



## **Charleston County Government Public Participation Plan**

### **Overview**

The County manages the public participation process for major transportation and planning projects. These guidelines are utilized in the planning and project development process. They are intended to ensure an opportunity for all parties interested to make comments, ask questions, make suggestions, and participate in the County's transportation and planning projects. Implementation of these guidelines will permit meaningful and direct impact on the decision-making process that occurs during project planning and development processes.

### **Public Participation Plan**

**The following guidelines outline the County's public participation plan:**

- At the beginning of a project, all project stake holders will be identified and will receive notice of the impending project development process;
- Increase the direct notification area to include a wider range of properties surrounding the project area, depending on the size and scope of the project;
- Create a project mailing list database to include other agencies such as the South Carolina Department of Transportation, the Army Corps of Engineers, the Office of Coastal Resource Management, the Federal Highway Administration, local municipalities and utility companies;
- Offer informal public information meetings and hold these meetings at churches, schools, and other public places near the project to permit increased participation by those citizens directly affected by the project;

- Increase advertisement of public meetings through media including community newsletters, radio, TV, flyers, and notification signs in the project area;
- During public information meetings, request that all attendees fill out a sign-in sheet that notes names, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, and relevant demographic information;
- Supplement the project mailing list with the attendee sign-in sheets and notify these people of upcoming meeting;
- Encourage all suggestions, questions, concerns be submitted in writing on a comment sheet at the meeting or submitted electronically to County staff within the public comment time period;
- Staff will make notes on issues during the public meetings so that they can be addressed even if a comment card is not filled out;
- On large, more complicated projects, offer two (or more) public meetings. The initial public meeting will offer information on the project and provide both council members and citizens an opportunity to ask questions and raise issues. The second public meeting gives staff the opportunity to provide responses to questions and issues.

Implementation of these actions may depend on the size and scope of a transportation project. When the project manager is developing the scope of work for the project development phase (engineering), he/she should refine the public involvement process in accordance with the project magnitude. This approach is a project specific public involvement program which can maximize input from all stake holders.

**The County will categorize the types of public involvement required for different transportation project magnitudes as follows:**

1. Minor—Representative projects include turn lane additions, signal installations, and other such roadway improvements. These improvements are typically isolated to one intersection or location, can be constructed primarily in existing right-of-way, and may affect only several adjacent properties with respect to acquisition and/or permissions. The costs of these projects will typically not exceed \$1,000,000. Public participation for these projects will involve direct notification and coordination with any affected adjacent property owner. No public meetings are anticipated for these types of projects.

2. Intermediate—Representative projects include the widening of roadways and new alignment projects that add capacity to a significant portion of the collector/arterial road network and affect multiple property owners. The cost of these projects typically exceeds several million dollars and requires multiple acquisitions and/or permissions. Public participation for these projects will involve all the actions listed above, to include at least one public meeting.
3. Major—The primary difference between intermediate and major projects relates to the cost of the project. A \$10,000,000 project cost threshold defines major projects. Public participation for these projects will involve all the actions listed above to include two or more public meeting(s) before County Council.

All documents for transportation project public meetings will contain the County's nondiscrimination statement. To engage minority, disabled or LEP persons, public notices for transportation projects will also have the following statement in English and Spanish:

"For additional information regarding this project or for persons with disabilities or limited English capability that may require special accommodations or assistance, please contact the Charleston County Government Transportation Department at 843-202-6140."

"Para obtener información adicional sobre este proyecto o para personas discapacitadas o de capacidad limitada en inglés que requieran adaptaciones o asistencia especiales, comuníquese con el Departamento de transporte del gobierno del Condado de Charleston al 843-202-6140."

### **Plan for Language Assistance to Individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)**

Awareness of Limited English Proficiency has grown in recent years and Charleston County Government is committed to providing quality services to all County citizens. Charleston County Government has developed the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) policy to help identify reasonable steps to provide language assistance for LEP citizens as required by Executive Order 13166. An LEP person is one who does not speak English as their primary language and who has limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English.

Strategies listed below are the result of a four-factor analysis performed by the County. Strategies to provide meaningful access to LEP persons to ensure that they can communicate effectively will be achieved by measures including but not limited to:

- Training staff on resources available to the County to communicate with LEP individuals
- Providing notices that LEP individuals can understand so they may engage other communication techniques
- Utilize bilingual personnel to communicate with LEP individuals
- Utilize computer-based communication tools
- Utilize smartphone and portable tablet based interpretation applications on an as-needed basis.