may be something as simple as a phone call to the municipality of jurisdiction to obtain feedback on the project and what (if any) changes could be implemented to improve the process next time. For a major project, it may be beneficial to host a formal post construction public/stakeholder meeting to obtain this same kind of information.

There are always positive and negative “lessons learned” on every project. Follow-up allows MDOT to evaluate the overall effectiveness of our efforts on a project and apply that knowledge to future projects.

## V. Evaluating Stakeholder Satisfaction

While follow-up during the course of a project focuses primarily on obtaining and disseminating information to and from the stakeholders to answer questions and clarify information, stakeholder evaluation helps determine how effectively the project team addressed questions or issues raised by stakeholders. It allows MDOT to not only determine if we are truly communicating and engaging the stakeholders, but it also provides a mechanism for a change in approach if current efforts are not as effective as desired.

How and what kind of evaluation is best? The answer to this question depends on several factors:

- What level of engagement your project has utilized to date.
- What approach your project utilized (formal, informal or a combination).
- The comfort level of the stakeholder(s).

Higher level engagement activities usually involve more formal feedback, but this is not always the case. Often projects utilize a combination of both formal and informal opportunities for stakeholders to provide comments on the process. This can range for example, from formal presentations with question and answer opportunities, to informal small group discussions or one-on-one direct communication.

The comfort level of the stakeholder is also a factor in how to determine evaluation methods. Some stakeholders may feel uneasy about speaking in front of others in a public forum, and prefer a more one-on-one engagement approach. In addition there are those who prefer to only provide comments in writing or by phone call voice mail. Providing options, when appropriate, is generally the best way to encourage stakeholder feedback. Use of surveys after public meetings, comment forms, Web site comments or blog posting, and phone calls or voice mail are all valid methods for obtaining stakeholder evaluation data. Appendix G provides two examples of feedback evaluation forms for stakeholder meetings.

Once you have obtained the evaluation data from the various methods, how do you gauge the success of your efforts? Using a variety of techniques may help you obtain enough evaluations for data compiling.

Over time, it may be possible to look at this data from several perspectives:

- *Are we asking the right kinds of questions? Do stakeholders understand the questions?*

As we provide tools for stakeholder evaluation we need to look at the types of questions we are asking. Are we getting the types of responses we expect or have the questions been misunderstood in some way? If some participants appear to misunderstand questions, then we should also look at how we are presenting

information and engaging stakeholders to see if we can pinpoint problem areas and make corrections.

- *Do stakeholders seem to prefer one medium (phone, web, written form, etc.) over another?*

In higher level engagement projects, it is likely that you will want to provide a variety of evaluation options for the stakeholders. As data is collected from similar projects over time, it may be possible to statistically determine whether one media option is preferred or better utilized than another. This might help to better define future evaluation efforts.

- *Are we providing adequate access/opportunities for feedback?*

If we are receiving few evaluation responses, there may be a reason. We should make sure we are providing adequate access and opportunities to provide evaluation feedback. If response forms are in an out-of-the-way location at a meeting, we are likely to get few responses. Likewise, if we do not provide stakeholders with easily found websites, phone numbers, etc. we risk losing this evaluation data.

## VI. Conclusion

There is no single way to conduct stakeholder engagement. Each project has its own individual issues and challenges. Focus on identifying the process for engagement that will work best for your project. Be sure to ‘begin at the beginning’ of the project, don’t wait! The Opportunity Curve shows how important it is to have engagement begin from the earliest points of scoping, and before, if you have an established relationship with a community.

Understand your project needs from the beginning. A clear understanding of what expertise you possess and where expertise is lacking can save a great deal of time and effort later if issues arise. Bring in the right team members early in the process, as they will provide expertise and may identify issues that have been overlooked. They can help determine what level of engagement is needed and help to identify additional stakeholders. When necessary, other MDOT personnel can help to facilitate project meetings where a project manager may be perceived as biased.

When engaging stakeholders, be sure to define roles and responsibilities. This is true of MDOT staff, consultants and other stakeholders. If information is needed from a stakeholder, make sure they understand MDOT’s expectations for the project from the beginning. Clear parameters for communication and timetables for responses are critical for successful project management.

Provide clear opportunities and methods for stakeholders to provide feedback. These evaluations provide the benchmark for your future efforts on long term projects and future projects that will occur in the same communities. Correcting errors and revising methods, per evaluation suggestions and comments will help make your next engagement activities more valuable to both MDOT and stakeholders.

# Appendices

## ***Appendix A: Stakeholder Identification Checklist***

Use this checklist to help identify relevant issues to your project. Once you know the issues, then you can develop a stakeholder list to include in your planning and project outreach.

### **Maintaining Traffic Questions**

- Who is using the facility?
  - Commuters
  - Transit Operators
  - Trucks
  - Cyclists
  - Pedestrians
  - Emergency services
  - Through traffic
  - Local traffic
  - Tourists
- Are there local shift changes at factories that would have significant short term impacts?
- What time of year will project be under construction and how long will construction take?
- Are there any festivals or special events?
- Will we be using a detour or closing a road/ramp?
- Will access be maintained to residences and businesses?
- Will overweight, over-length restrictions be needed?

### **Enhancement**

- Is there an opportunity to partner on local grants?

### **Real Estate**

- Are we taking any right of way?
- Will we be displacing businesses or residences?

### **Internal**

- Is a Lansing specialist involved such as:
  - Temporary signals – Traffic and Safety
  - Bridge Management
  - Hydrology
  - Landscape architect
  - Archaeologist
  - Biologists
  - Railroad coordination
  - Public Involvement and Hearings Officer

### **Time**

- How much time do we have to develop the plans?

### **Traffic Operations**

- Are we changing existing traffic patterns?
- Are there any controversial issues (signal/crash concerns)?
- Will snow removal routes or procedures be impacted?

### **Emergency Services**

- What emergency services will be impacted?

### **Schools**

- Are there schools nearby – elementary, middle, high school or university?
- Will the normal bus schedule be impacted?
- Is there an opportunity to use Safe Routes to School monies?

### **Direct Neighborhood Impacts**

- Who are the adjacent property owners?
- Will mail delivery be impacted?
- Will garbage collection be impacted?
- Will churches be affected?
- Is there a public recreational area nearby?
- Will parking be impacted?
- Will you be increasing capacity and potentially increasing noise?
- Will you be removing vegetation?
- Do any residents have special needs?

### **Other**

- What advocacy groups want a voice in transportation decisions?
- Do any individuals have a special interest in the area?
- Are there future development impacts in the project area?
- Are there individuals or groups that have been involved in other MDOT projects that should be encouraged to participate?
- Is this a Heritage Route?

### **Pedestrian/Non-motorized**

- Will sidewalks/shoulders be closed?
- Will the project affect non-motorized users?
- What are the non-motorized needs?
- Is there an adopted non-motorized plan?
- Are there facilities for elderly/handicapped people nearby?

### **Politics**

- What legislators should be contacted?

### **MDOT approvals**

- Does the project require design exceptions?
- Is this an FHWA oversight project?

### **Other Modes of Transportation**

- Is there a transit service along the route?
- Is there an opportunity to improve transit connections?
- Is there an opportunity from performance improvement (ex. on time, geometrics)?

### **Environmental (1775 form)**

- What type of land use surrounds the facility and will your project potentially lead to changes?
- Are we in a coastal area?
- Is there a known or suspected contaminated site within the project limits?
- From whom will we need permits to complete this project?
- Does the project impact water quality – drainage, streams, wetlands, watershed groups?
- What kind of environmental clearance will this require?
- Potential historic neighborhoods or resources?
- Are there visual quality impacts?
- Are there vegetation impacts?
- What wildlife groups are there locally? Ducks/Bucks Unlimited?
- Are there environmental justice populations and do they have an organization representing them?
- Will the project increase capacity leading to air/noise problems?
- Are there parks/recreational areas?
- Is this a non-attainment area?
- Are there environmental groups interested in air quality, green space, water quality?
- Does the project affect municipal facilities?

### **Local Agencies or Civic Groups**

- Will there be any other local work in the project area such as city infrastructure, county pavement resurfacing where coordination is necessary or partner would be beneficial?
- What public agencies have jurisdiction along the facility?
- Is there an Arts Council?
- What is the community vision, long range plan or master plan?
- What MPOs are involved?
- Are there neighborhood planning groups?
- Is there a garden club?

### **Businesses**

- Does the project go through a downtown or commercial area?
- Will the businesses be directly affected by the project?
- Who are the adjacent businesses and how will they be affected?
- Who are the major employers?



- Is there a local Chamber, Downtown Development Authority or Business Association?
- Are there local zoning issues?
- Is there downtown revitalization activity?
- Will parking be affected?

## ***Appendix B: Interdisciplinary Team Experts List***

### **MDOT In-House expertise:**

Engineer of Design for Design Exceptions  
Pavement Engineers  
Work Zone Safety  
Utilities Engineers  
Right of Way – Permit Engineers, Real Estate staff  
Construction Engineers and Technicians  
Maintenance  
Soil Engineers  
Landscape Architects  
Transportation Planners  
Governmental Affairs  
Communication Representatives  
Soil Erosion  
Non-Motorized Planners  
Mapping and Graphics  
Economic Development/Enhancement  
Agreements  
Finance  
Multi-Modal (Aeronautics, Transit, Railroad, Freight, Ports, Boats)  
Attorney General/Risk Management  
Elderly Mobility/ADA Expert  
Geo-Technical for foundations  
Archaeologists  
Historians  
Bridge  
Region Resource Specialist  
Hydraulics  
County Drains  
Wetlands  
Water Quality  
Endangered Species Plant/Animal  
Traffic and Safety (Signs, Signals, Geometrics, Guardrail, Pavement Marking)  
Farmland Preservation

### **External expertise:**

FHWA  
Statewide and Local Non-Motorized Groups  
Consultants with expertise in just about anything  
State Police and Local Police  
Fire Department/Hospital/Other Emergency Services  
Michigan Department of Environmental Quality  
Michigan Department of Natural Resources  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
State Historic Preservation Office  
Non-profit interest groups

## ***Appendix C: Possible Roles and Responsibilities for Interdisciplinary Team Members***

*Facilitator* (May be the Project Manager, Transportation Planner, Public Hearings Officer or another person with facilitation skills)

Provide direction or complete:

- Stakeholder identification
- Oversee scheduling of activities
- Determine level of engagement
- Determine format(s)
- Oversee advertising
- Maintain focus of activities, meeting objectives
- Develop documentation/next steps needed
- Oversee evaluation and follow-up.
- Conflict resolution
- Determine who attends activities from MDOT
- Determine meeting materials
- Delegate prep tasks, meeting roles, and follow-up responsibilities

### ***Administrative Support***

Facility prep

Activity scheduling

Logistics

- Costs
- Agendas
- Meeting materials
- Food
- Office supplies
- Handouts
- Sign-in sheets
- Comment sheets
- Registration

Documentation

- Issues
- Minutes
- Action items
- Distribution

ADA Compliance

- Interpreters
- Building accessibility
- Multi-modal accessibility

### *Communications Specialist*

- Press release
- Advertise/promote meetings
- Recommend communication techniques
- Spokesperson
- Audience Response System (anonymous electronic voting)

### *Technical Specialist*

- Transportation Expertise/Knowledge
- Planning
- Engineering
- Graphics
- Visual Quality/Aesthetics
- Environmental Specialists
- Safety/Mobility/Operations
- Computer Modeling
- Traffic Analysis/Capacity Issues
- AASHTO Guidelines and Standards
- Federal Regulations/State
- Program Knowledge (Funding)
- Pedestrian/Non-Motorized
- Other modes as needed

### *Project Manager* (May or may not be Facilitator)

- Establish project timeline
- Provides information on scope, budget, funding history, construction
- Resource for selecting stakeholders and experts
- Provides displays/visuals/plans
- Go-to-person for facilitator
- Balancing staff workloads
- Incorporates input into project (implementation)
- Follow through
- Attends meeting

## ***Appendix D: Example Application – Creation of a Modal Choice Steering Committee***

The following example applies principles of CSS and ITSOM. It serves to show how proactive stakeholder engagement, and internal and external collaboration, can solicit enhanced program activities and broaden opportunities for support and creative solutions to difficult issues and needs.

MDOT Metro Region, Passenger Transportation and Intermodal Policy Divisions in Lansing cooperatively moved forward with an initiative to integrate modal choice as a greater part of project scoping and project development. This was with the understanding that most highway construction projects throughout the Region should accommodate a variety of user options to help maintain movement of people, goods and services. The intent was to use construction projects as a catalyst to introduce modal opportunities to not only help with traffic mitigation, but to help change user commuting behavior. With the increasing cost of gasoline, the timing and support for enhancing modal choice can not come fast enough.

Commuters and others looking for options to the automobile would benefit from reduced cost of commuting and reduced traffic congestion. In the near term, specific project needs for maintaining traffic during construction could be better met. A long-term benefit may also include continuing modal choice with transit and other non-motorized options. More importantly, this example of a collaborative effort, which includes local transit agencies in Southeast Michigan, the Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT) and Southeast Michigan Area Transit (SMART), offers another means for: 1) coordinated application of programs, technologies, and business processes, and 2) collaboration with public and private partners across modes and jurisdictions to optimize resources and performance.

Initially, this was an effort by Region staff to help address project specific Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) needs during highway construction. The intent was to form a steering committee which included key state and local agency stakeholders as a means to cooperatively address needs and issues. Collaboration is important here, with the added outcome of building trust between agencies and stakeholder groups early in the project process. Working more closely on an on-going basis improves communications, understanding of respective agency challenges, and collective opportunities and potential for more effective problem solving and application of results. With the support of Lansing MDOT leadership, this effort was carried forward to be on-going and completely recognized within the broad framework of MDOT's strategic planning, not just as an individual project effort.

One of the initial tasks, after identifying key MDOT participants between the Region and Lansing offices, was to clearly define the purpose and plan for application. Initial MDOT stakeholders included Metro Region leadership and technical staff, and representation from the Intermodal Policy Division, Bureau of Passenger Transportation, and University

Region. The effort began by drafting a document titled “Modal Choice Opportunities Strategic Plan: Metro Region” (Appendix E). This document served to accomplish several purposes:

- crystallized the purpose and need for the effort;
- established an overall strategy and defined specific methods for implementation;
- established a core MDOT team that immediately bridged across department bureaus;
- provided the framework needed to integrate and align the effort with the Department-wide strategic planning effort, which also allowed for recognition by the Transportation Commission; and finally
- the document provided the tool needed to bring other agency stakeholders into the intended cooperative process.

The document became a fully sanctioned working document with clearly defined intent and benefits.

The Modal Choice Steering Committee used real project initiatives to actively engage other key agency stakeholders. Committee representation included the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG), the Regional Transportation Coordinating Council (RTCC), the Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT), Southeast Michigan Area Transit (SMART), and the Detroit Transit Corporation (DTC). A single point of contact was requested for each agency, with the ability to include technical support as needed within the respective agency for specific meetings. The thinking was to use the Modal Choice Steering Committee to facilitate general discussion among MDOT, SEMCOG, RTCC, DDOT, SMART and the DTC on modal choice opportunities on many fronts.

Engaging the committee to address real and immediate issues was an important factor for reaping the benefits of the newly formed committee and building trusted working relationships. An opportunity presented itself with closure of two Metro Region freeways: I-75 and I-96 as part of the Ambassador Bridge/Gateway Project, a 2-year plus construction project. DDOT and SMART collectively proposed transit mitigation along with temporary park and ride lots to help mitigate construction impacts by maintaining mobility between Detroit and downriver communities. Through continued collaboration, a temporary High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane was also incorporated into the transit solution. To facilitate the effort, sub-committees were formed, targeting special technical support needs and fast tracking for implementation. Other applications of the respective committee have included sharing of information related to the status of other on-going modal transit and passenger rail initiatives, issues, and discussion of alternative solutions.

There are many different venues for collaboration between agencies. The above noted Modal Choice Steering Committee serves to provide an example of active application and use of interdisciplinary teams from these different agencies, and integration of external partners. This principle is also more specifically outlined as part of the ITSOM “Objective 5 – Integrate With External Partners.” As therein, “MDOT should adopt

procedures and practices which promote a high degree of flexible, fluid interaction with our customers.” For reference, strategies and action items are described as part of ITSOM Objective 5, which, again, reflects principles of CSS.

# **Appendix E: Modal Choice Opportunities Strategic Plan—Metro Region**

**Michigan Department of Transportation  
February 26<sup>th</sup> 2007**

## **MODAL CHOICE OPPORTUNITIES STRATEGIC PLAN: METRO REGION**

### **PURPOSE AND NEED**

The purpose of this plan is to identify and implement actions resulting in new or enhanced modal choices<sup>1</sup>. The primary focus will be on actions that assist in mitigating the impact of corridor construction projects, thereby improving mobility, accessibility and safety for all socioeconomic groups in the Region. These actions are intended to provide a long-term benefit to modal choice and development in Southeast Michigan and will be planned and implemented with that long-term benefit in mind.

### **STRATEGY**

MDOT's Metro Region is committed to:

1. Play an active role, both as a leader and in partnership with others, in the proficient study, evaluation, and implementation of new and enhanced modal choices along major corridors and feeder routes. MDOT will partner with transit providers, community advocate groups, regional transportation planners, and local land use planning and economic development agencies to achieve its objectives and will work independently as needed.
2. Correlate modal choice opportunities with construction occurring along major corridors to both mitigate construction impacts and to use construction as an opportunity to create new commuting opportunities and change long-term commuter habits to improve the efficiency of the region's transportation system.

### **METHODS FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

**Method One (MDOT Vision):** *Develop modal choice opportunities consistent with, local governments, SEMCOG's transit vision and the MDOT's mission, vision, and long-range plan.*

- Provide a variety of transportation opportunities

**Method Two (MDOT Five Year Transportation Program):** *Design modal choice opportunities into corridor construction projects contained in MDOT's Five Year Transportation Program.*

- Incrementally fund modal choice opportunities

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<sup>1</sup> Modal choices include many different opportunities such as new/expanded ridesharing,, non-motorized, and transit.



- Reduce traffic congestion and ameliorate transportation system choke points
- Analyze the corridor construction project within the context of an appropriate corridor length, not just the construction project segment
- Use parallel routes to the corridor construction project; avoid having alternative transportation going through construction projects
- Coordinate scheduling of projects, both state/local and enhancements, while mitigation efforts are being implemented

**Method Three (Long-Term Duration):** *Seek modal choice opportunities that will continue long beyond the life of the corridor construction project.*

- Incorporate plans for alternate modes related to construction project areas and corridors
- Integrate modal choice into individual projects and include a follow up evaluation of the project for improved process changes

**Method Four (Land Use Compatibility):** *Encourage land use patterns that reduce the demand on the transportation system and can be readily served by a mix of transportation modes.*

- Encourage transit-oriented development and identify communities with long-range/comprehensive plans currently accommodating transit/multi-modal opportunities
- Develop transit centers and encourage improvement of existing transit centers to include a variety of commerce for the convenience of transit riders of all demographics
- Work with major employers, developers, and land use planning agencies to create a short and long-term vision for land use development, including mixed use developments that can be derived from and supported by new and enhanced regional transit
- Educate and encourage communities to adopt access management guidelines

**Method Five (Coordination):** *Coordinate with all agencies having the potential to contribute to mitigating the impact of corridor construction projects.*

- Maintain and build partnerships with public and private transit and intercity service providers, the RTCC, community and transit advocacy groups, the Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce, county planning and economic development agencies, and other related entities in the process of evaluating and implementing modal choice opportunities in major transportation corridors
- Encourage strong local support for the corridor construction project mitigation measures and supplement it with state support
- Assure that advanced planning and direct investment are integral components of modal choice opportunities during corridor construction projects
- Establish an advisory committee to help build the modal choice initiative and lend support

**Method Six (Ridesharing Facilities Development):** Update MDOT's vision/approach for locating and developing park-n-ride and non-motorized facilities to better integrate

these facilities with development of new and enhanced public and private transit opportunities. Identify ways to increase funding and additional funding sources.

- Develop selected transit stops
- Designate underutilized parking areas such as fringes of shopping centers and church parking lots as park-and-ride facilities
- Develop/expand new and existing carpool facilities
- Develop carpool facilities that support transit
- Focus on improving operations to maximize the functions and capacity of modal choice upgrades

**Method Seven (Technology Development):** *Employ the latest technologies in mitigating the impact of corridor construction projects and appealing to transit riders.*

- Use such technologies as signal preemption, real time delay updates, and GPS as appropriate
- Research implementation of wireless internet access, non-motorized inclusion, and ideas for making transit more appealing and attractive throughout the region

**Method Eight (Public Awareness):** *Ensure that the traveling public is well aware of highway construction projects and the available alternative transportation routes and modes.*

- Educate the general public regarding the highway construction project
- Start the alternative transportation development and promotion well in advance of the construction project; have the alternative system in place and operating prior to the highway construction project
- Involve the major employers by making them aware of the highway construction project, encouraging them to have their employees use alternate routes and transportation modes, and obtaining the home zip code of their employees
- Encourage employee incentives within corporations for those who commute

**Method Nine (Research):** *Examine the needs/steps of construction traffic mitigation through transit implementation, including plans which both succeeded and failed, and analyze the economic development potential of modal choices.*

- Investigate federal aid opportunities for both research and development
- Analyze case studies involving modal choice implementation and quality of life/economic development
- Identify corridors with modal choice potential regardless of impact from major corridor construction
- Collect and present O-D data and develop maps of regions to easily identify corridors with strong traffic flow connections
- Revisit/capture information from earlier studies to build on previous work rather than repeat it
- Identify economically depressed areas with high transit usage for potential transit upgrades

## **CONCLUSION**

The goal of this strategic plan is to maximize modal choice investment opportunities as part of the process of mitigating the impact of corridor construction projects. This includes making investments that provide leverage, remove barriers, realize opportunities, and improve integration for multiple components of the transportation system. Use of the methods described in this document will become standard in MDOT's planning, design, and construction practices.

## **Appendix F: Example Stakeholder Engagement Plans**

### **Example Plan 1 Road Reconstruction/Bridge Replacement Projects Levels I-IV**

	<b>Pre-5 Year Program (5-7)</b>	<b>Year 4-5 Project Manager Not Assigned</b>	<b>Year 1-4 Project Manager Assigned</b>
Who?	Region Planners or System Managers /ARE	TSC Managers or System Managers	Project Manager or TSC Manager

**Year 4-5 / 5 Year Program Approved** – Begin discussions with impacted local community(s), neighborhood groups, businesses. Hold initial project related public meetings. . Identify CSS/CSD needs/wants with these stakeholders. Consider local plans (master plans, N/M plans, infrastructure plans, such as sewer/water/utilities/transportation, etc.) that can be incorporated with project. Determine items to incorporate with the project, identify funding responsibilities and potential sources (local funds, Enhancements grants, etc.). Finalize project scope.

**Year 1-4 Design Phase:** - Finalize agreements for items beyond MDOT cost. Hold public meetings to review project scope, purpose, and limitations; consider additional CSS issues identified by the public.

Request input/public meeting from Stakeholders and public regarding design issues, such as:

- Streetscaping and aesthetic treatments (especially for walls and bridges)
- Safety issues: decal lanes, turning lanes, signalization changes, etc.
- Access management/Access roads, driveway closure, shared access.
- Pedestrian issues (sidewalks, N/M paths, ADA crosswalks, pedestrian signals, etc.)
- Project staging/duration
- Maintaining traffic during construction
- Business access (customers and deliveries) during construction

**Construction Year:** - Hold follow-up meeting or other agreed to format to notify participants of the outcome and decisions, and reasons. Notify Stakeholders, media, and public of final project design, schedule and costs.

**When you have a Level IV with controversy:**

**Facilitation**

- 1 Primary facilitation method – by Region staff
  - a. Development engineer or TSC manager from other TSCs.
  - b. Region Associates or Region Planner (stakeholder engagement expert)
- 2 Secondary facilitation method – call in a more neutral party
  - c. Central Office staff
  - d. Communications or Performance Excellence Division staff
  - e. Consultants (Consider a non-project firm if you need a true neutral)
  - f. Use someone from the Regional Planning Agencies

**Support**

- 1 Administrative – Facility preparation
- 2 Administrative Staff – TSC – Scheduling (when, time, number, logistics)
- 3 Junior Engineer or Technical Staff – documentation, ADA, open meetings
- 4 Communications – advertise, promote, etc.
- 5 Technical (determined by Project Manager notice to staff that have been involved) – experts (geo-tech, historian, drainage), visuals, designers, planners, others

*Example Plan 2*  
**Road and Bridge CSM/ Heavy Maintenance Projects**  
**Level I or less, depending on project scope**

	<b>5 Year Program</b>	<b>Year 3-4 Project Manager Not Assigned</b>	<b>Year 1-3 Project Manager Assigned</b>
Who?	N/A	TSC Managers or System Managers	Project Manager

**5 Year Program** – Request input regarding local trunkline concerns, priorities, coordination/scheduling issues.

**Year 4-5** – Begin discussions with impacted local community(s). Consider local concurrent work planned (such as sewer, water, utilities, transportation, etc. Finalize project scope.

**Year 1-4 Design Phase:** - Finalize agreements for items beyond MDOT cost.

- \* Present proposed projects at annual TSC summits MPO committee meetings/staff, Rural Task Forces, RPAs etc.

Request input from Stakeholders and public regarding design issues, such as:

- Project staging/duration
- Maintaining traffic/pedestrian access during construction
- Business access (customers and deliveries) during construction

**Construction Year:** - Notify stakeholders, media, and public of final project design, schedule and costs.

**Example Plan 3**  
**Road and Bridge Rehabilitation/Repair Projects**  
**Levels I-III.**

	<b>Pre-5 Year Program (5-7)</b>	<b>Year 4-5 Project Manager Not Assigned</b>	<b>Year 1-4 Project Manager Assigned</b>
Who?	Region Planners or System Managers /Assistant Region Engineers	TSC Managers or System Managers	Project Manager

**Pre-5 Year Program** – Present proposed 5 Year Program and needs at Statewide Listening Sessions, MPO committee meetings/staff, Rural Task Forces, RPAs etc. Request input regarding local trunkline concerns, priorities, coordination/scheduling issues.

**Year 4-5 / 5 Year Program Approved**– Begin discussions with impacted local community(s), neighborhood groups, businesses. Consider local plans (master plans, N/M plans, infrastructure plans, such as sewer/water/utilities/transportation, etc.) Identify CSS/CSD needs/wants with these stakeholders. Determine items to incorporate with the project, identify funding responsibilities and potential sources (local funds, Enhancements grants, etc.). Finalize project scope.

**Year 1-4 Design Phase:** - Finalize agreements for items beyond MDOT cost. Hold public meetings to review project scope, purpose, and limitations; consider additional CSS issues identified by the public.

Request input/public meeting from Stakeholders and public regarding design issues, such as:

- Aesthetic treatments, streetscaping, etc.
- Safety issues: decal lanes, turning lanes, signalization changes, etc.
- Access management/Access roads, driveway closure, shared access.
- Pedestrian issues (sidewalks, N/M paths, ADA crosswalks, pedestrian signals, etc.)
- Project staging/duration
- Maintaining traffic during construction
- Business access (customers and deliveries) during construction

**Construction Year:** - Notify stakeholder of the outcome and decisions, and reasons; notify stakeholders, media, and public of final project design, schedule and costs.

**Example Plan 4  
Road and Bridge CPM Projects  
Levels I-II.**

	<b>5 Year Program</b>	<b>Year 3-4 Project Manager Not Assigned</b>	<b>Year 1-3 Project Manager Assigned</b>
Who?	N/A	TSC Managers, System Mangers, or Region Planners	Project Manager

**5 Year Program** – Request input regarding local trunkline concerns, priorities, coordination/scheduling issues.

**Year 4-5** – Begin discussions with impacted local community(s), neighborhood groups and businesses. Consider local concurrent work planned (such as sewer, water, utilities, transportation, etc.) Identify CSS/CSD needs/wants with these stakeholders. Determine items to incorporate with the project, identify funding responsibilities and potential sources (local funds, Enhancements grants, etc.). Finalize project scope.

- Present proposed projects at annual TSC summits MPO committee meetings/staff, Rural Task Forces, RPAs etc.

**Year 1-4 Design Phase:** - Finalize agreements for items beyond MDOT cost.

Request input from Stakeholders and public regarding design issues, such as:

- Pedestrian issues (sidewalks, ADA crosswalks, pedestrian signals, etc.)
- Project staging/duration
- Maintaining traffic during construction
- Business access (customers and deliveries) during construction

**Construction Year:** - Notify stakeholders regarding project changes and reasons; notify stakeholders, media, and public of final project design, schedule and costs.



*Example Plan 5*  
**Shows PPMS Tasks with Stakeholder Engagement**

PPMS tasks are included in CAPS; stakeholder engagement in lower case. This plan was produced for an urban milling and resurfacing project – a very routine activity. Things grew more complicated when the local government wanted to use special assessments to pay their match for an Enhancement project involving a bike path. The region planner who put together the plan with the project manager decided to go from a Level III to a Level IV engagement to address potential controversy. This turned out to be a good decision that kept the project on track.

Early December 2005: Interagency meeting  
Mid December 2005: TE scoping meeting (with local agencies)  
END DECEMBER 2005: BASE PLANS  
Early January 2006: 2nd interagency meeting  
Mid January 2006: Public meeting  
Early February 2006: Preliminary cost estimate developed  
Mid February 2006: Prepare TE application  
APRIL 2006: PRELIMINARY PLANS (GRADE INSPECTION)  
June 2006: Target TE grant approval date  
AUGUST 2006: FINAL PLANS (OEC)  
SEPTEMBER 2006: CONSULTANT PLAN COMPLETION  
OCTOBER 2006: LETTING

The TE scoping meeting with the local agencies was timed to allow base plans to reflect initial TE ideas. The bulk of the public outreach was completed during the gap between base plans and the GI, to allow public input to shape the project and to allow plans to reflect that updated information. We worked with the TE office to get project review scheduled in such a way that we knew what would/would not be approved in time for the consultants to complete final plans. The public meeting was essential since the local agencies were considering special assessments to provide their match.

## **Appendix G: Sample Stakeholder Evaluation Forms**

### **Public Involvement Evaluation**

Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions. Your responses are confidential and will help us improve the quality of future meetings.

#### **Instructions**

Please rate on a scale of 5 to 1, where five is “Strongly Agree” and one is “Strongly Disagree”, please rate the following statements by placing a check mark in the appropriate box. If the statement does not apply to you, please check column marked NA.

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Rating</b>					
	<b>Strongly Agree</b>			<b>Strongly Disagree</b>		
	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>NA</b>
I was comfortable in the meeting room.						
I could see the speaker and hear him/her clearly.						
The meeting was held at a convenient time.						
The meeting location was easy for me to get to.						
The displays were useful and helped me to understand transportation issues.						
The questions I asked were answered completely.						
The information presented was easy to understand.						
I learned how to become involved in the transportation planning process.						
I know who to call to offer suggestions or comments.						
I know how my comments and/or questions will be handled.						
I know where to get information about transportation planning.						
I understand that my comments, suggestions, and concerns are an important part of the process.						
I will attend future public involvement meetings.						
I will suggest to others (friends, relatives, associates) that they attend future meetings.						
This meeting was a good use of my time. The facility was accessible and barrier free.						
All printed materials were made available to everyone in the audience.						

How did you learn about today's meeting?

mailed notice                       Radio Ad                       Newspaper article  
 Television                       Website announcement                       Someone told me  
 e-mail                       other: please specify \_\_\_\_\_

Who do you represent?

General Public                       Citizen advisory group  
 Resident                       Public Official

Additional comments about today's meeting:

Optional:

If you would like someone to follow-up with you, please provide your contact information:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

## Meeting Evaluation

Please rate the following aspects of the meetings by circling a number between 1 and 5.

	Very Good 1	2	Okay 3	4	Needs Improvement 5
<b>Topics Covered</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Presentations</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Facilitators</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Length of Meetings</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Visual Aids</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Handouts</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Facilities</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Meeting met expectations</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Overall worth to you personally</b>	1	2	3	4	5

**What government or agency are you with?**

LOCAL \_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_ FEDERAL \_\_\_ TRIBAL \_\_\_

**What would you recommend that we change about this meeting?**

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**What did you really like about this meeting?**

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**What was the most interesting or useful part of the meeting?**

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**What was the least useful part of the meeting?**

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**If you have further comments, please feel free to write them on the back of this form.**

## ***Appendix H: Troubleshooting Questions and Answers***

**I spent a lot of time identifying stakeholders and working with them over the past two years to develop my project. Now I have someone who says they have been left out? What do I do?**

Bring them up to speed on what has happened prior to their arrival by providing meeting minutes or other documentation showing what has been accomplished. You may need to take some extra time to talk to them about MDOT business processes, what items are somewhat negotiable and which ones have been decided. You might also consider recruiting someone else from the stakeholder group to help them get up to speed. Sometimes a testimonial from another participant can help smooth the transition of a new person into the process.

**I sent out a letter notifying stakeholders about a project meeting and no one came? What's next?**

Talk to some of your local contacts in the project area and ask them some questions. For example, was the meeting held at a convenient time and place for stakeholders? Did the letter not have enough information on the content of the meeting to interest people? You can also talk to an MDOT expert such as one of the Region Planners. Show them your letter and ask their opinion on how to get better involvement.

**How do I estimate how much time it will take to do stakeholder engagement?**

Since stakeholder engagement is likely to occur throughout your project timeline, you probably won't have a budget line item dedicated to it. Instead your estimate should accommodate the estimated time within each PPMS task. See Example Plan 5 in Appendix F for some PPMS tasks that include stakeholder engagement.

**I've got a new mayor in office and she doesn't like what we are doing. We've been meeting for over a year and are pretty far along with design. How do I keep this project moving?**

Changes in local government officials and personnel present constant challenges. If you have stakeholders who have invested time and resources in the current plan, urge them to contact the newly elected official to advocate for the process that has been underway. Provide the new official with the project history and explain the costs of making changes at this late date. If they still want to influence the direction of the project, then look for ways to compromise, especially if they put up the funding to make it happen.

**How do I get the stakeholders to talk? We've been meeting and I get lots of nods and smiles, but little input.**

Do you have people together who will never speak their minds in front of each other? Perhaps they see each other as competing for resources regionally and are reluctant to give others any information about their plans. This situation can take strong facilitation to overcome. Consider a strategy such as calling key stakeholders and discussing meeting expectations. If there is a good working relationship, ask why people aren't talking. There are also techniques you can use within a meeting to solicit more input. MDOT experts like the Region Planners or the Public Hearings Officer might be able to provide ideas.

**Other possible questions:**

**How do I handle stakeholders who say they will do something, and then don't follow through?**

The first step is to speak directly to the stakeholder and ask about the status of the follow up item. Find out why they are having difficulty completing the task and offer to help them address the situation. For example, if the problem is conveying information to another group, then offer to speak directly to the group. If the stakeholder is unable to accomplish a task that is essential to moving forward, then talk to the stakeholder about alternative ways to get the task done. If you find that someone appears to be blocking your progress, turn to a trusted member of the community to assist in getting the process back on track.

**What happens if my stakeholders can't agree on how to proceed?**

There are times when stakeholders will not agree. You may not need to get everyone to agree. Consider both who is involved and the nature of the issue. Does the community need to provide funding for the project? Then, you probably need to seek agreement with city leaders. How important is the issue to the opposition? Are there compromises and if so, what are the costs? Offer to have stakeholders kick in the extra costs. Practice interest-based problem solving. Find out what the interests are behind the positions. Perhaps you can satisfy an interest in another way. The tendency is to jump to solutions without considering alternatives that might also work. If you treat people fairly, then despite disagreement, they may chose to stand aside and let the process continue.