
Public Information

Design Manual

Chapter 9

Traffic Control

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A work zone public information and outreach campaign typically involves several strategies to communicate with road users, the general public, area residences and businesses, and appropriate public entities about a road construction project and the safety and mobility effects of the work zone for the project.

According to FHWA's [Work Zone Public Information and Outreach Strategies](#), effective public information and outreach campaigns generally include the following key steps:

1. Determine the appropriate size and nature of the public information and outreach campaign.
2. Identify resources necessary to support the campaign.
3. Identify partners to assist in developing and implementing the campaign.
4. Identify target audiences for the campaign.
5. Develop the message(s) for the campaign.
6. Determine communication strategies for disseminating the messages to the target audiences.
7. Determine communication timing for the campaign.
8. Evaluate the effectiveness of the campaign.

Communication Strategies

Communication strategies used for public information of work zones include:

- Websites,
- Email alerts,
- Brochures/flyers/newsletters,
- Public meetings
- Paid newspaper, television, and radio advertising,
- Newspaper articles,
- Television and radio traffic news,
- Maps,
- Billboards,
- 511 systems, and/or
- Dynamic message signs.

Stakeholders Meetings

One way to obtain input from affected parties is through a community task force made up of stakeholders from the community who are likely to be impacted by the work zone. Ideally developed during the planning stage of the project, the objective of creating such a task force is to obtain input and review/comment on the development and implementation of construction and transportation management strategies to minimize the impacts the project has on the community. Both the contractors and transportation agencies may meet with the task force(s) to obtain input and recommendations at various stages of the project delivery process, starting during planning and extending through design, construction, and project assessment. An agency may be able to identify campaign partners from a community task force composed of members already highly interested in the project.

While meeting with all stakeholders is important, meeting specifically with local businesses and business organizations is often a very important element of a public information and outreach effort. Businesses

are a conduit for providing project information because they have a vested interest in communicating what they know with customers and suppliers. In addition, these meetings provide businesses the opportunity to suggest ways a project can be managed to minimize any negative effects.

Project Website

Websites are one of the primary tools for disseminating (pre-trip) traveler information. Websites have many advantages over other types of communication methods, with the primary advantage being that they can provide up to the minute information on a 24 hour basis.

The two most common options for the use of a website to provide information about a work zone project are:

- A project may be part of a larger-scale traveler information, such as 511, or
- A website may be dedicated solely to the work zone project.

Dedicated websites can provide both static and real time information, including many of the other forms of project information such as all types of written material, traffic camera images, travel times, photographs, maps, and links to other sources of information. Moreover, many of these features can be made interactive with links to map icons and pop-up textual information and camera views. Project websites are often used for larger projects and often these websites have a web address that incorporates the name of the project. A successful project website can be designed in many different ways, but most importantly, a website must provide accurate and up-to-date information, be easy to locate, and people need to know about it. Better still is up-to-the-minute traffic information provided by traffic sensors or cameras. How often a website is updated will depend on the project, but most large project websites will need to be updated at least weekly.

Regularly updating a project website is just one aspect of providing useful and trustworthy information. A website with out-of-date and/or misleading information will likely have limited success. Additionally, care must be taken with the links provided on a project website. The links must be current and provide credible information. The Highway Construction link on Iowa DOT's [Travel](#) website is an example.

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