



Federal Aviation
Administration



Community Involvement Manual





From the Administrator

February 2016

Our national aviation system is a vital transportation network connecting people and goods across the country and to other parts of the world. Building on a proud history of innovation in aviation, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is now engaged in transforming the system to meet 21st century air travel needs. As we carry out our mission to provide the safest, most efficient aerospace system in the world, we are accountable to the American public.

The views of communities—including local residents, the general public, and stakeholders—are important to the FAA as we take the next steps to advance the national aviation system. This update to the FAA’s Community Involvement Manual reaffirms our commitment to inform and involve the public and to give meaningful consideration to community concerns and views as the FAA makes aviation decisions that affect them.

The FAA would like to thank those who contributed to this Community Involvement Manual. We received significant advice and input through more than 40 interviews with local community groups, airports, aviation associations, and consultants. We also had the benefit of recommendations and specific suggestions from the NextGen Advisory Committee (NAC). The contribution of these organizations and individuals was critical in ensuring that a balance of perspectives and experiences were considered and are reflected in this manual.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael P. Huerta'. The signature is stylized and includes a circled number '1' at the end.

Michael P. Huerta
Administrator

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I.

Introduction

Community involvement is the process of engaging in dialogue and collaboration with communities affected by FAA actions.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is committed to open and effective public participation and regards community involvement¹ as an important consideration in decisions that affect the public. This manual provides FAA practitioners with an understanding of the value of community involvement and describes practices and effective techniques for community participation.

1.1 Background

The American public depends on aviation for travel and the transportation of goods nationally and internationally. The mission of the FAA is to provide the safest, most efficient aerospace system in the world. To achieve this mission, the FAA undertakes a wide range of actions² to maintain and improve the system. The FAA seeks results that embody professionalism, transparency, and accountability as we strive to reach the next level of safety, efficiency, environmental responsibility, and global leadership. In carrying out its responsibilities, the FAA is accountable to the American public.

As the FAA takes actions to modernize the U.S. aerospace system for the 21st

century, changes in aviation activity levels, aircraft flight paths, airport configuration, and runway use can generate community concerns about the environmental impacts of aviation, particularly aircraft noise. Although today's aircraft are substantially quieter than earlier generations of aircraft, noise continues to be the public's primary concern in regard to aviation growth or changes. Other environmental impacts may also be of concern to the public. Communities farther from airport boundaries have become increasingly concerned about aviation impacts. Such concerns can lead communities to seek opportunities for involvement beyond what is legally required for an FAA action. The FAA recognizes that we must adapt our community involvement practices to more

effectively identify and address community concerns.

Community involvement is the process of engaging in dialogue and collaboration with communities affected by FAA actions. This manual reaffirms the FAA’s commitment, established in our Community Involvement Policy, to give the public an opportunity to be informed, become involved, and have their concerns and views considered as the FAA makes aviation decisions that might affect them. In some cases, this may mean going beyond

legally mandated public participation requirements.

Community involvement does not guarantee outcomes that satisfy everyone. However, decisions that take community input into consideration are more likely to reflect the collective public interest, receive broader community acceptance, and experience fewer implementation and post-implementation problems.

1.2 Scope

This manual is written for FAA employees who are planning, conducting, or approving aviation actions with potential environmental issues that raise concerns within a community. We refer to this group of FAA employees throughout the document as “FAA practitioners.” The FAA undertakes a wide range of actions that could generate community interest, the most common of which are listed in Exhibit 1.

Exhibit 1: FAA Actions That Could Generate Community Interest

| Line of Business | FAA Actions |
|--|--|
| Air Traffic Organization (ATO) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Airspace changes • New or amended flight procedures • Operational tests • Asset construction • Asset decommissioning/disposition (e.g., Navigational Aid Removal) • Site environmental cleanup |
| Office of Airports (ARP) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of proposed new commercial service airport certificates • Review of proposed airport development • Financial assistance programs, including environmental mitigation • Airport noise compatibility planning • Review of airport noise and access restrictions |
| Office of Commercial Space Transportation (AST) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAA launch site operator license • FAA launch license • FAA reentry license • FAA experimental permits |
| Aviation Safety (AVS) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operations specifications • Aerobatic Practice Area waiver • Parachute Operations • Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) |

The manual provides FAA practitioners with the knowledge and resources needed to facilitate meaningful community involvement for such actions, including effectively engaging communities, encouraging exchange of information, and having community viewpoints heard. It provides guidance that supplements applicable public participation provisions in relevant FAA orders.

The practices and techniques described in this manual are flexible and should be tailored to the specific FAA action, the potential impacts, and the community concerns. Not every FAA action will raise community concerns or require community involvement, and those that do will call for varying levels and types of community involvement activities. FAA staff must assess the potential for environmental issues and community concerns associated with proposed aviation actions. While this manual focuses on community involvement in relation to environmental issues, these practices and techniques may also have applicability to a broader range of community involvement activities related to other issues such as airport planning.

This manual broadly defines the term “community” to include local residents, the general public, and other stakeholders. Examples of individuals and groups who could have an interest in an FAA activity and are included in the definition of “community” for the purposes of this manual are:

- Airport area residents and neighborhood groups
- Airport sponsors and airport users (e.g., traveling public, aircraft operators)

- Public interest groups (e.g., Non-Governmental Organizations [NGO], community action groups, roundtables)
- Government organizations and elected officials
- Business interests (e.g., Chambers of Commerce)

1.3 How to Use This Manual

This manual does not impose any requirements. It offers practices, tools, resources, and techniques as options that can guide practitioners in tailoring community involvement to their specific efforts. Tools and techniques should be selectively used, since a single approach does not fit all circumstances. FAA Lines of Business and Staff Offices (LOBs/SOs) should also use any community involvement guidance materials specific to their programs.

Community involvement should be closely coordinated with efforts to satisfy public participation requirements in applicable laws, and this manual should be used in conjunction with environmental regulations and relevant FAA orders. The FAA most commonly conducts community involvement activities in connection with actions or projects that are subject to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).³ FAA’s NEPA guidance emphasizes that strategic planning is needed to successfully integrate public involvement and NEPA.

The FAA integrates requirements of other environmental laws into the NEPA process. For example, under Environmental Justice requirements the FAA must provide for meaningful public involvement by potentially affected minority and

low-income populations,⁴ and public involvement and consultation may be required for projects that affect historic properties.⁵ Although the tools and techniques outlined in this manual can assist in complying with the public participation elements of NEPA and other environmental laws, FAA practitioners should consult FAA Order 1050.1, Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures, and its accompanying Desk Reference⁶ for information on specific procedures and requirements.

Users of this manual should also be aware of other legal requirements that may affect community involvement activities or that may arise during community involvement. For example, certain types of groups established by the FAA must comply with Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA)⁷ requirements, such as notice of establishment, a formal charter, and open meetings. Other laws that could be applicable to the activities described in this manual include the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA),⁸ the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA),⁹ and the Privacy Act of 1974.¹⁰ FAA’s Office of Chief Counsel (AGC) can provide additional guidance on compliance with these laws.



2. Good Practices and Effective Techniques

Community involvement should be tailored to the project, its potential impacts, and the community.

This chapter explains why community involvement can be important to the success of a project and describes practices and techniques for effective community involvement. Community involvement should be tailored to the project, its potential impacts, and the community. Community concerns should be identified as early as practicable and considered in the planning process. Managing expectations from the beginning is important to successful community involvement. The FAA should make clear how it will utilize any community input and how consideration of other factors, such as safety and efficiency, will be weighed. A well-designed community involvement effort reflects the value the FAA places on the community's concerns.

2.1 Why Community Involvement Is Important

People have an interest in governmental actions that result in changes to the places they live, work, or visit for recreation, and they may have concerns about the potential impacts of an aviation activity. They want to know about, understand, and contribute to FAA decisions that affect them and issues they care about.

Community involvement can inform the planning process and may result in better decisions. This is the goal of the public participation requirements in the NEPA and other

environmental statutes. Communities have an understanding of local issues and can provide perspectives and knowledge that broaden the FAA's information base, enabling the FAA to identify more effective solutions. In addition, outreach to communities can be critical in fostering public understanding of the need for the FAA action. While community involvement does not always lead to a broadly supported decision, especially where there is a wide diversity of community views, decisions informed by community concerns can better serve the collective public interest and build trust in the FAA.

Effective community involvement strives to:

- **Improve understanding of community concerns.** Community involvement provides an opportunity for the FAA to learn about social, economic, and environmental conditions and local needs and concerns.
- **Inform the community.** Open communication and flow of information can help the public understand the need for an FAA action, be familiar with the factors that inform decision making, and provide more meaningful input.
- **Use community input to improve decision making.** Collaboration with the community can help shape the project and lead to more effective solutions.
- **Enhance the transparency of the decision-making process.** While not everyone may agree on the outcome, community involvement can allow the public to better understand the factors weighed in the decision-making process.

2.2 Effective Community Involvement Practices

The elements of a community involvement plan will vary based on the project, its potential impacts, and the characteristics of affected communities, but there are effective practices that should guide FAA community involvement efforts. These practices are described in this section.

2.2.1 Coordinate Across the FAA

Coordinating across FAA LOBs/SOs is essential to planning and executing community involvement activities. Other FAA LOBs/SOs may

have historical knowledge about a community and/or ongoing or planned projects or activities that could impact or be impacted by community involvement efforts. It is important to note that the public does not usually differentiate between FAA offices or programs and may see a new project as an extension of one they are already familiar with. In addition, communities may be frustrated, and the FAA's credibility may be adversely affected when an FAA representative from one LOB/SO is unfamiliar with the activities of another LOB/SO.

Coordinating across the FAA identifies areas of collaboration. A particular LOB/SO may have established relationships, technical resources, and/or lessons learned based on prior community involvement efforts that other LOBs/SOs can benefit from. For example, the Office of Communications (AOC) can provide advice on the best methods and approaches for communicating with stakeholder communities, assist with any media-related activities, and develop a complete communications strategy for a project (see Section 2.3 "Effective Techniques").

Exhibit 11 in Chapter 3 identifies FAA LOBs/SOs and how they can help with community involvement.

2.2.2 Coordinate with Local Airport Operator

For projects in airport environs, the FAA should reach out first to the affected airport. The Office of Airports (ARP) can facilitate outreach to an airport. Early coordination with airport management, elected officials, and community leaders helps inform the FAA of community characteristics and potential community concerns. The FAA can also work with the

airport management and local government to introduce the proposed project to the community. When the airport operator is the project sponsor, the airport may have undertaken public outreach activities as part of their planning process and can share insights and information on community issues with the FAA.

2.2.3 Involve the Community Early

Ideally, the community should be involved as early as possible. Early public input allows valuable information to be factored into project planning. Communities that are not provided with information or given an opportunity to participate at the outset may seek information from alternative sources that could be inaccurate or misleading. They may also resort to media or political avenues to draw attention to their concerns. Regaining the trust of the community or correcting misconceptions can take considerable effort and time, impacting cost and schedule, as well as jeopardizing a successful project outcome. When community concerns arise about a project, the FAA should address those concerns in a timely manner.

2.2.4 Establish Ongoing Communications

Regular communication and involvement with the community throughout a project that has raised community concerns can build trust and understanding. For example, regular status updates, monthly or quarterly newsletters, or key documents posted to the project website can be an effective way to keep the community aware of the project's progress.

Making information available during the planning process gives the public

an opportunity to understand the proposed project and to ask questions and raise concerns before decisions are made. Additionally, making information publicly available on a regular basis may reduce the community's need to request information later and also reduce the project team's workload in responding to such requests.

Engaging with communities even when there is no specific project (e.g., maintaining involvement with established community groups such as Noise Roundtables) can be useful in places where there is regular FAA activity or strong community interest in aviation.

2.2.5 Foster Two-Way Communication

The ongoing relationship should not be just a one-way distribution of information from the FAA to the public, but a two-way communication channel through which the public has an opportunity to inform the FAA of concerns or information as the project develops. The FAA needs to understand the concerns and interests of the community, and the community needs to understand why aviation projects are proposed. It is important that the FAA not just listen to community concerns, but also let the community know how those concerns are being considered in project planning and analysis.

2.2.6 Facilitate Inclusive Participation

Effective community involvement is inclusive and facilitates participation by all interested individuals and groups within the community, including minority and low-income populations. An inclusive program

allows broader and more balanced community representation. For example, some groups or individuals may be well-organized and vocal on certain issues but only represent a part of the wider community. While it requires additional effort from the FAA to provide opportunities for participation by other members of the community, their perspective and input can result in a more balanced outcome. Ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to be involved at the outset may reduce the need to revisit issues or disrupt an established collaborative relationship.

2.2.7 Build Trust Through Transparency

Transparency is fundamental to the success of community involvement. Transparency means that the planning process is as open as possible and that decisions are made public. The community should have an opportunity to contribute to the process and be informed about how their input was considered. Decisions should be announced and the rationale for the decisions clearly stated.

The purpose, procedures, and schedule for conducting the project and community involvement activities should be described as clearly and completely as possible throughout the project. This information should include the following:

- Purpose of the project
- Decisions to be made
- Factors to be considered, including the constraints or requirements of aviation need, safety, environmental, financial, and efficiency considerations
- Roles of the FAA and, if applicable, the project sponsor
- Timeline of the project

- Approach for community involvement
- How the community input will be considered in decision making

2.2.8 Consider Options

Community involvement may include consideration of project alternatives and ways to mitigate project impacts. FAA practitioners should keep an open mind and work collaboratively with the community to explore solutions that are responsive to the community's needs and consistent with the FAA's mission. The FAA can offer its expertise to explain basic project considerations, such as the aviation requirements and technical and economic constraints, but should not restrict its consideration to options that have already been identified or have been used in other projects.

2.3 Effective Techniques

FAA practitioners should consider a variety of techniques to involve the community. Information technology has added a substantial range of new tools to traditional techniques that can improve the effectiveness and efficiency of FAA's community involvement efforts. A combination of techniques is usually needed to reach all the relevant communities. It is important to know the characteristics of your community in order to determine the most effective techniques. For example, communities may include non-English speakers who require communications in specific languages, individuals who do not have access to technology, or people who cannot easily travel to a meeting. The community involvement techniques covered in this section can be used alone or in combination to achieve various objectives. They are grouped by type of technique.

The Office of Communications manages the content of the FAA's websites, the agency's social media programs, and any interactions with the media. Practitioners who want to use any of these techniques should coordinate with AOC early on in any project planning.

2.3.1 Public Meetings

Public meetings enable the FAA to describe the proposed project directly to interested members of the community and allow participants to raise concerns that can be addressed through follow-up engagement efforts. While resources are required to develop, set up, and travel to such events, in-person meetings can foster relationships. They can provide opportunities for informal discussions before and after the meeting and during breaks and allow participants to read body language and gauge emotions more readily than in virtual meetings or through written communications. Knowledge of and access to new technologies is not required.

The level of turnout may be an indicator of how much people care or how much political energy might be brought to the issue, because participating in a public meeting requires a commitment of time and may require travel to attend in person. However, a smaller number of participants does not necessarily mean the meeting is ineffective in achieving its objectives and may facilitate more meaningful discussion. Public meetings may generate community interest, but are not often used to resolve specific issues due to time constraints and the public nature of the discussion. Public meetings can be effective ways to identify interest and solicit participation in future stakeholder engagement efforts (e.g., receiving newsletters or updates or serving as a member of a working group).

In certain cases, it is useful to contract with professional meeting facilitators who have experience with community-related public meetings. Professional facilitators can help ensure the meeting runs effectively, provide an impartial voice to the discussion, and enable FAA staff to focus on the technical subject matter. Local facilitators may also be familiar with the community and can advise on the best ways to engage the community.

Exhibit 2: Public Meetings

| Description | Advantages | Limitations |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Public Hearings: A public hearing is a formal process that has a designated public hearing officer who presides over the meeting and a court reporter present to compile a transcript of all oral comments. Public comments may be made in front of all attendees or separately to the court reporter.</p> <p>Some environmental laws require public hearings in certain circumstances; additionally, public hearings may be requested by community residents. A time limit may be set on comments to ensure everyone has an opportunity to speak.</p> | <p>Public hearings are one way to fulfill legal requirements for public participation, even if public hearings are not specifically required. Public hearings may provide an opportunity for community members to express views that are heard by all attendees.</p> <p>In addition, an official permanent record is established at the public hearing.</p> | <p>Public hearings can generate controversy, because some speakers can take extreme positions to elicit reactions from the audience. Other participants may not be comfortable speaking to a large audience. Public hearings must have a transcriber to record the meeting, which can be costly.</p> <p>The formal structure and format of a public hearing may not meet community expectations of a dialogue with the FAA.</p> |

(Table continued on next page.)

Exhibit 2: Public Meetings (cont.)

| Description | Advantages | Limitations |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Informational Meetings: Meetings can be held to brief interested stakeholders on multiple topics. These may be recurring meetings on a set schedule or organized as needed to address specific issues or projects.</p> | <p>This type of meeting is less formal than public hearings and can be a valuable opportunity to provide informational updates.</p> | <p>Informational meetings require resources and staff, and not everyone who is interested in the issues will be able attend.</p> |
| <p>Breakout Groups: Breakout groups are typically smaller discussion groups comprising participants in a meeting who subsequently report back to the larger group.</p> | <p>The small group discussion provides an opportunity for intensive participation. The summary reports offer a chance for all participants to get a sense of a broader range of ideas and concerns.</p> | <p>This type of meeting requires multiple group facilitators who are familiar with the project or action.</p> |
| <p>Panel Meetings: Panel meetings involve assembling a group of speakers representing different opinions, perspectives, or fields of expertise who can discuss the issues in question. Panel meetings can be followed by discussions among the panelists, questions from the audience, or by small group discussions.</p> | <p>Panel meetings can help clarify issues surrounding a project that may not be well understood. A panel format allows individuals to air their views.</p> | <p>The panel may not adequately represent all of the views or relevant areas of expertise. If not carefully coordinated, panel presentations may be repetitive or disjointed.</p> |
| <p>Open House or Workshop: An open house or workshop is an informal event usually held at a location and time that is convenient for the community and may be held over an extended period. Typically, printed information is provided and experts are available to explain issues, answer questions, and respond to public concerns. Attendees may also be invited to submit written comments or record oral comments.</p> | <p>An open house or workshop allows the public to learn about the issues in question in a non-intimidating, informal manner. The experts on hand may be able to address questions and concerns on the spot.</p> <p>Holding an open house over a period of time allows people to come and go when most convenient and can reduce crowding.</p> | <p>Participants may be hesitant to ask the experts questions or raise concerns. There is no opportunity for commenters to solicit support for their views or respond to the comments made by others.</p> |
| <p>Pop-up Meetings: Pop-up meetings, facilitated by displays or handouts, are meetings in locations where the community is already congregating (subway stations, farmers markets, churches, shopping centers, libraries, schools, etc.). Displays in public places can provide information about a project and may be staffed by community involvement specialists who can answer questions and solicit input.</p> | <p>Pop-up meetings can be useful to increase community awareness of a proposed project. They reach people where they are, rather than requiring them to travel to another location. People may feel more comfortable in a familiar setting, allowing them to share their thoughts more openly.</p> | <p>Pop-up meetings must be coordinated with the owners/managers of the space they occupy. They can require substantial staff time to develop, set up, and maintain.</p> |

2.3.2 Targeted Group Meetings

Meetings targeted to selected participants, such as working groups, committees, or roundtables, can be useful to identify and address specific issues. These are usually small groups representing a larger community interest and may be able to identify effective solutions with support from key community members. Targeted meetings can address ongoing issues in addition to new concerns as they arise. Targeted meetings can also be used to reach specific communities, such as non-English speakers or groups not familiar with technology. Targeted group meetings may be held in settings that are more familiar and comfortable, such as churches or community centers.

Exhibit 3: Targeted Groups to Address Specific Issues

| Description | Advantages | Limitations |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Working Sessions: Working sessions usually have a specific task or goal to be accomplished and typically include a representative cross-section of the community or a subset representing specialized interests or expertise.</p> | <p>Working sessions help bring major concerns to the surface and allow for people to express their preferences. This format is especially useful in developing potential solutions to problems by providing an opportunity for a more focused or in-depth exploration of issues.</p> <p>Smaller working groups may be better able to make compromises needed to reach consensus.</p> | <p>The views expressed in a working session may not entirely capture those of the community.</p> |
| <p>Charrettes: A charrette brings together individuals over a concentrated block of time (such as an entire weekend or a series of consecutive nightly meetings) in an attempt to collaborate on a design or plan.</p> | <p>Charrettes can be a useful means of achieving consensus and can result in a commitment by participating groups. They can lead to deeper understanding of the positions/motivations of others and a better working relationship among participants.</p> | <p>Charrettes are effective only when all interested parties are willing to fully participate. They can be time-consuming, require substantial staff preparation, and can be expensive.</p> |
| <p>Advisory Committees/Roundtables: Advisory committees and community roundtables serve many different functions; for example, they can provide views and advice on alternatives/issues; build consensus on controversial issues; coordinate with technical groups; review/monitor agency activities; provide independent, credible feedback; and/or build a constituency around a specific need or requirement.</p> <p>Advisory committees can be established by the FAA or formed by a local or state government, airport authority, or other body.</p> | <p>Advisory committees and roundtables can bring structure to discussions of specific challenges or issues, and provide a more neutral forum that can enhance the credibility and transparency of FAA's activities.</p> <p>Community roundtables may be able to help communicate complex topics to the community.</p> | <p>In some cases, advisory committees or roundtables may represent limited interests and may not reflect the entire stakeholder community.</p> <p>Advisory Committees or similar groups sponsored, directed, or funded by the FAA must comply with FACA.</p> |
| <p>Facilitated Conflict Resolution: Facilitated conflict resolution is a process for resolving disputes with the assistance of a neutral facilitator. The facilitator structures the deliberations and enforces ground rules for negotiations.</p> | <p>Facilitated conflict resolution can result in an agreement supported by all parties and may lead to quicker resolution of issues.</p> | <p>Facilitated conflict resolution will work only when all parties are willing to negotiate in good faith.</p> <p>Requires the services of a third-party facilitator, which can be costly.</p> |

(Table continued on next page.)

Exhibit 3: Targeted Groups to Address Specific Issues (cont.)

| Description | Advantages | Limitations |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Community and Interest Groups: Established community-based or special interest organizations have existing mechanisms such as regular meetings, newsletters, and listservs. Many community organizations look for information, materials, and speakers on issues of interest to their members. Staff from these organizations are often active in their communities and may be able to assist in arranging events or developing outreach materials.</p> | <p>By coordinating with existing community organizations, agencies can build on the work that such organizations have done to facilitate citizen participation and reach more people across the community.</p> | <p>If there are multiple organizations, considerable staff time may be required to attend and participate in the various meetings.</p> <p>Organizations have their own agendas and procedures that may not accommodate the type of information that FAA needs to disseminate.</p> |

2.3.3 Internet and Technology Tools

Internet and technology tools provide many ways to communicate and can enhance the FAA’s ability to collaborate with communities by facilitating a two-way dialogue, providing transparency, and helping to educate the community.

Additionally, by posting or otherwise electronically sharing technical materials during the planning process, the public has an opportunity to review and understand the technical issues and constraints and raise questions about them before decisions are made. FAA practitioners should keep in mind that traditional communications methods are still important in reaching people in the community who may not have access to the Internet.

(Note: Although social media is Internet-based, it is covered in a separate section in this manual because of the variety of social media sites.)

Exhibit 4: Internet and Technology Tools

| Description | Advantages | Limitations |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Websites: Project websites are one of the most widely used community involvement tools. They may be the public face of the project and/or community involvement effort. Websites can be used to inform communities and can also serve as a public record of information exchanged and decisions made. Websites can support or house other techniques such as newsletters, feedback forms, and surveys. Project websites can be maintained by a consultant or project sponsor.</p> | <p>Websites are accessible to the public and can be used to share a wide range of information in a searchable format. Websites can support graphics that would be difficult to reproduce in print. Translation and text-to-speech software can make websites accessible to non-English speakers and visually impaired individuals.</p> | <p>Websites may require internal approvals for posting information, which can be time-consuming. Hosting and maintaining a website may require funding and/or additional resources.</p> <p>Some people may not have access to an Internet connection.</p> |
| <p>Simulation and Visualization: Visualization tools allow the FAA to present information geographically and in multiple dimensions to show how different project alternatives might affect a specific location or resource or illustrate how aviation operations interact and change under different forecast scenarios. These tools help communities to see the results of a proposed project or the way that the environment could be affected.</p> | <p>Simulation and visualization tools are effective in communicating complex information and are a powerful aid in explaining technical subject matter. These tools enable communities to better understand constraints and options, so that they can provide more informed input into the FAA’s activities.</p> | <p>Using simulation and visualization tools may require advanced technical expertise and may be costly.</p> <p>Care must be taken not to overcomplicate subject matter. Some information can be conveyed just as effectively and at lower cost using printed maps or other low-tech visual aids.</p> |

(Table continued on next page.)

Exhibit 4: Internet and Technology Tools (cont.)

| Description | Advantages | Limitations |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Virtual Meetings and Webinars: These tools enable individuals to participate in meetings or discussions via an Internet and/or telephone connection. They can also be used to record the meeting.</p> | <p>Virtual meetings can be more convenient for people who otherwise could not attend due to time of day, location, accessibility, or transportation issues. They typically require less time to organize and cost less than in-person meetings. The automatic recording feature can be a useful way of capturing the discussion.</p> | <p>Virtual meetings do not always allow for effective interaction. Some of the value of face-to-face meetings is lost.</p> |
| <p>Feedback Tools: Audience response systems and similar feedback tools can gather immediate feedback from large numbers of people. These are used to identify and rank topics using computers, phones, tablets, or other devices. The FAA can use these techniques in public meetings or virtual settings to quickly and efficiently identify the participants' concerns.</p> | <p>Feedback tools can be an efficient way to quickly identify the key issues/priorities across a large body of people. Use of these tools helps to show individuals the priorities of the entire group in an immediate and anonymous way.</p> | <p>These tools may require specialized expertise to set up and manage. To generate statistically valid responses, they need to use sound sampling methods.</p> |
| <p>Brainstorming and Collaboration Tools: There are a number of electronic tools available that can assist the FAA in identifying, organizing, and prioritizing ideas from the community; breaking down a problem into component parts; and collecting and categorizing feedback. These tools can be used in working sessions or larger formats.</p> | <p>Brainstorming tools are useful to help the FAA fully understand all of the different aspects of an issue. Brainstorming tools can also be helpful in identifying solutions in a way that is visible and transparent to the individuals involved.</p> | <p>Expertise may be required to select and use the appropriate types of brainstorming tools to maximize the value.</p> <p>Low-tech methods, such as recording ideas on a flipchart, can be just as effective.</p> |

2.3.4 Social Media

Social media is specifically designed to use Internet technology to allow people to share information and ideas within virtual communities. Social media offers some advantages over traditional media in that it can reach many people, can be used efficiently with high frequency, is highly interactive, and can be used to disseminate materials at relatively low cost. However, social media may not be used by all communities or by certain members of a community. It can be challenging to manage interactions on social media, and their use requires a level of technological expertise to ensure the appropriate security and privacy controls are in place. Some people may view information provided through social networks as less authoritative than information available from other sources.

The AOC can help FAA practitioners develop successful communication plans using the tools described in Exhibit 5 on the next page and is the only FAA office authorized to use these tools.

Exhibit 5: Social Media

| Description | Advantages | Limitations |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Social Networks: Services such as Facebook and LinkedIn allow the user to establish a profile and connect with interested parties. Profiles can serve as a project website where regular updates can be posted. They are interactive and enable community feedback while maintaining a historical record.</p> | <p>Social networks are usually easy to use and allow information to be quickly uploaded or accessed from computers and mobile devices. They are also widely used by the general public and enable the FAA to communicate in near real-time with participants.</p> <p>Social networks can offer a cost-effective alternative to a website.</p> | <p>Social networks have their own terms of use and conventions, which may not always lend themselves to FAA community involvement activities.</p> <p>Monitoring and moderating postings to the various sites can be very labor-intensive.</p> |
| <p>Microblogging: Microblogs (for example, Twitter) allow users to post short entries that are pushed out to anyone subscribed to receive them. These can be used to provide community subscribers with quick, real-time updates on progress and point users to other information sources. They can also be used to receive feedback from communities and serve as an open line of communications.</p> | <p>Microblogs are effective at getting real-time updates out to a wide community network and can be an efficient way to direct individuals to a project website or inform them of an upcoming meeting.</p> | <p>Microblogs are intentionally limited in the amount of information that can be conveyed at a time.</p> |
| <p>Social News: Services such as Digg and Reddit provide primarily user-generated information on current events and offer an alternative to traditional newspapers and radio/television news.</p> | <p>Social news can be an effective way to reach a broad network of individuals or certain demographics and can be cost-effective to use.</p> | <p>There may be limited editorial control over user-generated information.</p> |
| <p>Blogs, Forums, and Listservs: Online blogs, forums, and listservs are used to share information within a community. Members hold conversations by posting messages or discussing topics. These sites can be used to communicate with communities and solicit feedback. These are generally managed by individuals in the community. The FAA can also establish its own blogs, forums, and listservs.</p> | <p>Blogs, forums, and listservs can be effective methods to connect directly with communities. The FAA can exert greater control over blogs, forums, and listservs it establishes and maintains.</p> | <p>The FAA does not control the rules for use of blogs, forums, and listservs that it does not establish.</p> <p>FAA-established blogs, forums, and listservs may be viewed as biased by some people.</p> |

2.3.5 Print and Other Traditional Media

Print media, television, and radio remain important and effective methods to communicate with communities. Traditional media is most commonly used for a one-way transfer of outgoing information but can support a two-way communication format, for example, through questionnaires or letters with community response options or letters to the editor of a newspaper. Traditional media can be particularly helpful in reaching communities that do not extensively or routinely use the Internet. Foreign language newspapers, radio, or television stations can be effective ways to reach non-English speaking populations.

Any communications with the media must be coordinated in advance with the FAA's AOC. The AOC can prepare fact sheets and press releases on specific projects and media advisories for future meetings and events. In addition, every FAA region has a media communications professional who works with reporters and media outlets in the area and has relationships that can help build more effective results as outlined in Exhibit 6 on the following page.

Exhibit 6: Using Traditional Media to Reach Communities

| Description | Advantages | Limitations |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Newspapers and Magazines: Newspapers and magazines can be used to reach community members and other stakeholders. Editorial content (such as articles and opinion pieces) can provide information and convey different perspectives on an action. Public views may be reflected in letters to the editor or comments on an online edition. Sponsored content, inserts, or advertisements can provide information about a project.</p> | <p>Newspapers reach a certain segment of the population and provide a familiar and trusted format. Advertisements and inserts in newspapers can be designed by the FAA or project sponsor and are delivered directly to their readers. News articles are a no-cost means of disseminating information. The favorable opinion of an editorial board or columnist can help a project gain community support.</p> | <p>An increasing number of people are receiving their news from other sources.</p> <p>Newspaper inserts can be expensive to produce and distribute and may not be read by all subscribers.</p> <p>The content and tone of articles and opinion pieces are controlled by the reporters and editorial board and may be negative or even inflammatory.</p> |
| <p>Mail-outs: Postcards or other printed materials, usually sent via bulk mail, can inform communities of important issues, provide status updates, or make the public aware of published reports, meetings with local government, or other information. Mail-outs can also be used for obtaining public input on projects by including checklists or mail-backs.</p> | <p>Mail-outs can be effective in reaching large numbers of people within a certain geographic area or can use custom mailing lists to target specific groups or individuals (e.g., those who have requested updates on certain issues).</p> | <p>Individuals may not review mail-outs and in some cases may view them as “junk mail.” Mail-outs can be expensive to produce in large numbers depending on the quality and quantity of production.</p> <p>Mail-outs used by the FAA to obtain policy input on projects may be subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act and require approvals that are time-consuming to obtain.</p> |
| <p>Printed Reports: Reports typically contain technical information that presents the underlying assumptions and analysis for a proposed project and its potential impacts. These may be published several times during a project.</p> | <p>Printed reports are a direct means of providing a substantial amount of information to the public. Publishing interim reports during the planning process gives the public an opportunity to review and understand the technical issues and constraints before decisions are made.</p> | <p>Technical reports can appear dry and even intimidating to non-experts. Preparation of attractive and accessible publications requires specialized skills that may have to be obtained outside the FAA.</p> <p>Printing a large number of technical reports can be costly; more people may be reached by posting an electronic version of a document on the project website.</p> |
| <p>Brochures/Newsletters: Brochures usually contain a brief summary of the project, the issues involved, and opportunities for the public to participate in the study. Newsletters can highlight specific aspects of the project and provide periodic progress reports and information on upcoming events.</p> | <p>Brochures/newsletters can be an effective way to communicate on a regular basis or on certain topics.</p> <p>Newsletters can document progress in a highly visible and simplified form and serve as a consistent communication channel.</p> | <p>Brochures/newsletters can be expensive to produce in large numbers depending on the quality and quantity of production.</p> |

(Table continued on next page.)

Exhibit 6: Using Traditional Media to Reach Communities (cont.)

| Description | Advantages | Limitations |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Television and Radio: News coverage can provide information on the proposed project and can be used to publicize a website address or hotline for the public to call. Planned interviews can allow project representatives to convey key facts directly to the larger community. Talk shows or commentary sections of newscasts offer an opportunity for different views to be shared. It may also be possible to obtain a regular block of time from a local channel (such as public access and local government channels) and use this as a forum for communicating about upcoming events and continuing the discussion. Paid radio or television advertisements can also be used to provide information.</p> | <p>Television and radio have the potential to reach a large audience. Information conveyed through television and radio reaches people directly. Some stations are targeted to specific demographics and may be transmitted in foreign languages.</p> | <p>The content and editorial tone of news coverage are set by the station.</p> <p>It can be expensive to secure blocks of time on commercial television and radio.</p> |

2.3.6 Technical Assistance and Support

Communicating complex aviation or environmental subject matter is one of the primary challenges associated with the FAA’s community involvement efforts. Community members and other stakeholders may need assistance to interpret technical documents, and may be frustrated by discussions and documents that presume familiarity with technical terms and concepts.

It can be helpful to provide community members with some basic understanding of the key technical issues and topics that will be covered prior to a meeting or the release of a report. This assistance can be provided by the FAA or by consultants working directly for community groups. This technical assistance ensures that everyone has the same informational basis, and can help the community to frame the issues and understand the constraints the FAA has to work within.

Exhibit 7: Technical Assistance

| Description | Advantages | Limitations |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Education Programs: Education on technical topics can improve individuals’ understanding of the project and provide them with the knowledge and vocabulary to participate more meaningfully in the community involvement process. Education programs can cover the planning and decision-making process, critical environmental issues (e.g., noise measurement), and aviation topics (e.g., Performance-Based Navigation).</p> | <p>Education programs may increase the effectiveness of public involvement.</p> <p>Community members educated on technical issues can better participate in a dialogue with technical experts in the community involvement process.</p> | <p>Some community members may question the objectivity of an education program conducted by the FAA. Educational programs that are limited to a small group may need to be repeated in order to include everyone who is interested in the issues.</p> |

(Table continued on next page.)

Exhibit 7: Technical Assistance (cont.)

| Description | Advantages | Limitations |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Technical Support: Technical support allows community members without technical expertise to develop their ideas using the same tools used by the FAA. In these cases, the community may use their own experts (e.g., consultants or members of the community), or the FAA may provide technical experts.</p> | <p>Technical support can reduce the likelihood that community members will be intimidated by technical details. Ideas from the public can be developed to the same level of technical detail as ideas generated by the agency. In controversial situations, information generated by independent sources may be more acceptable to the public than those generated by the FAA.</p> | <p>Providing technical support to all groups can require extensive staff resources or significant funding for consultants. Members of the public may think there is bias in technical support provided by the FAA.</p> |

2.3.7 Additional Techniques

Many other techniques that are commonly used in community involvement efforts can be used in conjunction with the techniques described previously.

Exhibit 8: Additional Techniques for Community Involvement

| Description | Advantages | Limitations |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Surveys: Surveys can be designed to determine public attitudes, values, and perceptions on various issues. Surveys can be conducted electronically through websites or social media, in person at meetings or by phone, or through mail and other publications.</p> | <p>Well-designed sampling procedures can produce results that are truly representative of the population from which it was drawn.</p> <p>Surveys can capture a range of public views, not just those individuals who are most directly affected and likely to attend meetings, submit comments, or otherwise make their views known.</p> | <p>Unless a rigorous methodology is employed to ensure that the people surveyed represent the community and the questions are not biased, surveys may not produce reliable or meaningful data. The cost of developing statistically reliable surveys is high.</p> <p>Approvals required to comply with the Paperwork Reduction Act are time-consuming to obtain.</p> |
| <p>Interviews: Interviews can be used to understand community interest in the project, the goals, and values of the community, the manner in which the individuals would like to participate, and the political climate and relationship between the various interest groups. Interviews can be either non-structured conversations or follow a structured list of questions or topics to be discussed so that responses can be easily compared and summarized.</p> | <p>Interviews can provide a quick insight into community concerns, background issues, and important information on how individuals wish to participate.</p> <p>Interviews can help to build personal relationships with key individuals and establish more direct communication links with the public.</p> | <p>Interviews may not be entirely representative of public sentiment.</p> <p>Approvals required to comply with Paperwork Reduction Act are time-consuming to obtain.</p> |
| <p>Temporary Project Offices: Offices can be temporarily established at the project site or in the community. Typically, a project office is placed in a highly visible part of the community, such as a downtown storefront or shopping center, so that the largest number of people will know of its existence. The project office staff are available to answer questions and solicit opinions from the local community.</p> | <p>Temporary offices provide a means of informal interaction with the local community at the convenience of the residents and communicate the value the agency places upon the community.</p> <p>Staff occupying temporary offices may obtain a better understanding of community needs and desires.</p> | <p>Temporary offices can be costly to staff and to operate.</p> |

Exhibit 8: Additional Techniques for Community Involvement (cont.)

| Description | Advantages | Limitations |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Hotlines: A hotline is a single telephone number that community members can call to ask questions or make comments, and is often publicized through brochures, reports, news stories, paid advertising, etc. Hotlines have been used as a method of handling noise complaints and as coordination points for individuals requiring information about the progress of a project. Comments received over a hotline can be incorporated as a part of the record.</p> | <p>The hotline provides a convenient means for community members to register their questions, comments, and concerns and can also be useful in providing information about upcoming meetings or other community involvement activities.</p> | <p>Hotlines can be expensive to set up and staff.</p> <p>Depending on the volume of calls, a hotline can require a great deal of staff time.</p> |

2.4 Applicability of Community Involvement Techniques

The techniques described in the previous section can be used to facilitate various objectives of community involvement. Exhibit 9 indicates how each technique can be used to:

- **Inform the Public:** Provide the community with information—usually in a one-way flow.
- **Educate the Public:** Explain and illustrate complex aviation or environmental topics to people with varying levels of background, education, and experience.
- **Foster Dialogue:** Encourage two-way communication, including gathering data and providing an opportunity for the public to offer feedback.
- **Collaborate:** Facilitate discussion and collaboration, for example, by providing a forum for the FAA and community to work through topics and generate shared solutions.

This chart is just a guide; these techniques may also be used in other ways to further different objectives.

Exhibit 9: Applicability of Community Involvement Techniques

| Technique | Inform | Educate | Foster Dialogue | Collaborate |
|------------------------|--------|---------|-----------------|-------------|
| Public Meetings | | | | |
| Public Hearings | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Informational Meetings | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Breakout Groups | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Panel Meetings | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Open House or Workshop | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Pop-up Meetings | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |

(Table continued on next page.)

Exhibit 9: Applicability of Community Involvement Techniques (cont.)

| Technique | Inform | Educate | Foster Dialogue | Collaborate |
|--|--------|---------|-----------------|-------------|
| Targeted Group Meetings | | | | |
| Working Sessions | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Charrettes | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Advisory Committees/Roundtables | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Facilitated Conflict Resolution | | | | ✓ |
| Community and Interest Groups | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Internet and Technology Tools | | | | |
| Websites | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Simulation and Visualization | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Virtual Meetings and Webinars | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Feedback Tools | | | ✓ | |
| Brainstorming and Collaboration Tools | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Social Media | | | | |
| Social Networks | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Microblogging | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Social News | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Blogs, Forums, and Listservs | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Print and Other Traditional Media | | | | |
| Newspapers and Magazines | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Mail-outs | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Printed Reports | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Brochures/Newsletters | ✓ | | | |
| Television and Radio | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Technical Assistance and Support | | | | |
| Education Programs | | ✓ | | |
| Technical Support | | ✓ | | |
| Additional Techniques | | | | |
| Surveys | | | ✓ | |
| Interviews | | | ✓ | |
| Temporary Project Offices | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Hotlines | ✓ | | ✓ | |



3. Community Involvement for Your Project

Understanding community characteristics helps to determine the appropriate amount and type of community involvement effort.

This section describes community involvement activities that FAA practitioners can undertake at each phase of a project's life cycle: pre-planning, initiation, planning, implementation, and close-out. As no two FAA projects are precisely the same and some projects may have legal requirements for public participation, every community involvement effort needs to be tailored to the unique characteristics of the project and communities involved. Therefore, the guidance in this section does not prescribe the exact steps and actions that an FAA practitioner should take. Rather, it provides a general description of the types of activities to be considered during each phase of the project life cycle.

3.1 The Project Life Cycle

For the purposes of this guidance, a project life cycle can be broken down into five phases with varying community involvement activities relevant at each project phase, as described below and illustrated in Exhibit 10.

1. Pre-Planning: During the pre-planning phase, the FAA or another project sponsor defines the proposed project. At this early phase, FAA practitioners can begin to identify which communities may be affected, key community issues and concerns, past or current community interest in aviation,

whether and how to provide community involvement, and the groups and individuals who should be included in any community involvement efforts.

2. Initiation: Once the project has been officially proposed, the FAA, in coordination with airport and local government officials, can begin to engage with any identified groups and individuals within the community. The focus in this phase is making interested parties aware of the proposed project and letting them know how they can participate in the process, as well as receive feedback from the community.

3. Planning: This is the most active phase of community involvement. The FAA’s review of the project’s impacts under NEPA and other environmental statutes normally occurs during the planning phase. The FAA can provide information and gain a more in-depth understanding of community concerns. Community input is considered in developing and refining project options, analysis, and potential mitigation measures. At the conclusion of this phase, the FAA makes its decision on whether and how to implement the project.

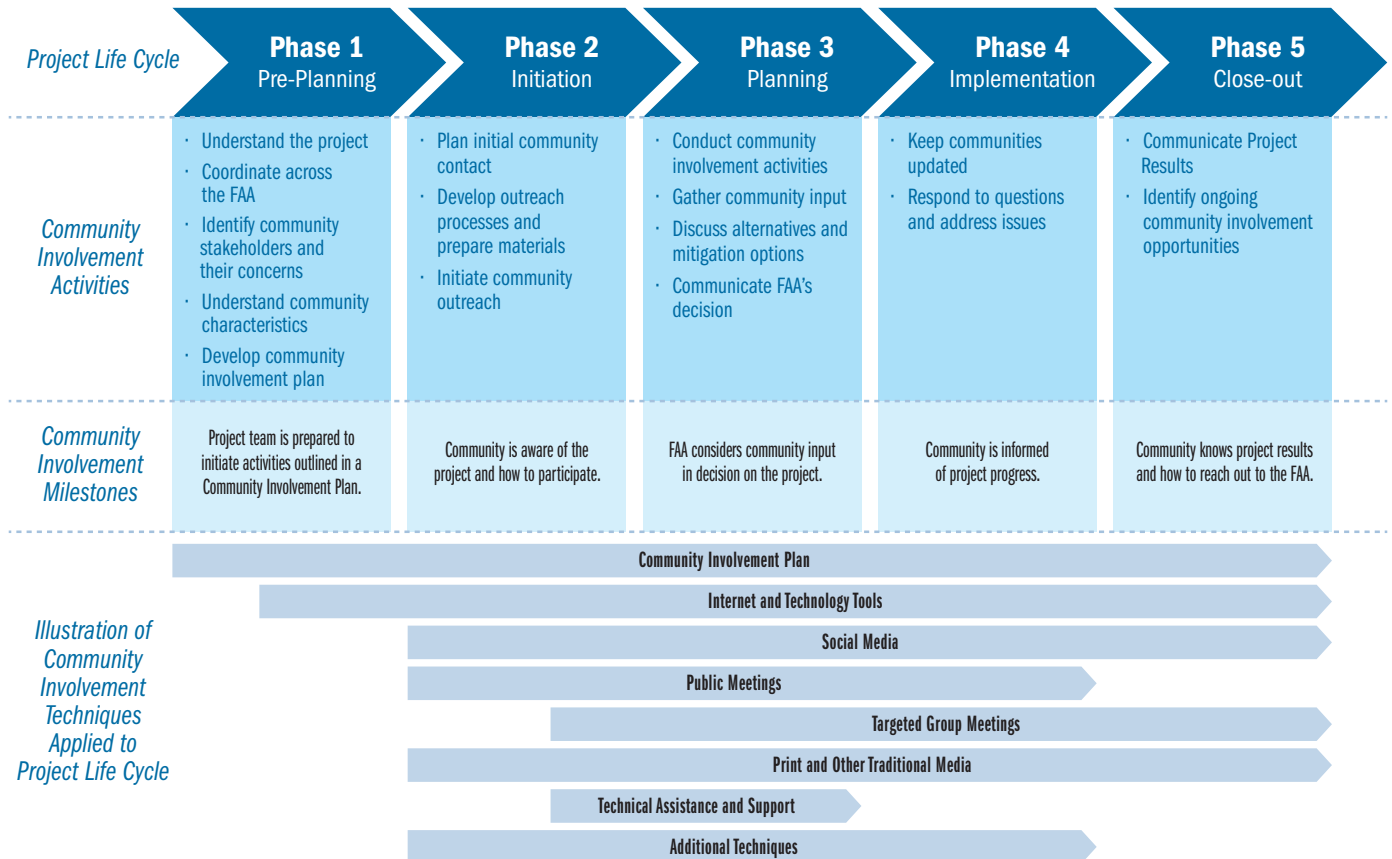
4. Implementation: After a decision has been made to go forward with the project, the FAA informs the community of the project start date and progress of implementation. During this phase, the FAA can respond to any further community issues and concerns that may arise.

5. Close-out: At the completion of the project, the FAA can provide an FAA contact or identify another mechanism for the community to convey new or ongoing concerns.

3.2 Project Life Cycle Phase I: Pre-Planning

Activities at this phase help the FAA to gauge the probability, level, and complexity of community issues and determine the extent of community involvement that should be undertaken. Information collected and evaluated by the FAA during this phase can affect project schedules and budgets and help determine the need for specialized resources (e.g., training, contractors, or communications) and the degree to which other LOBs/SOs need to be involved. The FAA should ensure that any airport operators in the project area are aware of the proposed project. At the completion of this phase, the FAA will have determined the level and extent of community involvement.

Exhibit 10: Project Life Cycle—Key Community Involvement Activities and Outcomes



3.2.1 Understand the Project

The purpose and goals of the proposed project should be identified before community involvement planning activities take place. FAA practitioners carrying out community involvement activities must understand and be able to describe in non-technical language the requirements, purpose, and goals of the proposed project, the general concept or approach for achieving those goals, the geographic locations that could be affected, the level of complexity of the effort, and the projected time frame of the project.

3.2.2 Coordinate Across the FAA

At this early stage, an effective way to identify community concerns (as well as groups and individuals likely to express those concerns) is by consulting with other FAA organizations, as indicated in Exhibit 11. It is important to make other FAA organizations aware of proposed

projects. FAA practitioners should coordinate with other LOBs/SOs to inform them of the project and learn about any relevant studies, related projects, or helpful information. The public generally expects FAA representatives to be familiar with the agency's activities.

Coordinating with other FAA LOBs/SOs is also essential to gain insights and make effective use of FAA resources and expertise. Some LOBs/SOs will be able to highlight sensitivities, community concerns, or ongoing community involvement activities. Staff within the FAA also have community involvement experience and can provide guidance on the most effective approaches, given the characteristics of a specific project and community. By coordinating across the FAA, practitioners can enhance their initial understanding of the level of likely community interest in their proposed project, local community interest

groups, and potential sources of information and assistance.

3.2.3 Identify Community Concerns

Identifying community concerns begins by identifying groups and individuals who may have an interest in, or be affected by, the project and/or who have a history of involvement with aviation issues. A project that would affect a community with a history of engagement in aviation activities may call for a different approach than one that affects a community with no previous involvement. The FAA's community involvement efforts and the choice of tools and techniques will be influenced by the nature of the project, community concerns, and the number and type of interested groups and individuals. There may be one community group that represents people with similar concerns or many groups with differing points of view.

Exhibit II: FAA LOB/SO Coordination

| FAA LOB/SO | How They Can Help |
|---|--|
| Office of Environment and Energy (AEE) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify ongoing or past projects and issues that may be relevant Identify sources of information or assistance from across the FAA Provide guidance and other resources related to community involvement and specific public participation requirements in FAA environmental orders |
| Office of Communications (AOC) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide best practices and tools for communicating with the public Develop and execute communications plans, including media coordination Identify past or current media coverage that may provide insight into community concerns |
| Office of Chief Counsel (AGC) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide guidance on regulatory or statutory requirements Identify any potential legal issues related to the project Identify any past, ongoing, or potential future legal action Review draft materials for community involvement |

(Table continued on next page.)

Exhibit II: FAA LOB/SO Coordination (cont.)

| FAA LOB/SO | How They Can Help |
|--|---|
| Office of Airports (ARP) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify airport projects that have raised or are expected to raise community concerns • Provide guidance and insight on community interest groups and community sensitivities • Identify regional or Airport District Office staff who can assist with outreach to airport operators and community groups • Coordinate with an airport sponsor's ongoing community involvement efforts |
| Air Traffic Organization (ATO) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify past, ongoing, or potential future air traffic procedure, airspace, and facilities projects that have raised or are expected to raise community concerns • Identify ATO Service Area staff who can assist with outreach to community groups who have been involved in past air traffic procedure, airspace, or facilities projects • Provide guidance and insight on community sensitivities |
| Office of Commercial Space Transportation (AST) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify past, ongoing, or potential future commercial space projects that have raised or are expected to raise community concerns • Identify resources who can assist with outreach and communication to communities near commercial space launch or reentry sites • Provide guidance and insights based on past experience |
| Aviation Safety (AVS) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify past, ongoing, or potential future aviation safety projects, policies, or industry operations that have raised or are expected to raise community concerns • Identify regional or Flight Standards District Office staff who can assist with outreach to aircraft operators and community groups |
| Regions and Centers (ARC) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide guidance and insights on community sensitivities based on regional knowledge and experience with community groups • Provide information on political interest in aviation issues in the region • Identify regional staff who can assist with outreach to community groups |
| Office of Government and Industry Affairs (AGI) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide political insights and coordination for projects with likely or known political interest in community concerns • Assist with responses to Congressional inquiries • Assist in identifying federally-elected officials with input on local concerns and community involvement efforts |
| Office of Civil Rights (ACR) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide assistance to ensure there is no unlawful discrimination against any person because of race, color, national origin, sex, creed, or disability • Identify public outreach techniques that can accommodate community members with Limited English Proficiency, those with disabilities, and other groups • Provide insight on stakeholder groups within the community and any sensitivities or past issues |

More planning, resources, and time may need to be devoted to community involvement when there are more groups with more diverse concerns. Groups outside the region and groups that are not associated with a specific location, such as the National Organization to Insure a Sound Controlled Environment (N.O.I.S.E.) or the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) may also warrant consideration.

FAA practitioners should also look beyond established groups when identifying community concerns. In addition to getting input from other FAA staff and the airport operator (if applicable), information on community concerns can be gathered from local elected officials, or through Internet searches from a range of sources, including local/national media and community websites/blogs. As information is collected during this phase, the areas represented by these groups can be located on a map to assist in identifying any additional areas with potential concerns.

3.2.4 Understand Community Characteristics

Understanding community characteristics helps to determine the appropriate amount and type of community involvement effort. The project team should be aware of the key characteristics of each community of interest in the project area. Population demographics may be important to consider, for example if there is a sizeable affected population that requires communication in a language other than English. It is particularly vital to identify low-income and minority populations to which Environmental Justice requirements apply. Other notable characteristics may include historic properties, parks and wildlife

refuges, tribal lands, and other cultural resources. Online tools, such as Google Earth, can provide a three-dimensional tour of the community.

3.2.5 Develop a Community Involvement Plan

A community involvement plan serves as an anchor document that identifies community involvement activities and aligns them with the project goals, schedule, and any legal requirements for public participation. A plan is recommended for any sizeable community involvement effort to help ensure that the project team is adequately prepared in terms of technical expertise, schedule, budget, and other resources. The project team generally begins to develop a plan once the community concerns and characteristics have been identified. Understanding how different perspectives and concerns are represented will influence how they will be addressed in the plan. Special consideration needs to be given to provide meaningful public involvement by minority and low-income populations (e.g., Environmental Justice populations).

Developing a community involvement plan early in the process creates a clear plan of action to initiate community outreach activities. Examples of key elements that can be included in a community involvement plan are listed in Exhibit 12. The community involvement plan can address relevant elements in a concise way. It is a living document that can be refined and updated as the project progresses. Additional information is likely to be collected during the initial community outreach activities, which may result in changes to the plan.

In addition, a community involvement plan can provide a basis to include

funds for community involvement as part of the project costs. It can identify the types of resources and skills needed and whether they are available in-house or need to be obtained through contractors. Coordination with FAA LOBs/SOs may help identify available resources within the FAA. Resources may need to cover technical support for websites, productions of presentation materials or publications, public meetings, and other techniques as identified in Chapter 2.

Exhibit 12: Key Elements of a Community Involvement Plan

| Project Description |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept/description • Location • Purpose and goals • Estimated schedule |
| Community Concerns and Characteristics |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key issues • Community groups and individuals • Community characteristics • FAA and airport contacts |
| Community Involvement Activities |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope of community involvement • Roles and responsibilities • Process for initiating contact with communities • Communication strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key messages • Materials • Website/other media • Schedule • Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical staff • Tools • Communications • Budget |

3.3 Project Life Cycle

Phase 2: Initiation

The community's introduction to the project and the project team generally occurs during this phase. First impressions can set the tone for constructive community involvement. The FAA practitioners initiating community involvement activities need to have the training and experience to interact with the community in a positive manner. They should also have enough information to describe in non-technical terms the proposed project, why it is needed, and the anticipated time frame for making an FAA decision.

Community involvement during this phase is not simply about making communities aware of the project, but also providing appropriate opportunities for their participation. This includes describing how they can get information and provide input and how community issues and views will be taken into consideration. The relationship between the community involvement process and the FAA's environmental review of the proposed project should be part of this early communication.

FAA practitioners can initiate community outreach using techniques suited to the specific characteristics of the community and the project (see Section 2.3, Effective Techniques). In some cases, communities may already be engaged in aviation issues through community roundtables, newsletters, or established websites. In other cases, a community may have little awareness and no pre-existing groups. In all cases, the FAA must provide for meaningful public involvement by minority and low-income populations.

In order to be successful, each project may require a different combination of communications and outreach methods.

3.3.1 Plan Initial Contact with the Community

The project team should determine who will contact the community groups and individuals identified in the community involvement plan. Trained and experienced staff can make initial FAA-community interactions go more smoothly. FAA practitioners who interact with the community should be experienced or trained in community involvement or be accompanied by individuals with the necessary expertise.

Project team members may want to review a proposed outreach list with FAA regional organizations or field offices to see if they have established relationships with community group leaders, local elected officials, or key stakeholders. For example, the Airport District Office and ATO Service Center staff may be able to make initial introductions or help craft the most effective message for initial outreach. FAA practitioners should also coordinate with management of affected airports, if the airport operator is not already involved in the project. The project team can also work with airport management or local government to introduce the project team to the community. Early coordination with airport management, elected officials, and community leaders helps inform the project team of the extent of local interest and anticipated community concerns. Consulting such officials before initiating broader community

outreach activities can also avoid putting them in a position of seeming uninformed about issues that may be of importance to their community.

3.3.2 Develop Outreach Processes and Prepare Materials

The project team should develop an initial process for communicating with the public and prepare some introductory materials before initiating community outreach. It may be helpful to work with AOC, AGI, and/or AGC in developing these materials to ensure that the messages they convey are consistent with agency policy and do not inadvertently raise legal issues. Before outreach begins, it is useful to have prepared or made arrangements for:

- **The Project Website:** This serves as the one-stop-shop for the project and can demonstrate the FAA's commitment to open and transparent communication with the public. The website can provide detailed information on the project and how the community can get involved, including mechanisms for community feedback and questions.
- **Informational Materials:** Materials such as brochures, mail-outs, exhibits, public notices, and press releases can clearly and concisely describe the proposed project, why it is being proposed, where individuals/groups can obtain more information, and how they can participate in the process. More detailed materials describing the areas where the project is planned and known community concerns can be developed and expanded during the community involvement process.

- **Mechanisms for Community**

Input: FAA practitioners initiating contact with communities should be able to offer mechanisms to provide feedback or ask questions. These may take the form of a hotline, email address, microblogging address (e.g., Twitter account), website comment/feedback form or mailing address, or meetings.

3.3.3 Initiate Community Outreach

Initial outreach should provide the information that the community needs to become involved. FAA practitioners initiating contact with communities should be able to clearly describe in non-technical terms:

- **The Project:** Provide a clear explanation of the problems to be solved, the goals, and an accurate description of the proposed project. The project description and justification should be provided in plain language to allow non-experts to understand complex technical topics.
- **Timeline and Key Milestones:** Make the community aware of the project schedule, including key milestones and opportunities for community involvement. Community involvement opportunities should be coordinated with any public participation requirements of the FAA's environmental review.
- **Key Issues and Concerns:** Share the FAA's preliminary understanding of the community and of the community's concerns and/or priorities (e.g., changes in noise patterns) to allow the community to correct or expand on initial impressions.

- **Ways to Participate:** Explain how communities can participate in the project. Provide email addresses, website addresses, and phone numbers. Let community members know if public meetings have been planned and when and where they will be held.

- **Communication Methods:** Describe how the FAA plans to communicate information on the project, including updates and key data (e.g., through a public website, newsletters, emails, or social media).

Initial outreach should be planned carefully to establish a strong foundation for future community involvement activities. This will be the first opportunity for community members to meet the project team, learn about the project, ask questions, and provide feedback.

From the outset, the project team should aim to be inclusive. Broad engagement and representation at meetings can help reflect all community views. This may reduce the likelihood that new community groups are identified later in the project and are dissatisfied because they were left out of initial engagement efforts. It is a good practice to provide affected airports, as well as officials from state and local governments, the opportunity to participate in community involvement activities. When officials from airports or the local government participate in meetings, it is usually valuable to review the meeting agenda, logistics, roles, and responsibilities with them in advance.

3.4 Project Life Cycle Phase 3: Planning

Typically, most community involvement activities occur in the project planning phase. During this phase, ongoing effective two-way communication enables the FAA to understand community concerns and consider their input. This phase may include efforts to educate the community on technical subject matter using understandable, non-technical terms, and work toward understanding key issues. Aircraft noise, which is often a community concern, can be particularly difficult to explain in non-technical terms. The FAA's methodology for calculating noise and determining a significant noise impact may not be understood and communities may not agree with FAA's conclusions. Noise increases that do not meet FAA's criteria for significant impact or reportable increases may still be considered a noise problem by the community. The AEE can offer assistance on explaining noise impacts to communities.

Community input and FAA analysis can help to shape project alternatives and/or mitigation measures that can be considered in the NEPA process during this phase. At the conclusion of this phase, the FAA will make a decision, based on project goals, analysis, community input, and other relevant factors, on whether and how it plans to move forward with the project.

3.4.1 Conduct Community Involvement Activities

Early community involvement activities typically focus on communicating the details of the proposed project and educating the public about technical issues. The FAA can provide information and opportunities for communities to give input and feedback through a range of activities (as described in Chapter 2). The type of communication will generally depend on the project and community interest. The FAA can provide additional information as it is developed, including environmental analyses. Providing opportunities for individuals to ask questions of experts at an open house or public hearing offers a chance to address any misperceptions or information gaps. Visualization and modeling tools can help to illustrate how the project could affect specific communities or resources.

3.4.2 Gather Community Input

Community input can be collected from the outset of the project, but community involvement efforts during the Planning Phase can provide the FAA with a more detailed understanding of the issues that need to be considered. As project planning proceeds, the community should become more knowledgeable of the project and be in a position to offer more robust feedback, perhaps including suggestions for project alternatives or mitigation. Techniques that may facilitate more detailed community input at this phase include work sessions, open houses, and brainstorming.

3.4.3 Discuss Alternatives and Mitigation Options

Community involvement may include input on project alternatives and ways to mitigate project impacts. The project team should be prepared to discuss alternatives currently under consideration and explore additional alternatives with the community. The project team should be able to describe the aviation and environmental implications of each alternative in non-technical terms.

As the community's concerns are better understood, the project team may be able to develop additional alternatives to address these concerns. Community groups and individuals may also put forward alternatives for the FAA's consideration. The project team can use a range of community involvement techniques to discuss alternatives with the community and gain their input. Techniques such as charrettes, brainstorming exercises, or working groups usually involve a time commitment and iterative process to review options and alternatives but may result in a better understanding of the reasonable range of alternatives, their relative merits, and any related tradeoffs. The project team should explain any impediments to adopting an alternative.

Mitigation options may also be raised by and discussed with the community during the planning phase. The FAA's community involvement process should be reflected in any NEPA documentation for the project. The FAA's consideration of reasonable alternatives and mitigation options must be consistent with FAA Order 1050.1 and any other relevant orders or policies.

3.4.4 Communicate the FAA's Decision

After gathering and considering community input and conducting all of the requisite analysis, the FAA is responsible for completing the NEPA process and making a decision on the project. It may not be possible to reach a decision that satisfies all parties, especially when there is a wide diversity of community views. It is important to communicate this decision, so the community is aware of the reasoning that underlies it and understands how community concerns were taken into account. The FAA will communicate the agency's decision in accordance with applicable FAA Orders. This communication should be coordinated within FAA, including how and when the decision is announced. A project implementation date or schedule can also be conveyed if known at this point.

3.5 Project Life Cycle Phase 4: Implementation

Phase 4 includes community involvement activities that may be considered during project implementation to maintain positive community relations and address unforeseen issues. Community involvement during implementation focuses on ensuring that communities remain aware of project progress, key milestones, and any significant changes or new issues that might affect the community. It can also be helpful to highlight key milestones to demonstrate progress, especially those that benefit the community.

3.5.1 Keep Communities Updated

During implementation, the project team can continue to provide information and mechanisms for community feedback. Since project implementation can take several years, it can be helpful to keep the community apprised of progress and maintain community access to public project records by maintaining the project website and providing regular updates through newsletters, the website, public meetings, and/or social media. For example, the FAA can provide information on:

- **Project Progress:** Regular communications describing the status of the project and major activities that are underway or will be started soon can keep the community up-to-date on the progress being made. Updates should identify any potential issues for the community, such as roads that might be closed, changes in air traffic patterns, or temporary construction impacts.
- **Key Milestones:** Highlighting major accomplishments shows the community that progress is being made. It may be especially helpful to spotlight milestones that benefit the community, such as re-opening a runway that returns air traffic to normal patterns or implementing a noise abatement procedure.
- **Changes to the Project:** It is not unusual for minor changes to occur during implementation for a variety of reasons. Changes of interest to the public should be communicated along with the reasons for the change. Certain changes may involve a written re-evaluation and possibly require supplemental analysis and documentation under NEPA; this should be determined prior to communicating the proposed change.

3.5.2 Respond to Questions and Address Issues

Communities may have questions about the project schedule, complaints about construction nuisances (traffic, noise, dust, etc.), or other concerns during project implementation. The FAA can strengthen community relations by recognizing these issues and responding to these concerns in an appropriate manner. It may be useful to maintain a question-and-answer (Q&A) webpage or Q&A section in newsletters.

3.6 Project Life Cycle Phase 5: Close-out

At project close-out, the FAA's community involvement activities shift from discussing an ongoing project to communicating project results that are of interest to the community, along with opportunities for ongoing community involvement. This may also be an appropriate time for the project team to conduct an internal review of lessons learned, best practices, and tools that could be used for other FAA projects in the future.

3.6.1 Communicate Project Results

Communicating project results to the community, including areas where the community influenced the planning process or helped improve the outcome, can occur via a project website or newsletter. In some cases, it may be appropriate to hold a meeting or other event with the community to share project results or to mark the project completion.

3.6.2 Identify Ongoing Community Involvement Opportunities

The community should know how it can reach out to the FAA once the project has ended, particularly where the FAA practitioners who worked with the community move on to projects in other locations. There are a number of different mechanisms for communities to communicate with the FAA after project completion including:

- **Ongoing Community Organizations:** In many locations, FAA regional or district office staff participate in airport and local community groups (e.g., Noise Roundtables) on a regular basis, not just during specific projects. These venues may provide opportunities for continuing FAA and community dialogue.
- **Regional Offices:** The FAA maintains offices in regions across the United States with representatives from different FAA organizations. The project team can provide communities with information on how to submit concerns or questions about aviation issues in their region or service area.

Opportunities for ongoing community involvement help to maintain relationships and provide communities with an enduring voice in aviation issues that affect them, even when there is no specific project underway. Where there is regular FAA activity or continuing robust community interest, it may be desirable to maintain an ongoing dialogue rather than having to rebuild community relationships for every project.

Notes

1. For the purpose of this document, “community involvement” is synonymous with “community engagement,” “public outreach,” and other similar terms.
2. The terms “actions” and “projects” are used interchangeably in this manual.
3. 42 United States Code (U.S.C.) §§ 4321–4335, 40, *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR), Parts 1500–1508, Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (Council on Environmental Quality [CEQ] Regulations).
4. Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, 59 *Federal Register* 7629 (February 16, 1994); Department of Transportation (DOT) Order 5610.2(a), Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations.
5. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, 54 U.S.C. § 36108, 36 CFR Part 800, Protection of Historic Properties.
6. FAA Order 1050.1F - *Policies and Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts* is available at http://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/headquarters_offices/apl/environ_policy_guidance/policy/faa_nepa_order/.
7. 5 U.S.C. App. §§ 1–16; 41 CFR Parts 101–6 and 102–3.
8. The Paperwork Reduction Act requires that agencies obtain approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) before requesting information from the public through surveys, interviews, and other methods. 44 U.S.C. §§ 3501–3521; 5 CFR Part 1320.
9. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requires federal agencies to disclose information requested by the public unless it falls under one of nine exemptions and requires agencies to proactively post online certain categories of information, including frequently requested records. 5 U.S.C. § 552; FAA Order 1270.1A, FOIA.
10. The Privacy Act establishes a code of fair information practices that governs the collection, maintenance, use, and dissemination of information about individuals that is maintained in systems of records by federal agencies. 5 U.S.C. § 552a.





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