

Indian River County MPO Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) 2035 Update

Public Participation Plan Summary Report

Indian River County
Metropolitan Planning Organization



Prepared by:

Clear Light Communications, Inc.



Introduction

The Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is a future "vision" of the community's transportation needs, and is updated approximately every five years. This update process is a Federal requirement and is one of the major transportation planning activities conducted by the MPO.

To complete the LRTP update, staff must project future growth patterns between now and the year 2035; estimate federal, state, and local gas taxes and other available revenues; and develop a network of roads, sidewalks, bike paths, transit routes, and aviation improvements that will be needed to facilitate mobility.

The first task of the 2035 LRTP Update process involves the creation of a project-specific public outreach campaign associated with this major transportation planning effort. This Public Participation Component Plan (PPCP) has been prepared to identify the outreach efforts and techniques that will be used to ensure that officials, agencies, local government, interested parties and the public are provided an opportunity to participate in the planning process for the LRTP update.

The following pages define the specific elements of public outreach associated with the 2035 LRTP. The public involvement plan for the LRTP shall function as a subset of the MPO's adopted LRTP, and will hereby be referred to as the PPCP.





Public Participation Requirements



This plan has been designed to comply with the MPO's adopted Public Involvement Process and with the federal public involvement requirements contained in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), its successor, the Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) and the current Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act - a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU).

These acts mandate early and ongoing public involvement in the development of transportation plans for metropolitan areas. SAFETEA-LU adds safety and security as separate new planning factors that must be considered. SAFETEA-LU requires the MPO to make long range transportation plans available for public review in electronic formats, such as on the worldwide web. The law also requires that public participation efforts be documented in a separate report. Details on how these efforts influenced the development of the LRTP must be included. In addition, SAFETEA-LU also states that visualization techniques must be employed to the maximum extent practicable.

Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1994 US Department of Transportation Order on Environmental Justice require the MPO to identify the needs of low-income and minority populations. Therefore, the public involvement process must have a strategy for engaging minority and low-income populations in transportation decision-making, and it must employ strategies to reduce participation barriers for such groups.



Public Outreach Techniques

This section describes the key components of the PPCP that will be followed in the 2035 LRTP Update to keep local government officials, agencies, the public, and other interested parties informed of the project and to allow them opportunities for input into the project.

The schedule of the outreach activities will follow the key phases of the 2035 LRTP Update to ensure that the public will have ample time to review and consider the technical analysis, and to help determine project priorities.

Public involvement will include the distribution of electronic and printed materials, public service announcements, e-mail correspondence, and presentations and workshops to inform and engage the public. For efficiency, the MPO website will be used as the major conduit for distributing project information to keep stakeholders and the public informed of the progress of the LRTP. While the MPO quarterly newsletter will include detailed information about the project, local media will be used to announce upcoming meetings and workshops, as well as major project accomplishments. Also, the MPO's contacts database will be used to ensure that community stakeholders are informed of the LRTP update and given the opportunity to provide their input. The traditionally underserved community, such as seniors, low income residents, and children, will be informed of the LRTP process through additional means, if needed.

Public Outreach

Public notification of the meetings and workshops will be critical to the success of the public involvement efforts for the LRTP update. Meeting notifications will be made in a timely manner, to provide adequate notice of public meetings and opportunities to provide public comment. These public notifications will include newspaper public notices as well as newspaper articles that are generated by the media outreach. Cable television and public radio will be invited to broadcast public service announcements regarding the LRTP process. The MPO website will post up-to-date information about public meetings, as well as the status of the project.

Various local public organizations, such as the Indian River County Chamber of Commerce, the Sebastian River Area Chamber of Commerce, the Indian River County School Board, and the Senior Resource Association, will be contacted to help spread information about the LRTP process. Input from students, seniors, and businessmen will be solicited. Additional comment cards will be distributed with the assistance of these organizations, in order to obtain feedback from all citizens. Meeting flyers and informational brochures may be produced for distribution around the County. Public libraries, the Community Center, schools, and other public locations will distribute this material for the public. In addition, homeowners associations and neighborhood groups



will be informed of the LRTP process, and they will be asked to help spread the information to their residents.

MPO Newsletter

The MPO regularly publishes the ***MPO*Overview** Newsletter which will be used to disseminate information about the LRTP project and upcoming workshops. This regular newsletter is an excellent tool to make the public more aware of the long range planning process, to invite the public to various meetings/workshops, and to solicit their input in the planning process. The newsletter will be used for LRTP-related public involvement purposes in accordance with procedures outlined in the current MPO Public Involvement Plan.

Media

The local news media will be approached to help disseminate information about the project and the upcoming workshops and meetings. The media outreach will include press releases and public service announcements. A cycle of news releases will immediately precede the significant LRTP process events: 1) the alternatives workshops; 2) the availability of the draft plan and the public meeting; and 3) publication of the final plan.

Listed below are the specific publications, radio, and television stations that will be contacted. This list includes publications targeted to minority and low-income areas.

Newspapers

- Press Journal yesdesk@scripps.com
- Sebastian Sun
- Ft Pierce Tribune
- Palm Beach Post
- Hometown News info@hometownnewsol.com
- Florida Courier news@flcourier.com
- Treasure Coast Business Journal
- Vero Beach 32963 Info@VeroBeach32963.com

Radio Stations

- WSCF 91.9 FM www.wscf.com
- WGYL 93.7 FM <http://thebreeze.fm>
- WGNX 99.7 FM www.997jackfm.com/
- WCZR 101.7 FM www.wzzr.com
- WQOL 103.7 FM www.wqolfm.com/main.html
- WTTB 1490 AM www.wttbam.com
- WJNX 1330 AM www.lagigante1330.com/ (Spanish)
- WQCS 88.9 news@wqcs.org
- WAXE 1370 AM radiorhett@aol.com

**Television Stations**

- WWCI Channel 10: Marcia Littlejohn "TV 10 Talk" marcia@wwciv10.com
- Comcast Cable (PSA's): Louise Cartwright (772) 567-3473 x138

Online Media

- Cultural Council Online Website: info@cultural-council.org
- PlanetVero.com: info@planetvero.com
- VeroBeach.com: info@verobeach.com
- Indian River Magazine Online: www.indianrivermag.com

Public Groups

- Indian River County Chamber of Commerce www.indianriverchamber.com
- Sebastian River Area Chamber of Commerce info@sebastianchamber.com

Using Social Media to Engage the Community

Although newspapers are reaching fewer and fewer citizens, more than 100 million Americans log onto Facebook daily. Consequently, the Internet has now surpassed television as the most viewed media in the United States. Once only a vehicle for reaching younger demographics, social networking has grown in popularity among seniors and baby boomers. In fact, citizens over age 35 are the fastest growing Facebook demographic.

For the LRTP, the MPO will create a "Facebook Group" as an interactive outreach vehicle for engaging citizens interested in the 2035 Plan. The Facebook group page will provide a link to the MPO web page, feature project photos and renderings, will help publicize events, and will be a place where citizens can easily post their input and participate in the process.

The fact that the Indian River MPO is as innovative as to employ social media in its planning process will help generate positive coverage for this project. All news releases and media notices will list the Facebook Page. The group will be moderated, and the public will be invited to post only appropriate comments. The results from Facebook will be evaluated before the use of other social media such as Twitter is considered.



MPO Advisory Committees and Boards

Two advisory committees, the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), currently provide direction and recommendations to the MPO Board. These committees will provide their technical expertise and input at key points during the LRTP planning process. Their participation in the interim reviews will ensure a high degree of public involvement in the LRTP update process. Another advisory committee, the Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BAC), meets on an as-needed basis to advise the MPO regarding bicycle and pedestrian issues. The BAC will also be invited to review interim LRTP plans.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

The principal responsibility of the MPO Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) is to provide technical recommendations to the MPO on transportation matters. The TAC is composed of technically qualified representatives of agencies responsible for the transportation system in the Vero Beach/Sebastian Urbanized Area. The TAC has a total of eighteen voting members. Committee duties include the coordination of transportation planning and programming activities, review of all transportation technical studies and reports, and review of work programs and transportation improvement programs.

Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

The MPO Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) consists of eleven members appointed by the MPO Board and representing a broad cross-section of local residents. The committee is responsible for providing the MPO with citizen input regarding transportation-related matters. The composition of CAC membership corresponds to the MPO Board membership and includes two at-large members representing the disabled and minority communities.

Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BAC)

The Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BAC) is composed of bicycling and pedestrian advocates and enthusiasts. Their major task is the update of the county's bicycle/pedestrian plan. The BAC also provides the MPO with input on enhancement projects and MPO planning activities.

Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board

Pursuant to Florida Statutes 427, the MPO also works with the Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board. This 14-member board represents a traditionally underserved population of elderly individuals, handicapped, veterans, and economically disadvantaged citizens. Through quarterly meetings, the coordinating board helps plan and coordinate transportation services that accommodate this sometimes-overlooked population.



Contacts Database

The MPO's database of names and addresses of social and civic groups, neighborhood and community associations, and interested individuals will be used in the public outreach for this LRTP update project. The electronic list of names will serve as a mailing list for notification of workshops and meetings. Particular efforts will be made to reach members of disadvantaged and minority populations, non-English speaking populations and persons with disabilities, along with the general public.

To supplement the MPO's database, members of the public will be asked if they would like to be included on the LRTP mailing list. On the comment forms (to be dispensed and collected at public meetings) and on the MPO website, there will be an area where mailing and e-mail addresses will be requested

This master list of contacts may also be maintained and categorized by the geographic interest area, affiliation, and issue. With this database, MPO staff and consultants will fine-tune and adjust public outreach techniques, if needed, to ensure diverse representation in the LRTP process. Additionally, local and regional freight providers will be added to the County's database. The database will help ensure that opportunities to participate in the process are provided to a diverse socioeconomic constituency, consistent with federal Title VI and environmental justice provisions.

Public Venues

The MPO meets at locations that are convenient and accessible to the public, including low-income and minority community members. The meetings and public hearings for the LRTP update process will be scheduled at times convenient and accessible to both committee members and the general public alike. Evenings and Saturday meetings may be scheduled to promote greater attendance. Previously scheduled routine meetings may include LRTP issues on their agendas. This will encourage greater participation in the long-range planning process from a larger cross-section of the public, including low-income and minority workers. The venues will be ADA accessible, and accommodations for those with special needs can be provided upon request.

The public hearings will be broadcast on the cable television channel, as feasible. This will allow people who do not have the ability or time to attend LRTP meetings in person to be able to participate remotely through live broadcasts or taped meeting coverage. As part of this taped coverage, a contact number for public input should be displayed. This will encourage citizens to provide their comments, even if they cannot attend the meetings. MPO staff may log in these comments to add to the public record.



Meeting Notices, Flyers and/or Posters

To ensure outreach to minority and low-income people regarding the long-range transportation plan, and to inform these communities of the public hearings and workshops concerning the update of the LRTP, the MPO may distribute flyers and/or posters for display on GoLine buses. Other locations for LRTP distributing meeting notices and posters include the public libraries, senior centers, schools, hospitals, community centers, and cultural centers, such as:

- Indian River County Administrative Building
- Indian River County Health Department
- Indian River County Sheriff's Office
- Police Departments
- Community Centers
- Vero Beach, Sebastian, and Fellsmere City Halls; Orchid Town Hall.

A sample Meeting Notice is attached at the end of the Plan.

References

In accordance with FDOT's Community Impact Assessment (CIA) methodology, the LRTP will incorporate a review of community profiles early in the planning process to ensure plan alternatives address community concerns. **The MPO's Community Profiles Report** will be used. This is an excellent source of information on neighborhoods, demographics, economics, etc. and was developed to complement the FDOT ETDM process.

The FDOT **Sociocultural Effects Evaluation Handbook** will be used as a reference when obtaining feedback from and disseminating information to the community.



Key Issues

For the purposes of developing the 2035 LRTP update, a list of key issues helps to outline the public outreach process. These Indian River County issues include the following:

- Prioritizing long-range transportation improvements in a time of limited budgets
- Coordinating with the County and municipalities on plan updates and visioning
- Encouraging broad community participation
- Expanding participation by 'interested parties' following SAFETEA-LU procedures
- Emphasizing innovative outreach techniques and scenario planning.

Intergovernmental Coordination

The development of the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) will be coordinated with:

- City of Fellsmere
- Town of Orchid
- City of Sebastian
- City of Vero Beach
- Town of Indian River Shores
- Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council
- Florida Department of Transportation
- Vero Beach Municipal Airport
- Sebastian Municipal Airport.

The Treasure Coast Transportation Council (TCTC) is the administrative entity created by interlocal agreement to provide a formal mechanism to coordinate regional transportation planning on the Treasure Coast. Specific duties of the TCTC include creation of a Regional Long Range Transportation Plan, a process for prioritization of regional projects, a regional public involvement process, and measures of effectiveness to assess regional performance.

Feedback from the adjacent MPO's will be recorded by the Indian River County MPO staff and presented as appropriate at the scheduled MPO meetings as part of the ongoing LRTP process.



Regional Coordination

To coordinate LRTP update activities with adjacent jurisdictions, the MPO will send the intermediate LRTP plans to the Brevard, Martin, and St Lucie County MPO's and to the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council (TCRPC) in order to obtain their input and feedback. In addition, the TAC/CAC meetings for reviewing the interim plans will be open to members from these adjacent MPO's. The final end products will also be distributed to the adjacent MPO's for their subsequent review and comments. It is anticipated that these interim and final plans will be routed to the MPO directors, and subsequently distributed to MPO members for their individual review prior to their own MPO meetings.

The Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) was formed to ensure better public participation throughout the Treasure Coast. With representatives from the Indian River, Martin, and St. Lucie MPO's, the RAC will function as a regional TAC/CAC and will provide citizen input on regional transportation activities.

Phases of the LRTP Process

The major steps in the public participation process are matched to the following major milestones in the LRTP development process:

- Alternative Land Use Data Development
- Data Review and Analysis
- Needs Plan Development
- Transportation Alternatives
- Alternatives Testing
- Financial Resource Analysis
- Cost Feasible Plan
- Draft 2035 LRTP
- Adoption.

During each phase, various techniques for outreach and information sharing will be employed. These techniques will include public workshops, focus groups, public hearings, newsletters, website, and public service announcements. A series of meetings with the MPO advisory committees will guide development of the plan. Special interest groups and the general public are welcome to attend these meetings.



SAFETEA-LU encourages that public outreach efforts include appropriate and innovative visual aids to help the public better understand transportation projects. The project team envisions using the following tools to engage the public:

- High quality renderings of projects and proposed projects that can be displayed at public meetings and/or posted on MPO web site and/or included in the MPO Overview newsletters.
- Aerial and other photography, when appropriate.
- The use of handouts, surveys, questionnaires, tracing paper exercises, etc. may be used, when appropriate, to encourage/solicit public feedback.

Controversial Issues

In the event that issues arise that generate public concern or controversy, the MPO will proactively engage the public with targeted outreach efforts designed to provide the public with the best information possible. Many controversial issues are fueled by misinformation and the approach of the MPO will be to proactively publicize the facts. Every effort will be made to allow the public to address their concerns and provide feedback. Tools used to engage the public regarding controversial issues include but are not limited to:

- One-on-one meetings with community leaders, elected officials, and/or civic leaders.
- Outreach meetings with homeowners associations, business groups, and/or civic groups.
- Appropriate targeted outreach efforts which might include creation/distribution of fact sheets, Frequently Asked Questions, and/or letter from the MPO addressing the controversial issue.

If a controversial issue or major project arises that requires a higher degree of public involvement technique, the MPO may choose to expand the scope of this Public Participation Component Plan and direct the project team to provide case-specific techniques that may include, but are not limited to:

- 3-D Renderings
- Video Simulations
- Interactive project web site
- Use of new interactive social media including YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, Digg, Reddit, Ping, etc.
- Additional meetings, visualization workshops, etc.



Implementation

L RTP Public Involvement Schedule

Alternative Land Use Data Development

March 2009 – June 2009

- *Public Land Use Workshop*
- *CAC/TAC/MPO presentation*

Needs Plan Development/ Transportation Alternatives

June 2009 – February 2010

- *CAC/TAC/MPO presentation*
- *Public Alternatives workshops (2)*
- *CAC/TAC/MPO presentation*

Financial Resource Analysis/ Cost Feasible Plan

January 2010 – July 2010

- *CAC/TAC/MPO presentation*

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

July 2009 – May 2010

- *CAC/TAC/MPO presentation*

Draft 2035 LRTP/Adoption

July 2010 – November 2010

- *Public Meeting*
- *MPO Board*

Public Workshops

Four project-specific public meetings will be held during the 2035 LRTP Update process:

- 1 Public Land Use Workshop
- 2 Alternatives Workshops
- 1 Public Meeting

The purpose of the public land use workshop is to obtain feedback to assist in the development of a land use growth alternative for the county. The public land use workshop will include a presentation on the subject issues and topics along with



consensus-building activities.

Two subarea alternatives workshops will be held during the development of transportation alternatives. The focus of the workshops will be the series of transportation model runs in order to achieve consensus on a preferred model run alternative package. Workshop participants will be encouraged to “vote” for their preferred alternative using a series of sticky dots. Each participant will be allocated a certain number of dots (“votes”) to place on their favorite plan. The alternative plan with the most dots will be deemed the consensus choice. Additionally, workshop participants will be encouraged to fill out comment cards detailing their specific issues and concerns.

A public meeting will be held following the preparation of the Draft 2035 LRTP Update. The meeting will be held in a central location within the Indian River County region. The purpose of this meeting will be to present the Draft 2035 LRTP Update and to receive final comments on the draft prior to its adoption by the MPO Board. Again, public comments will be solicited via comment cards and opportunities to speak during the meeting. A summary report of the public meeting will be prepared for the MPO Board.

Procedures

Beginning approximately four weeks prior to a public workshop, the location and date for the workshop will be set. The agenda, invitation flyers and announcements will be prepared. Media will be informed, and public service announcements will be made. Speaker cards, comments cards, and sign-in sheets will be produced to record public input and concerns.

At the workshops, participants will be encouraged to write down their comments and concerns. Speaker comments will also be recorded at the workshop, for the MPO to use in updating the LRTP. A follow-up summary of the workshop will be prepared and posted to the MPO website. A sample comment card is attached to the end of this plan.

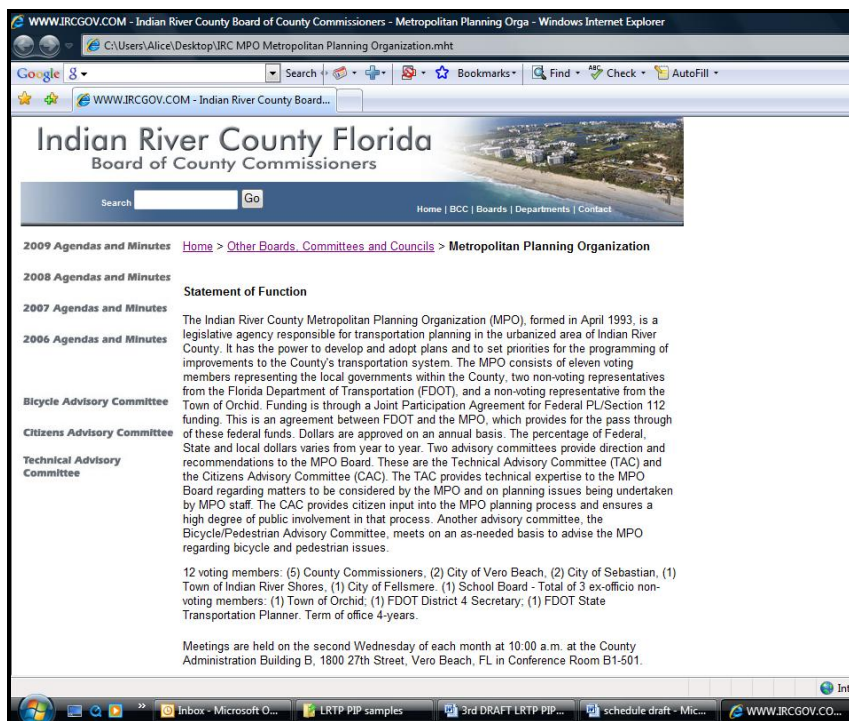
Se Habla Español

To provide outreach to those persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), all LRTP meeting notices and summaries will be translated and prepared in Spanish. A translator will be available at the workshops and public meeting to interpret, as needed. Limited English proficient individuals are defined as people who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English.



Public Involvement Documentation

Throughout the plan development, summaries will be compiled of draft plans and meetings to document the entire public outreach process. Summaries posted to the MPO website will enable the public to engage in reviewing the technical work, in order to be informed and prepared to provide input during the public meetings.



The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) requires the documentation of public participation activities. The complete documentation of these activities will create a history and record of the public's involvement and input. Access to the documentation will allow the public to see that their input was heard and considered.

Proper documentation of the 2035 LRTP Update process includes compiling all of the materials related to the project activities, as well as evaluating outreach efforts to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to provide input. Documentation also includes summarizing and analyzing the public comments.

Comments and Feedback

Public comment forms/cards will be prepared for distribution at the public meetings and at the advisory board meetings. Comment cards will also be handed out by staff at



special meetings and other gatherings during the course of the project in order to reach a larger number of people. The comment card will provide space for written comments and/or questions and will specify how to submit their comments. The comments will be tallied and the appropriate comments will be addressed in the plan. Comment card forms may also be made available through the MPO website and via direct e-mail.

Public comments will be tallied after the two workshops and the final draft meeting. A summary report of the public comments will be produced for the MPO. In addition, public comments will be gathered during the duration of the LRTP process, and comments will be forwarded to the MPO Staff Director and Board on a monthly basis, as appropriate.

Collecting comments is the first step in the comment process. Each comment will be documented with information regarding the date received; the essence of the comment; the name, address, and contact information of the source; and an optional internal tracking number. Once the comments have been documented, they will be analyzed and sorted. Trends in the comments will be noted. Comments received will be acknowledged in accordance with the MPO Public Involvement Plan, and comments directly related to the 2035 LRTP Update will be considered for incorporation into the decision-making process.

Measures of Effectiveness

Clear, measurable objectives for public involvement have been adopted as part of the 2002 MPO Public Involvement Plan. To be consistent, this PPCP will follow the same objectives for measurable results. Additional measures will be used to test the effectiveness of the new social media outreach component.

It is the intent of the MPO to increase the overall attendance levels at meetings and workshops, and also to increase the number of comments received from members of the community, including the traditionally underserved public. Comments will be counted and recorded, and attendance tallies will be carefully monitored. Public comments and attendance will foster an understanding of community issues that must be considered in designing transportation solutions to address the community needs.

The following are the Measures of Effectiveness that will be used in conjunction with this plan:

- Number of non-staff, non-committee member individuals attending LRTP-related meetings.
- The number of comments/questions received from the general public regarding the LRTP.
- Number of hits on the LRTP section of the MPO web site.
- Number of non-staff, non-committee member individuals who have participated in the new LRTP Facebook Page.



PPCP Summary Report

In order to disseminate information regarding the 2035 LRTP Update in a timely and budget-conscious manner to the community, a summary report will be posted to the MPO website. This report will be written in a non-technical language. The summary report, in three parts, will document the MPO planning process, the reasons for updating the LRTP, and the methodology undertaken during the LRTP process. This report will also show the results of feedback obtained during the project, and detail how that feedback was ultimately incorporated into the final plans. The report will list the transportation improvement projects identified in the 2035 LRTP Update, how these projects would be implemented, and contacts for more information regarding additional public participation.

Maps and bulleted text to describe the final 2035 LRTP Update will be prepared and posted to the website. Additional hard-copies of the final report, maps, and summary text will be printed and distributed to various public locations such as the libraries, where this information will be readily available to the public. A key component of this written material will be the inclusion of contact information for inquiries, comments, and additional feedback from the public.

Additionally, a post-project public participation analysis will be completed by the consultants after the 2035 LRTP Update process is finished. This analysis will be done utilizing the MPO's standard public participation evaluation forms and in accordance with the current MPO Public Involvement Plan.

The project website will be updated to ensure that the public is informed of all project milestones. The final summary report will serve as the public record of the MPO's 2035 LRTP Update outreach activities, and will document how information gained during the public participation process influenced the outcome of the LRTP. An appendix to the summary report will include copies of all relevant materials used in the public outreach process.

Informative brochures, *html* Internet files, maps, an executive summary, and other materials may be produced after the completion of the LRTP 2035 Update project, to enhance the public outreach efforts by the MPO.



**INDIAN RIVER COUNTY MPO
2035 Long Range Transportation Plan**

WE VALUE YOUR COMMENTS!

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

COMMENTS: _____

PLEASE RETURN TO: MPO/ Community Development Department
Indian River County
1840 25th Street
Vero Beach, FL 32960



**INDIAN RIVER COUNTY MPO
2035 Long Range Transportation Plan**

PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE

- Who:** YOU!
- What:** Long Range Transportation Plan Update
Alternatives Workshop
- When:** January 18, 2010
- Where:** Indian River County Administration Building A
1801 27th Street
Vero Beach FL 32960-3388
- Why:** To get YOUR input on Transportation Solutions
in Indian River County

WE VALUE YOUR COMMENTS!