

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

LAP

How long is 'public involvement' good for?

There are no hard and fast rules regarding public involvement and how long it's good for - each project is different. If there have been significant project changes it's best to go back and revisit it with the public.

If it's mostly just funding delays and the limits or scope of the project has not had significant changes then it may not be as important to hold another meeting, but significant delays (many years) could result in new residents or businesses along the route.

Use your best judgement!

FHWA Policy

Public involvement and a systematic interdisciplinary approach are essential parts of the development process for proposed actions.

23 CFR § 771.105(c)

Public involvement happens on many levels and at many stages in the life of a project – it should happen early and often. Engaging the public is an important part of the NEPA process and should always be documented, whether a written or verbal response, they should be noted and included in the project folder.

Consulting with other agencies, public meetings/hearings, sending mailers or going to the media are all forms of public involvement.

MDOT requires public meeting documentation from local agencies for projects such as road diets or those that have a 4(f) use. Public hearings are required for the completion of an Environmental Assessment.

When public meeting documentation is required a sign in sheet, meeting minutes and any public comments are to be provided by the local agency to MDOT. A public hearing requires a transcript, completed by a certified court reporter, including the questions answer portion of the meeting. Hearings will also include a time period after in which comments may still be received.

The public meeting/hearing must be held in location and at a time of day that is accessible and convenient for the public because a proper public hearing allows for input from all interested parties. Provide a sign in sheet and comment form. For most public meetings, a two week notice should be sufficient.

What a Local Agency Should Provide at a Public Meeting

Just an example of some things to have prepared for the meeting are a sign in sheet, title VI sheets, agenda, proposed plans or title sheets, visual materials such as cross sections and aerials, comment sheets, information on project purpose, cost and funding, etc... If it helps complete the picture, show micro-simulations from the traffic modelling software such as Vissim, Vistro or Synchro, etc... The local agency should

be looking to provide all the information that they can to answer any questions they think public may have as well as give the entire picture so that the public comments are appropriate and relevant to the project.