

**APPENDIX A-1**  
**GUIDANCE FOR THE PUBLIC HEARING HANDOUT**

A public hearing handout should contain sufficient information to provide a clear, understandable explanation of the project. Handouts should be prepared with the understanding that many are distributed prior to the hearing and are read by people who may not attend the hearing.

Contents should include:

1. Date, time and location of hearing, and plan review.
2. Project numbers and description.
3. Length of project.
4. Type of hearing (location, design, location and design).
5. Contact person and location of additional information.
6. Contact person for right of way information and relocation assistance.
7. Statement concerning any special arrangements for conduct of hearing (reserved speaker times, time limits, etc.).
8. Non-discrimination notification statement. (Added 05/31/2002)
9. Procedure for submitting written statements and exhibits for the hearing record.
  - a) For Interstate, Primary, and Arterial projects, all comments oral and written will be returned to the District Administrator. A printed postage paid comment sheet will be provided on all projects.
  - b) For Secondary projects all comments oral and written will be returned to the Resident Engineer. A printed postage paid comment sheet will be provided on all projects.
10. Map or maps as necessary for explaining project.
11. Project history (need for project, consistency with area planning, previous meetings, existing road system and problems, etc.).
12. Description of project, location and design features.
13. Explanation of special construction details (detours, maintenance of traffic, etc.).

14. Description of alternatives studied (not in detail unless viable).
15. If appropriate, a statement that an environmental document has been prepared and is available for review.
16. If appropriate, a summary of environmental impacts and mitigation measures (this may consist of a statement that there are no significant impacts).
17. A statement on flood plain involvement (if involved, try to explain briefly).
18. A statement on number of families, etc., to be displaced.
19. Cost figures and funding responsibilities.
20. Discussion on remaining actions necessary and schedule for right of way acquisition and construction activities.
21. A statement on maintenance responsibilities after completion.
22. A statement that all information, including the transcript, will be available for review and copying and the location where it will be available.
23. If a federal-aid project, explain federal-state relationship.

**Example Statement for Federal-aid Project:**

The Federal Highway Administration must approve the need for the proposed highway improvement, as well as the environmental document, plans, specifications, cost estimates, right of way acquisitions, and construction procedures.

This federal participation in the decision-making process provides an additional check to assure that federal, state, and local goals and objectives are met and that opportunity for public participation is provided. Federal and state regulations require that a wide range of factors and impacts are considered and that the final decisions are made in the best overall public interest.

## **APPENDIX A-2**

### **GUIDANCE FOR TRADITIONAL PUBLIC HEARING PRESENTATION**

A public hearing presentation by VDOT should last no longer than 25 minutes. There are usually three VDOT representatives (moderator, engineer, right of way and utilities) giving presentations. Special presentations may be made when necessary (environmental landscaping, traffic, etc). All presentations should be coordinated to avoid repetition or leaving out necessary data.

While the moderator and right of way and utilities presentations are generally the same format for each hearing, care should be taken to assure that all items are consistent with a particular hearing and project.

The moderator generally covers:

- The call to order and introduction.
- The project description and type of hearing.
- Introduction of local officials (if the officials desire to be introduced).
- Explanations of conduct of the meeting with special care to adjust to specific attendance and speaker registration procedures.
- Statement concerning submission of written comments and preparation of transcription.
- Availability of information (including transcript) in the future.
- Remaining actions prior to final approval of the project.
- Any project related data he/she feels should be a part of the general comments.
- Introduction of speakers including making sure all persons wanting to speak are accommodated (even if they did not pre-register).
- Maintain control of a meeting, including setting time limits if necessary and obtaining clear statements of name, address, and comments regarding the project.
- Closing the meeting.

#### **The Engineering Presentation**

An engineering presentation should contain the same basic engineering information contained in the handout. It should be more general in content because the listeners do not have an opportunity to study maps and digest the information, as they would while reading a booklet. If there will be no special environmental presentation, the engineering should cover the environmental impacts and studies and should indicate availability of the environmental document if a Federal-aid project is being presented (coordination with the environmental section is necessary).

Slides or other special display materials should be used at all public hearings.

### **The Right of Way and Utilities Presentation**

VDOT's Right of Way and Utilities Division in the Central Office keeps current an example of a complete right of way presentation. Each presenter should adjust this presentation to meet his or her own speaking tone and style, as well as adjusting it to meet the requirements of a specific project. A Right of Way and Utilities representative will be available to discuss acquisition and relocation procedures after the formal presentation.

There is a slide presentation available to accompany this speech that should be used at all public hearings.

**APPENDIX A-3**  
**GUIDANCE ON ITEMS TO CHECK WHEN SETTING UP**  
**AND CONDUCTING PUBLIC MEETINGS**

**MAKING THE ARRANGMENTS –**

The District Administrator or his appointed representative is responsible for making all arrangements for and conducting the hearing. Careful thought should be given to the details of any public hearing, from making arrangements for a meeting time and place to final submission of transcripts. Responses to public comments and recommendations on project action should be carefully considered to indicate a willingness to respond to concerned citizenry input.

As a general rule, all public hearings will be held at night. Exceptions to this rule will be considered if there is good reason to believe that a day hearing will best serve the interests of local citizens.

**PROJECT INFORMATION AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW -**

Maps, drawings, and other information must be available for public inspection and copying in appropriate local highway offices, city and county offices, and public libraries as the need may dictate when the hearing advertised (30 days prior to meeting date) or willingness to conduct a hearing is advertised (15 days prior to expiration date). The information shall include a Location, Location and Design, or Design Study Report which will be made available to the public as interest is shown and distributed to all who attend the public hearing. The information for review and copying shall include, among other items, the Environmental Impact Statement (including Section 4(f) statement when applicable) or environmental assessment on all Federal Aid projects.

**MEETING WITH LOCAL CITIZENS BEFORE HEARING -**

On all projects in urban areas or other areas of unusual public interest, at least one meeting should be scheduled before the public hearing to informally review the project with local citizens and answer questions.

The District Administrator should notify all local civic and citizens' associations advising them of scheduled public hearings in their area. The District Administrator or VDOT engineers should arrange to meet with organizations that have a strong interest in the project, at their invitation, to informally discuss the proposed project prior to the scheduled hearing.

**ADDITIONAL/ALTERNATIVE ADVERTISEMENT OF MEETINGS -**

Advantage should be taken of any available opportunity for public service spot announcements on radio and TV just prior to the public hearings. This opportunity should be used to encourage people to attend the hearing who have interest in the traffic service of the road, as well as those who may live adjacent to the project.

## **REGISTRATION -**

OPEN FORUM HEARINGS - Registration cards or sheets, which will provide as a minimum, the person's name, mailing address, will be provided to all who attend a public hearing.

FORMAL HEARINGS - Registration cards or sheets, should include as a minimum, the person's name, mailing address, an area to indicate if a Citizen wishes to speak. These cards should be turned in to the moderator.

## **PUBLIC TESTIMONY –**

OPEN FORUM HEARINGS – A Verbatim Reporter should be available to receive public comment and should be placed in a location easily seen by those attending the meeting. An employee may take verbal comments via a tape recorder if it is deemed to be more physically responsible for small projects. However the recorder should never be left unattended.

FORMAL HEARINGS - Microphones for receiving public testimony should be conveniently placed near the front. Wireless microphones should be available for those individuals who cannot easily get to the speakers microphone. Arrangements should never be in a way that would intimidate the public. Arrangements should also be such that participants from the audience address the hearing officer rather than the audience.

Some ways of avoiding problems are:

- Make your best estimate of expected attendance, then prepare for twice that number (size of facility, number of handouts, number of Department representatives, number and type of displays, length of time needed for plan reviews, type of attendance and speaker registration to be used, etc.).
- Check for other activities scheduled for the same time at or near the facility as they would relate to noise, parking, and crowd control (basketball, baseball, football, bingo, classes, band practice, etc.).
- Make sure that the facility will have air conditioning or heating (whichever is necessary). Some newer buildings have computer systems that cut off systems after normal hours and facility managers are unable (or reluctant) to change the system. Also, check to see if the building must be emptied at a certain time.

- Check with the facility manager prior (one to two days) to any meeting to assure that the necessary people will be available to unlock the building, set up tables and chairs, indicate light switches, etc..
- Check parking area to make sure that all prime spaces are not filled with state vehicles, particularly if spaces close to the entrance are limited.
- Check to see if signs will be necessary to direct the public to the meeting area.
- Check with the representatives to assure they are prepared, that they know what time to arrive, that presentations have been coordinated and practiced, and that all displays and equipment will arrive on time. Representatives should be present from the engineering, environmental, right of way and utilities sections for most projects. Specialists may be requested to participate whenever necessary, and may include highway and traffic safety, transportation planning, landscaping, noise, water quality, bridge, drainage, etc., sections.
- If special displays are to be used, those representatives using them should set them up and review prior to the start of any meeting.
- Set up displays and registration material in as wide an area as is practical to spread the people out, avoiding confusion and a crowded appearance.
- Have pre-addressed comment sheets or envelopes available for submittal of written comments after the meeting.
- If practical, provide handouts, registration material, and displays outside the formal meeting room. This allows conversations with late arrivals without disrupting the meeting.

Assistance may be obtained from the Public Involvement Section of the Location and Design Division. Different registration and hearing formats may be desirable in certain cases and may be discussed with this section. Additional display equipment, directional signs, informational signs, and personnel may be obtained through this section.

**APPENDIX A-4**  
**GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR PLANNING MEETINGS**

**1. PUBLICITY/PROMOTION/NOTIFYING**

- notices - to whom
- letters of invitation
- directions to meeting place
- phone calls
- news releases
- contact with the media
- copies of speeches
- copies of meeting plan
- pictures/photographs
- bulletin boards
- personal contacts

**2. AGENDA AND RESOURCE MATERIALS**

- copies of agenda
- contact people on the agenda
- materials needed (e.g., reprints)
- committee reports
- previous agreement and time commitments

**3. RESPONSIBILITIES BEFORE THE MEETING**

- leadership assignments
- documentation or recording
- assignments
- resource persons
- observers
- "hosting" roles
- making reports
- trying out equipment
- test whether charts and posters are readable
- test electrical outlets
- preview films for timing and content



#### **4. SPACE CHECK**

- size and shape of space room (when, how)
- electrical outlets
- mike outlets
- engineering, where to be reached
- acoustics
- doors, bathrooms, and stairs (handicap accessibility)
- elevators
- heat/cold regulation/ventilation
- parking facilities (number and access)
- registration area/location
- transportation, access to facility (by buses)
- room set up arrangements
- access to meeting
- name of custodian
- telephone access
- exhibit space wall space for displays, etc.
- emotional impact (color, aesthetics)

#### **5. EQUIPMENT FOR MEETING**

- tables (number, size, shape)
- chairs (comfort, number)
- microphones
- audio tape recorder
- audio tape cassettes
- video tape recorder
- video tape cassettes
- extension cords
- overhead projector
- chalkboard, chalk, eraser
- bulletin boards
- projection table (s)
- flannel board
- easels (number)
- slide projector, screen, platform
- camera, film
- transparencies & appropriate pens & grease pencils
- TV and VCR

## **6. MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES FOR THE MEETING**

- name tags
- pamphlets
- small tip felt pens, display materials
- large tip felt pens
- decorations
- masking tape
- posters
- paper clips
- instruction sheets
- pins/thumb tacks
- directional signs (to meeting)
- scissors, stapler, glue
- note pads
- pencils
- visual aids
- plans/mosaic
- renderings/photographs
- copies of study reports
- copies of environmental document

## **7. JUST BEFORE THE MEETING**

- seating arrangements
- extra chairs
- extra tables
- P.A. system checkout
- equipment (easels, screens, etc.)
- materials (paper, pens, etc.)
- ash trays
- thermostat
- opening and closing of windows
- registration set-up
- check that charts, boards, screens can be seen from everywhere
- agendas available
- other materials available: handouts, name tags, tables (number) and audio-visual equipment ready

## **8. AT THE MEETING**

- meeting, greeting, seating of participants and guests
- documentation - recording
- evaluation activity
- handing out materials
- operation of equipment
- process, review, stop sessions, etc.
- announcements

## **9. END OF MEETING AND AFTER**

- hold post meeting debriefing (what everyone gathered from comments from the meeting)
- collect unused materials
- return borrowed equipment
- clean up
- thank helpers
- read and analyze feed-back, prepare feedback and mail follow-up materials to remind people of their commitments (telephone and written)

**APPENDIX A-5**  
Compliance with **Public Hearing**  
(provide supporting documentation if available)

Title  
Proj:  
Federal Proj:  
County:  
UPC:  
Fr:  
To:

Public Notification of Hearing -

1. Public Notice content:
  - a. Date, time, place and type of meeting
  - b. Description of project (iPM)
  - c. Statement of tentative schedules
  - d. Statement of right-of-way relocation and assistance information
  - e. Statement of opportunity for written and oral comment
  - f. Procedure for submitting written statements (10-day comment period)
  - g. Project identification information
  - h. Availability of project material (plans, brochure, and environmental documentation)
  - i. Non-Discrimination notification with working phone number for public inquiries
  
2. Certification of publication in newspapers (usually the invoice):
  - a. 30 days ahead
  - b. Second posting within 15 days of project
  
3. Notification of Local, State and Federal officials:
  - a. Clerk of Court or Town/City Clerk
  - b. Other Local Officials
  - c. FHWA
  - d. Other State Agencies

Public Notification:

- e. Letters to adjacent property owners
- f. Highway signs on termini of project
- g. Posting in local businesses and public facilities
- h. Notification of special interest groups

Data available to Public 30 days prior –

1. Public Hearing plans in:
  - a. Residency
  - b. District
  - c. City or Town
  - d. Central Office
  - e. Public Hearing plans .tiff (post on iPM)
  
2. Environmental
  - a. Copies of environmental document
  - b. Noise Wall information
  
3. Brochure or information to support project
  - a. Title VI
  - b. Project description
  - c. Traffic data
  - d. Environmental data
  - e. Right of way impacts
  - f. Tentative schedule
  - g. Procedures for submission of comments
  - h. Availability of public hearing comments to public

4. Comment Sheet
  - a. Project identification information
  - b. Comment period information
  
5. Plans in place, residency, district, falcon, city, town etc.

Conduct of meeting:

1. Project information:
  - a. Plans
  - b. Brochure
  - c. Comment sheet
  - d. Environmental data
  
2. Court Reporter
  
3. Comment table
  
4. Right of Way
  
5. Environmental
  
6. Residency
  
7. Reception desk
  
8. EEO data

Transcript submission:

1. Cover with hearing and project information
  - a. Project description
  - b. Type of hearing
  - c. Project limits
  - d. UPC code
  
2. Index of content
  - a. Sign in sheets
  - b. Oral comment
  - c. Written comment
  - d. County/Town/City recommendation
  
3. Sign in sheets
  - a. Copies of original
  
4. Local government recommendation
  
5. Cover letter that addresses the citizens' comments, the Residency recommendation and the Districts recommendation.
  
6. One set of prints (half size ok)



**APPENDIX A-6**  
Compliance for **Willingness** to hold a Public Hearing  
(provide supporting documentation if available)

Title  
Proj:  
Federal Proj:  
County:  
UPC:  
Fr:  
To:

Public Notification of Willingness to hold a Public Hearing -

4. Public Notice content:
  - a. Date, type of meeting
  - b. Description of project (iPM)
  - c. Procedure for requesting a hearing
  - d. Project identification information
  - e. Availability of project material (plans and environmental documentation)
  - f. Non-Discrimination notification with working phone number for public inquiries
  
5. Certification of publication in newspapers (usually the invoice):
  - a. 15 days ahead
  - b. Second posting within 7 days of project
  
6. Notification of Local, State and Federal officials:
  - a. Clerk of Court or Town/City Clerk
  - b. Other Local Officials
  - c. FHWA
  - d. Other State Agencies
  
7. Public Notification:
  - a. Letters to adjacent property owners
  - b. Highway signs on termini of project
  - c. Posting in local businesses and public facilities
  - d. Notification of special interest groups
  
8. Data available to Public 15 days prior –
  5. Plans in:
    - a. Residency
    - b. District
    - c. Plans .tiff - posted on iPM
  
  6. Environmental
    - a. Copies of environmental document
    - b. Noise Wall information

**APPENDIX A-7**  
Compliance for **Waiver** for Public Hearing  
(Answer yes or no for items below and provide documentation)

State Project #:  
Federal Project #:  
UPC:  
County:  
Fr:  
To:

1. This project does not require the acquisition of additional right of way:
  - a.  Purchase is required for easements either permanent or temporary beyond the current limits.
  - b.  Additional purchase of right of way is required.
  - c.  Right of way has been donated and transfer is complete.
  
2. This project will not have any unfavorable effect upon abutting real property:
  - a.  Do the adjacent property owner object to the project.
  - b.  Will the changes to the area affect the economic, scenic, or use of the owners property.
  
3. Will the project change the layout or function of connection roads or streets of the facility being improved?
  - a.  Will traffic be detoured during construction.
  - b.  Will neighbors have a different travel pattern after the project is complete.
  - c.  Are streets being closed or opened.
  
4. Does this project have federal funding? 
  - a. If so has an environmental document been completed and public posting of the availability of the document occurred.
  
5. District/Local Government letter of request for waiver approval by: \_\_\_\_\_
  
6. Assistant L&D Engineer letter of recommendation for waiver approval: \_\_\_\_\_