

Engineering Project Communication Process

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What are the ramifications if a project moves from Moderate to Substantial late in the process (i.e. FPR)? Do we take a step back to satisfy the rule on engagement in all 3 phases?

A: There is no need to step back in the process. Proceed forward by providing public engagement in the current or subsequent phases. The decision to add engagement to the current phase will be made by the design team and project sponsor.

Q: Where do we put "4(f) and/or 6(f)" as a consideration when determining Level of Impact?

A: This is more of an overall project risk than it is impact to public interest. However, if the team feels this would result in heightened public interest, document it in the Rationale/Justification for decision section.

Q: How does the Project Manager find out if the Transportation Commission designates the project as having Substantial Impact?

A: The Chief Engineer/Preconstruction Engineer will notify the PM if the Commission designates a project as substantial. A PM can also review the Transportation Commission meeting minutes at: http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/trans_comm/

Q: When analyzing R/W involvement in determining Level of Impact, is there a range for the number of parcels for each of the Levels?

A: MCA 60-2-245 uses language implying any R/W involvement, but a limited/low amount of R/W involvement may be rationale for not classifying the project as having Substantial impact. Use best judgement and document in the Rationale/Justification for decision section.

Q: What is the definition of the terms: significant, some, short, moderate, long-term, controversial, high-interest, and potential?

A: Use your best judgement, experience, discuss with the design team, and Project Sponsor when determining the level of impact. There is a "Significant Project Checklist" (Appendix A) in the WZSM that you can use to help determine a project's level of impact. Remember that the project's level of impact is not static and can change as the project progresses and that the project's level of impact is just one of the many tools to help determine the best way to communicate to public/stakeholders about a project. Are

there new or innovative designs included? If in doubt, it is better to error on the safe side build the engagement early. It is difficult to engage the public after they have become upset about a project.

Q: Is utility involvement a consideration when determining Level of Impact?

A: This is more of an overall project risk than it is impact to public interest. However, if the team feels this would result in heightened public interest, document it in the Rationale/Justification for decision section.

Q: Are environmental subcategories (i.e. sensitive species, wetlands, permits, etc.) a consideration when determining Level of Impact?

A: These are more of an overall project risk than it is impact to public interest. However, if the team feels this would result in heightened public interest, document it in the Rationale/Justification for decision section.

Q: Where do we put special items not listed in the Level of Impact worksheet?

A: Additional areas not covered should be documented in the Rationale/Justification for decision section.

Q: When determining Level of Impact, should "Potential" condemnations, relocations, and displacements be considered Moderate and "Known" condemnations, relocations, and displacements be Substantial?

A: Heightened public involvement may be just what is needed to avoid condemnations. Therefore, potential condemnations should be considered substantial.

Q: Is "Politically important" the same as locally important when determining Level of Impact?

A: No. A project may have the eyes of a political faction not in the area.

Q: Is there flexibility to add comments to any box in the Level of Impact worksheet (i.e. PM checks box for "Local agency(s) interested in project, but largely hands-off", but want to note that it's only the County that has expressed interest. Or PM checks box for New Construction, but wants to note that it's only a sidewalk or path project.)?

A: Comments like these can be added to the Rationale/Justification for decision section.

Q: Where do we add ADA Ramps as an Area of Analysis when determining Level of Impact?

A: This is more of an overall project risk than it is impact to public interest. However, if the team feels this would result in heightened public interest, document it in the Rationale/Justification for decision section.

Q: What about funding types that come with timing restrictions (i.e. TSEP grant, etc.)? Are these a consideration for Level of Impact?

A: This is more of an overall project risk than it is impact to public interest. However, if the team feels this would result in heightened public interest, document it in the Rationale/Justification for decision section. Remember that TSEP and other grants may demonstrate that the public/local government has a vested interest in the project and wants to stay engaged throughout the development.

Q: What constitutes substantial irrigation coordination in the Level of Impact worksheet?

A: Coordination with numerous irrigation users.

Q: The Level of Impact worksheet contains the term "high profile project". How is it determined if a project is "high profile"? The public may not care about the design, but they may have a high interest regarding construction disruption.

A: This is a judgement call made by the Sponsor and Design Project Manager, with input from others if needed.

Q: Regarding e-docs, what about stale e-docs that need a re-evaluation? Is this a consideration when determining Level of Impact?

A: This is not a consideration when determining level of impact; however, updates on the status of the environmental document need to be communicated to the stakeholders and public.

Q: What about "impact to wide loads" or "lane width reduced to ## feet or less" as consideration of Level of Impact?

A: This should be a consideration under the category of traffic impacts during construction.

Q: What about temporary impacts? They can be just as important as permanent impacts when determining Level of Impact. An example is a detour. While full project build-out may not be controversial, the detour may be very unpopular.

A: This should be a consideration under the category of traffic impacts during construction.

Q: When filling out the Level of Impact worksheet, is the scope of work section just for roadwork? There may be minor roadwork (i.e. bridge approaches), but contain other "reconstruction"-type items.

A: The scope of work should consider entire project scope, not just the roadway.