

6.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

6.1 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

As part of the I-10 Tier 1 study process, public involvement activities are utilized to communicate with the public and local agencies as well as to provide public notification of study activities, meetings and milestones. This notification is accomplished by developing and maintaining a web site, providing advertisements in local newspapers, and holding informal workshops and public meetings.

6.1.1 Internet Access

The Interstate 10 Master Plan web site, www.i-10masterplan.com, was made available 24 hours a day and was updated to incorporate current information such as future meeting opportunities. This project specific public information web site includes information such as the project description, project schedule, meetings, progress reports, contacts for the study team, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) and a feedback form.

6.1.2 Public Meetings

The following public meetings were held to involve the public and interested agencies during the study process and to inform interested parties of the study's current status.

- FCMPO Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC).
- FCMPO TCC.
- FCMPO Board.
- Public Workshops.

A series of presentations to the FCMPO were conducted between March 3, 2004 and March 11, 2004 for members of the CAC, TCC and Board at FDOT District 2's Training Facility. The purpose of the presentations were to present the CMEAs that will be evaluated in the Tier 1 study process and obtain feedback from the members. Additional presentations were made at the MPO office during the Tier 2 phase.

A series of informational Public Workshops were conducted between August 12, 2003 and August 21, 2003 for residents and interested persons who may be directly or indirectly affected by the development of a master plan for the I-10 corridor from the Jefferson / Madison County Line I-295 in Duval County. The workshops were designed to introduce citizens to the master planning process and present the data collected and analyzed with respect to the study corridor. Due to the long length of the corridor four workshops were held to provide the public with opportunities to learn about the project.

A total of 2,261 letters were mailed out to the property owners along the study corridor notifying them of the workshops. One hundred twenty letters were sent directly from the FDOT to local and elected officials within the study area. In addition, legal advertisements were published in eight local newspapers throughout the study corridor for a total of fourteen days.

Each workshop started with an open house from 5:00 to 7:00 pm, followed by a 20-minute presentation, after which comments and questions from the attendees were received. Information regarding the two workshops held within the Segment 3 project limits is provided below.

Thursday, August 14, 2003

Holiday Inn
US 90 @ I-75
Lake City, Florida

Thursday, August 21, 2003

Baker County Middle School
211 East Jonathan Street
Macclenny, Florida

The workshops were held in conjunction with the Public Hearings for the I-10 PD&E Study. The format of the workshop was an informal question and answer setting. The public was provided an opportunity to talk about the project informally with project staff, and to offer their comments, questions, and concerns. There was also an opportunity to provide comment in written form. Following the informal portion of the workshop, a formal presentation about the study was made, and the public was afforded the option to provide their comments or questions. Following the presentation, there was an additional opportunity for additional informal discussion with project staff.

The focus of the workshop was to share the data collected and explain the purpose of the study. Information was provided regarding the corridor information collected and analyzed, including existing and projected traffic volumes and traffic conditions. At each workshop, several exhibit boards illustrating existing and future traffic information for I-10 were displayed.

Another series of five public workshops took place from late March 2004 through mid-April 2004 in each of the five counties within the project study area. These workshops follow the same basic format as for the first round. The second round of workshops focused on the CMEAs identified for further analysis that may be implemented as part of the master plan. Information regarding the three workshops held within the Segment 3 project limits is provided below.

Thursday, April 15, 2004

Baker County Middle
211 East Jonathan Street
Macclenny, Florida

Tuesday, April 20, 2004

Whitehouse Elementary
11160 General Avenue
Jacksonville, Florida

6.1.3 Daily Interaction

The study team was also available to respond to questions from the public on a daily basis. Questions and comments could be provided via the website, e-mail, mail, telephone and fax. Questions provided by the public were considered for inclusion in the FAQ of the website.

6.2 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT RESULTS

Based on the observations of the study team, the citizens who attended the public workshop were appreciative of the opportunity to provide their comments and have their questions answered at this early stage of the project.

The first round of workshops was fairly well attended with an average of 25 citizens per meeting. Many of the citizens expressed their appreciation of the opportunity to provide their comments and learn more about the project. Most citizens were curious about the master planning process and why it was being performed. Several citizens pointed out specific locations that they felt warranted some further consideration with respect to traffic operations, safety, and mobility. These items will be considered by the study team in formulating recommendations. Several citizens requested hard copies of the PowerPoint presentation that was given at the public workshops. Other comments received mainly focus on the interchange geometry, road maintenance, traffic congestion and law enforcement needs.

The second round of workshops was also fairly well attended with 27 citizens attending, as an average per meeting. Generally, the workshop participants were appreciative of the opportunity to provide their comments and have their questions answered at this stage of the project. Most attendees were curious about right-of-way acquisition and drainage issues. A few participants pointed out areas to the study team that warranted further consideration with respect to safety and mobility.

Many attending the third round of public workshops were interested in a particular property and the relation of the road to it, some were interested in improvement features in the interchanges, and others were just generally curious about the project. A few people were interested in development opportunities. Attendance was light to fair, about 12 to 15 people depending upon the meeting.

Details regarding the workshops were documented in the project diary as part of the ongoing public involvement program for the study.

A comment log was also maintained by the study team to document and record formal inquiries regarding the project. To date, there were over a dozen emails sent to the project team, some from the project website. These emails offered various comments and questions to the study team regarding various aspects of the study. All emails were answered, and in a few cases, the Florida DOT was able to address some immediate action items regarding signing and other basic operational aspects.