HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

There is no need to wait until a public meeting to provide your input. Public comments and questions are welcomed at any time throughout the study. Please see our contact information in the column to the right. We are also available for small group meetings with your community or special interest group.

A PUBLIC KICK-OFF MEETING WILL BE HELD:

Date: Tuesday, December 9, 2014
Time: 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
Location: Coleman Community Hall
Address: 1204 North Church Street
Coleman, Florida 33521

The meeting will begin with an open house at 5:30 p.m. FDOT staff and project representatives will be available to discuss the project with individuals and answer questions. The meeting will end at 7:30 p.m.

JOIN THE PROJECT ADVISORY GROUP

We are in the process of recruiting volunteers for our Project Advisory Group (PAG). The PAG will include community leaders and stakeholders who will provide advice and feedback to the project management team on issues vital to the community. The PAG will act as a resource by helping identify common goals and objectives of the study and serve as a mechanism to develop, clarify and exchange ideas and concerns related to the project.

STUDY WEBSITE

Check out the study website at www.us301sumter.com. The website will be updated on a regular basis to provide the latest study information. Through the study website, you can also request to be added to the mailing list and contact us with your questions or comments.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public participation is being solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability or family status. Persons who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or persons who require translation services (free of charge) should Ms. Jazlyn Heywood, FDOT Project Manager by phone 386-943-5388 or by email to jazlyn.heywood@dot.state.fl.us at least seven days prior to the public meeting.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information about the project or to schedule a group meeting, please contact one of the following:

Ms. Jazlyn Heywood, Project Manager
Florida Department of Transportation
719 South Woodland Boulevard
DeLand, Florida 32720
Phone: 386-943-5388
Email: jazlyn.heywood@dot.state.fl.us

Mr. Charles Hutcherson, Consultant Project Manager
Eisman & Russo
6455 Powers Avenue
Jacksonville, Florida 32217
Phone: 904-733-1478
Email: chutcherson@eismanrusso.com

INTRODUCTION

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is conducting a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study to evaluate the need to widen US 301 from a two-lane roadway to a four-lane roadway. The study limits extend from CR 470 West to SR 44, a distance of approximately eight miles. We will also evaluate the need to create a truck route around the City of Coleman to lessen the movement of heavy truck traffic through that community, and the need to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety throughout the corridor.

WHY DO WE NEED THIS PROJECT?

Traffic volumes are projected to increase due to planned residential, commercial and industrial developments near the study corridor. The objective of the study is to develop design alternatives that will safely and efficiently accommodate the projected increase in traffic. There is also a lack of pedestrian and bicycle facilities throughout the study corridor, so, we will evaluate the need to provide facilities to improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety along the roadway.
WHAT IS A PD&E STUDY?

A Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study is a process conducted by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to determine the environmental, social and economic impacts that are associated with proposed transportation improvements. The process, mandated by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), is a combined effort by professional engineers, planners, environmental scientists and others who analyze the project related information to develop the best alternative for a community’s transportation needs.

The process used in the development of a PD&E Study is made up of several components:

- Data collection is a review of existing conditions, traffic counts, existing and future land use, drainage, wetlands, endangered species habitat, potential contamination sites, traffic noise levels and air quality.
- Engineering analyses are conducted to develop alternatives that meet the needs of the project area, and are environmentally responsible, socially acceptable and cost effective.
- Environmental evaluations are documented and potential impacts to the natural, physical and social environments are assessed, including, but not limited to: wildlife habitat, public lands, wetland locations, archeological and historic sites, and community issues and concerns.
- Public involvement means that there will be continuous community outreach and stakeholder coordination throughout the study process. Three public meetings and a public hearing will be scheduled during the 36 month project.

A range of alternatives will be considered for this project. The No-Build or No-Project alternative will remain a valid alternative throughout the study process. Under the No-Build alternative, no improvements would be made.

PD&E STUDY PROCESS

1. Project Initiation – Identify Transportation Issues and Develop Solutions
2. Public Kick-off Meeting – Introduce the Study to the Public and Receive Public Input
3. Environmental & Engineering Analysis
4. Alternatives Public Meetings(s) – Present the Alternatives to the Public and Receive Public Input
5. Draft Environmental & Engineering Documents
6. Public Hearing: The Final Opportunity for the Public to Make Verbal Statements During the PD&E Study
7. Final Environmental & Engineering Documents
8. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Location Design and Concept Acceptance (LDA)

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

The Study Team has been analyzing traffic and other existing conditions, collecting data, and meeting with local transportation and planning agencies. These efforts have provided us a better understanding of the study corridor.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

The PD&E Study schedule is shown at the bottom of this page. The study began in June 2014 and is anticipated to be completed in late 2017. There will be three public meetings at the approximate dates illustrated on the schedule. Six newsletters will be distributed to keep the public updated on our progress. At the end of the study, a recommended design alternative will be selected, and all engineering and environmental reports will be finalized. A Public Hearing will be conducted toward the end of 2016. We will present the recommended design alternative for public comments at the Hearing.

Public meeting notices will be sent by U.S. mail and published in local newspapers. You can also provide your email address to receive future meeting notifications by email.

WHEN WILL THE PROJECT BE BUILT?

If the PD&E Study shows that improvements are needed, we will present the recommended design alternative to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for review and acceptance. If accepted, the proposed transportation project will go through several phases of development that include design, right-of-way purchase and construction.

The design phase is currently funded and scheduled to begin in 2018. The right-of-way purchase and construction phases are not currently funded. It is typical for transportation projects to take between five and 10 years to be constructed after the PD&E Study has been finalized and accepted by the FHWA.