

National Community Impact Assessment Research Design Team Recommendations for Development of the Strategic Plan

Prepared for

U. S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
Office of Human Environment

Florida Department of Transportation
Environmental Management Office

Prepared by

Center for Urban Transportation Research
University of South Florida



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Foreword

The Office of Human Environment (formerly the Office of Environment and Planning), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Environmental Management Office, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), convened the National Community Impact Assessment (CIA) Workshop September 15 and 16, 1998, in Tampa, Florida. The workshop was one outcome of an ongoing initiative to refocus transportation professionals on the importance and necessity of addressing community impact issues. Other FHWA efforts to enhance understanding and promote State DOT and metropolitan planning organization (MPO) initiatives in this area have included publications, such as *Community Impact Assessment: A Quick Reference for Transportation*, *Community Impact Mitigation: Case Studies*, and *Flexibility in Highway Design*.

One primary goal of the National CIA Workshop included exploring methods to incorporate CIA techniques throughout the project planning and development process. Oversight for workshop planning and evaluation was provided by the CIA Research Design Team, a group of transportation professionals, who have strongly influenced the development of several projects mentioned above. The Research Design Team convened a meeting on September 17, 1998, to assess the degree to which to the goals of the workshop had been met. One objective of the workshop was to gather recommendations that would be incorporated into an "action plan" for use by FHWA, State DOTs, and MPOs in future training, research, and other needs. These recommendations and other information from the workshop and earlier Design Team meetings are compiled in this document. This document establishes a framework for the development of a strategic plan to improve CIA techniques and incorporate CIA methods and principles into transportation decisionmaking during the planning, project development, construction, and maintenance phases.

The National CIA Workshop and the Research Design Team meeting were thought-provoking and a call to action by all participants to better understand community impacts at all phases and more effectively work with communities. Transportation actions can and should **improve** communities! These recommendations outline ways in which FHWA, State DOTs, and MPOs can improve their processes and work closely with communities to contribute to the quality of life of an area. The Research Design Team hopes that these recommendations will be championed by other practitioners throughout the industry and serve as the foundation for development of the National CIA Strategic Plan.

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Chronology of Key Community Impact Assessment (CIA) and Related Activities	5
Community Impact Assessment Research Design Team Goals	6
National Community Impact Assessment Recommendations	7
A. Action Items for a National Community Impact Assessment Program: Recommendations to State DOTs and MPOs	7
B. Action Plan for a National Community Impact Assessment Program: Recommendations to FHWA	13
Appendix A: CIA Research Design Team and Meeting Attendees	21

Introduction

In 1997, Leroy Irwin, Manager, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Environmental Management Office, invited several representatives of State departments of transportation (DOTs) and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) to serve as members of a research design team on projects for improving the community impact assessment (CIA) process. Many of the invitees had participated in the preparation of the *Community Impact Assessment: A Quick Reference for Transportation* primer. The National CIA Research Design Team was charged to:

1. Serve as a technical resource to the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) staff at the University of South Florida on the evaluation of the CIA primer's effectiveness since publication;
2. Form and serve as a steering committee for a National CIA Conference in 1998; and
3. Serve as a technical resource to FDOT and CUTR in the development of a CIA Handbook on Methods. (The handbook is an FDOT-funded research project, separate from the evaluation and conference.)

CUTR conducted a National CIA Evaluation for the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Office of Human Environment (HEHE), in cooperation with the FDOT, Environmental Management Office (EMO). The CIA Research Design Team met in Tampa, Florida, January 26 and 27, 1998, to review the interim findings of the national evaluation, develop an action plan, and make recommendations to FHWA based on the evaluation. As part of the action plan, the Team began planning for a Community Impact Assessment National Practitioner Workshop for Fall 1998. The National CIA Workshop was held in Tampa, September 15 through 16, 1998.

On September 17, 1998, the Research Design Team and other attendees of the National CIA Workshop convened to discuss the workshop. The Research Design Team is composed of representatives of 10 states. A listing of the Research Design Team members and other meeting attendees is provided in Appendix A. The National CIA Workshop was part of an ongoing initiative to refocus transportation professionals and enhance their skills in addressing the impacts of transportation actions on communities. (The workshop summary is available from FDOT.) The goals of the meeting included reviewing past recommendations from the evaluation of the *Community Impact Assessment: A Quick Reference for Transportation* primer, other Research Design Team meetings, and obtain initial feedback from the workshop to formulate a strategic plan. To accomplish these objectives in the limited timeframe, the meeting was facilitated by Louise Fragala of Powell, Fragala, and Associates, Inc.

The remainder of the document contains a chronology of key dates and activities related to CIA, CIA Research Design Team Goals, action items, and other strategic actions proposed to integrate CIA into the transportation planning and project-development process.

Chronology of Key Community Impact Assessment and Related Activities

June 1995	American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) requested FHWA to provide guidance to State DOTs on CIA.
December 1995	FHWA facilitated State practitioner meeting in Washington, DC.
August 1996	FDOT created a statewide team to review Federal and State CIA, public involvement, Title VI, Environmental Justice, and relocation practices and procedures from planning through project-development phases.
September 1996	<i>Community Impact Assessment: A Quick Reference for Transportation</i> , a.k.a. the "Purple Book" facilitated, published, and distributed by State practitioners and FHWA.
May 1997	FDOT's CIA Team report published.
July 1997	FHWA <i>Flexibility in Highway Design</i> book was released.
Fall 1997	Evaluation of the effectiveness of the "Purple Book" cosponsored by FDOT and FHWA. Evaluation respondents identify the need for more outreach.
January 26-27, 1998	CIA Research Design Team meeting in Tampa, Florida, to plan National CIA Workshop.
May 3-5, 1998	"Thinking Beyond the Pavement" – "context-sensitive design" was a theme of a meeting held in Maryland and cosponsored by Maryland (MD DOT), AASHTO, and FHWA.
May 1998	FHWA <i>Community Impact Mitigation: Case Studies</i> book was released.
August - December 1998	National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Project 25-19, "Evaluation of Methods, Tools, and Techniques to Assess the Social and Economic Effects of Transportation Projects," Panel was convened. A 20-month study was initiated including a literature review, survey of government agencies, classification, evaluation, draft handbook, peer review, final handbook (Planned completion November 2000).
September 15-16, 1998	First National CIA Workshop was held in Tampa, Florida, cosponsored by FDOT and FHWA.
September 17, 1998	CIA Research Design Team Meeting to develop recommendations for the National CIA Strategic Plan in Tampa.
April 25-28, 1999	TRB meeting on "Transportation Planning Research Needs and Requirements," in Irvine, California, cosponsored by TRB and FHWA.
May 2-5, 1999	"National Town Meeting for a Sustainable America," in Detroit, Michigan, cosponsored by the President's Council on Sustainable Development and the Global Environment and Technology Foundation. Call: (888) 333-6878. Internet: http://www2.whitehouse.gov/PCSD/ntm-plain.html .

Acronyms

AASHTO	American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
CIA	Community Impact Assessment
DOT	Department of Transportation
FDOT	Florida Department of Transportation
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
TRB	Transportation Research Board

Community Impact Assessment Research Design Team Goals

- < Use CIA to make better decisions.
- < Help communities and practitioners be more informed.
- < Aid decisionmakers to become "community sensitive."
- < Encourage interdisciplinary decisionmaking.
- < Illustrate the benefits of considering community values.
- < Network with colleagues in CIA.
- < Provide technical assistance on CIA.
- < Document research needs in CIA.
- < Promote consideration of practitioners' needs.
- < Support public involvement as a valued source of data.
- < Serve as a focal point for CIA information.

National Community Impact Assessment Recommendations

A. Action Items for a National Community Impact Assessment Program: Recommendations to State DOTs and MPOs

The recommendations comprise a number of “action items” that are to be undertaken by practitioners, on an individual level, within their units, and within their organizations. These items should be considered, as appropriate, by staff responsible for transportation planning and decisionmaking at the local level, and within MPOs, State DOTs, and Federal Highway Divisions, Resource Centers, and Headquarters. Generally, State, local, and federal managers and practitioners are asked to promote dialogue on community impact assessment within their respective organizations. Suggested methods for doing so are given below.

1. Organizational Change/Global Integration

Assess where you are as an individual. Assess your unit.

< Become familiar with these publications and the materials referenced in these publications:

U.S. Department of Transportation, FHWA. *Community Impact Assessment: A Quick Reference for Transportation*. September 1996.

U.S. Department of Transportation, FHWA. *Community Impact Mitigation: Case Studies*. May 1998.

U.S. Department of Transportation, FHWA. *Flexibility in Highway Design*. 1997.

< Become an ambassador, promoting the use of CIA techniques when consideration is given to **any** transportation action.

Bring together those with experience in CIA to share their stories.

< Call informal meetings with others in your unit or organization.

< Host meetings of community analysts from other organizations, e.g., local governments, MPOs, transit authorities, and turnpike authorities. Discuss CIA barriers and ways to link to processes and programs.

< Organize CIA sessions at local, State, regional, and national transportation and transportation-related meetings.

- < Organize CIA sessions at local, State, regional, and national planning, public administration, and impact assessment meetings.

Look for areas in your organization that are not using CIA.

- < Document where CIA techniques could have been used.
- < Document delays in the process when CIA is ignored or not conducted sufficiently.
- < Share your findings and recommendations.

Make a special effort to focus on the CIA process in existing projects.

- < Use CIA techniques on a trial basis as a pilot project.
- < Program the use of CIA techniques into future projects.

Identify CIA advocates within your department; encourage dialogue among the staff.

- < Develop an internal group of resource staff.
- < Seek assistance from and share information with resource staff.

Conduct an internal procedure review. (This was the starting point of FDOT's process.)

- < Share the publications mentioned earlier within your organization.
- < Conduct an assessment of your organization. The FDOT, EMO will share their assessment report.

Contact:

Lee Ann Jacobs
Florida Department of Transportation
Environmental Management Office
605 Suwannee Street, MS-37
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0450
(850) 922-7201
(850) 922-7217 (fax)
<http://www.dot.state.fl.us/emo/>

Organize intrastate teleconferences with similar staff to discuss community impact issues.

- < Hold periodic telephone calls with peers; share stories, information, and recommendations.
- < Use the information gathered in teleconferences to generate workshop sessions, research ideas, and other methods of advancing CIA.

Import other States' training initiatives or programs.

- < Selected handbooks and other materials:

California Department of Transportation. *Caltrans Environmental Handbook, Volume 4 - Community Impact Assessment*. July 1997. [<http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/Environmental/offdocs/mandocs/handbook/handbook.htm#winhbkvol4>].

Florida Department of Transportation. *Project Development and Environment Manual -Part 2: Analysis and Documentation*. 1995. <http://www.dot.state.fl.us/emo/pubs/pdeman/pdeman.htm>

Illinois Department of Transportation. *Environmental Technical Manual: Socio-Economic Impact Assessment*. 1992.

Wisconsin Department of Transportation. *Land Use in Environmental Documents: Indirect and Cumulative Effects Analysis for Project-Induced Land Development - Technical Reference Guide Document*. 1997.

U.S. Department of Transportation. *Public Involvement Techniques for Transportation Decision-making*. September 1996. [Download from <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/reports/pittd/cover.htm>.]

- < Selected training programs:

"Public Involvement in NEPA and the Transportation Decisionmaking Process."
National Highway Institute. Contact:

Lynn Cadarr
(703) 235-0528
e-mail: lynn.cadarr@fhwa.dot.gov
<http://www.nhi.fhwa.dot.gov/>
Cost: \$5,000/\$10,000

“Public Involvement in Transportation Decisionmaking.” National Transit Institute. Contact:

Amy Van Doren
Associate, Multimodal Planning
732-932-1700 (extension 21)
e-mail: avd@rci.rutgers.edu
<http://policy.rutgers.edu/nti/index.htm>
Cost: Free

Tie the [CIA] subject to other initiatives within DOT, other conferences, and new initiatives.

- < Offer to present information, papers, or presentations at department internal meetings, other State and local organizations, and other conferences.
- < Seek opportunities to relate to other initiatives, e.g., Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21)-related guidance, context-sensitive design, sustainable development, and livable communities.
- < Involve other practitioners in the assessment and decisionmaking processes by creating interdisciplinary or cross-functional task teams.
- < Get national agencies to partner and put CIA on the table as part of their agenda.

Review policies, procedures, and role definitions within and external to your organization. Identify where there is consensus, build partnerships and support.

- < Set up working groups to establish consensus on CIA process and revise policies and procedures accordingly.
- < Link processes for effective CIA purposes: local comprehensive planning, MPO planning, and NEPA process.

Build CIA into resource allocation plans.

- < Push for CIA training resources.
- < Push for staff resources to conduct adequate CIA.

Take a “do it right the first time” attitude.

- < Promote CIA techniques, internally and externally, as the correct and efficient way to plan transportation actions.
- < Document where CIA techniques save time, resources, and reduce conflicts.

Actively Build Positive Resource-Agency Contact Relationships

- < Governor’s Office
- < News Media
- < Environmental: State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Corps of Engineers, Parks and Recreation, Planning and Zoning, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Human Resource or Social Service Agencies

Long-term, training courses and workshops will need to be developed by State DOTs and made available to FHWA, Resource Agencies, and MPO staff for incorporating CIA goals and concepts into the transportation planning and project development process.

2. Increase Awareness/Inform the Public

Establish and maintain credibility with communities.

- < Work with communities, explaining why people and their input are critical to “getting the job done.”
- < Develop “problem-solving” networks in communities to assist in obtaining consensus in the implementation stages.
- < Promote outreach programs on programs and projects. “Go to the people. Don’t have people come to you.”
- < “Open up” decisionmaking processes for policies, projects, programs, and plans.

Clarify the community’s role in the transportation decisionmaking process.

- < Define the decisionmaking process for the community.

- < Define the roles of stakeholders in the decisionmaking process.

Respond quickly to community requests.

- < Establish a public involvement program that promotes two-way communication and is responsive.

Look for resources within community groups to “get the word out.”

- < Build base profiles of communities. Know your public.
- < Identify key resource people within the community **before** the project or program begins.
- < Proactively network within communities.
- < Stay in touch and stay informed.

Coordination/Partnering

- < Inform others about CIA, e.g., citizens’ groups, MPOs, public agencies, environmental resource agencies, etc.
- < Go to other organizations to explain CIA – increase awareness, working scenarios.
- < Proactively seek to link processes. Identify community needs through community advisory committees, political entities, councils of government (COGs), and other agencies in the community or that work with communities.
- < Learn other organizations’ planning and project development processes. Learn their established goals and objectives. Learn their programs and plans.

B. Action Plan for a National Community Impact Assessment Program: Recommendations to FHWA

Create Seamless CIA Progression from Planning through Project Development.

- < Work with State DOTs and MPOs to link processes, remove barriers, streamline CIA information flow and establish a seamless process.

Create Community Impact Mitigation Case Studies Booklet of Everyday Projects.

- < Develop a case studies on community impact mitigation and enhancements for everyday use.

Create, sponsor, or endorse multiple CIA training packages of differing lengths, topics, audiences, and types, e.g. half-day, full-day, or 2-day. Suggested training topics:

- < CIA "How-To"
- < CIA Process, Procedures, and Regulations
- < CIA Analysis and Methods
- < Consensus Building or Conflict Resolution
- < CIA Data Sources
- < Federal/State Requirements
- < General Public Education
- < Decisionmaking and CIA Process
- < Landuse Impacts
- < Linking the three processes: NEPA, MPO, and local government planning.
- < Community Impact Mitigation Techniques
- < Public/Community Involvement within the CIA Process
- < Topical Area Training

- @ relocation,
- @ scoping,
- @ community cohesion,
- @ time saved by “doing it right the first time”,
- @ CIA issues, e. g. construction, aesthetic values, traditional/cultural values, community cohesion, economics, quality of life, landuse, environment (air, noise, other animal and plant life or “greens”);
- @ civil rights,
- @ Native American issues,
- @ relocation issues,
- @ growth management,
- @ secondary and cumulative impacts,
- @ organizational development,
- @ community development,
- @ comprehensive planning, and
- @ the Federal continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3 “C”) planning; local; MPO; and NEPA processes, and
- @ tools to measure the effectiveness of CIA.

< Secondary and Cumulative (Indirect) Impacts

< Who to Contact, When, and How

< Why CIA?

Provide Training.

< Create a training delivery system:

- @ self-taught,
- @ State DOT-to-MPO,
- @ State DOT-to-State DOT,
- @ traditional-instructor to others, e.g., FHWA National Highway Institute (NHI), Federal Transit Administration National Transit Institute (NTI),
- @ train-the-trainer modules,
- @ videoconferencing,
- @ videotapes,
- @ webcasts (courses delivered via the Internet),
- @ workbooks, manuals, and other written materials, and
- @ workshops.

Suggested training audiences:

< CIA Practitioners

< DOT administrators and managers

- < FHWA staff
- < General Audience
- < Local Planners
- < MPOs
- < Project Engineers
- < Resource Agencies

FHWA Comprehensive Resource Book

Develop a resource book and CD-ROM that contains regulations, policies, guidance, technical advisories, resource handbooks, and so forth. Include an extensive bibliography of "good, practical" resource material. Include this information on a website.

FHWA Pilot Programs

Coordinate CIA with the "context-sensitive design" approaches AASHTO and FHWA are pursuing. This was the focus of the May 1998 "Thinking Beyond the Pavement" conference. This includes:

- @ mainstreaming context-sensitive design into MPO and State DOT transportation decisionmaking, and
- @ sensitizing planners and designers to community needs, plans, impacts, and desires – the "context."

Five national pilot projects are being pursued to this end. The State DOTs involved include Connecticut, Kentucky, Maryland, Minnesota, and Utah.

National CIA Clearinghouse

FHWA and FDOT will work with CUTR to establish a National Clearinghouse on community impact assessment. The Clearinghouse will provide a central location or responsible entity overseeing transportation research related to CIA to facilitate technology transfer. The Clearinghouse will serve as an information center and database on the literature and other resources related to CIA. CUTR will draw on the knowledge and expertise of the CIA Research Design Team to help in the development of the Clearinghouse and to provide reactions to the effectiveness and quality of its products. Tasks to be accomplished are detailed below.

< Assemble Resources

A listing of literature and experts are to be assembled establishing a basic information center and database on the materials and resources related to CIA. (This builds on CUTR's existing resources.)

< Develop Quarterly Circulars on CIA Issues

Focusing on a particular issue, such as public involvement, relocations, or using analytical tools, develop in-depth reviews of issues, including interviews with experts, discussions of assessment tools, and project outcomes. The circular distribution would include national workshop attendees, the list of experts in the Clearinghouse database, and others that express interest. The circular also would be accessible via the Internet and serve as an interim report on the project status and as a form of technology transfer.

< Develop an Internet Presence

Provide a website on "Community Impact Assessment." The site could provide summaries of CIA-related research, links to related websites, archives of a moderated listserver, and reports on ongoing activities of the practitioners and the Clearinghouse.

< Examine and Synthesize Research on Community Impacts

Monitor and coordinate reviews of literature and current research on relevant issues. This effort will contribute to issues for the circular; provide information and topics to practitioners; and supplement the database.

< Provide Short-term Technical Support and Other Technology Transfer

Provide technical assistance on a short-term basis to local and State entities. This may include assistance in transportation project planning and development; advanced technologies; movement of persons, goods, services, and information; environmental justice; public involvement; and mobility issues of persons with disabilities.

< Provide Additional Outreach through Presentations at National, State, and Local Workshops and Conferences

Seek local, State, and national opportunities to present papers and presentations on CIA. Efforts will be made to have publications of the research activities and findings in national transportation and related journals. In addition, the project team will make presentations and provide materials about the Clearinghouse at State, regional, and national meetings.

< Provide Support to a Practitioners' Network.

This effort could be supplemented by others, such as the CIA Research Design Team or a "speakers' bureau." The practitioners would:

- @ exchange scopes of work,
- @ provide mentoring to other States,
- @ provide peer reviews,
- @ network,
- @ collaborate and cross-train,
- @ establish/maintain state-of-the-art.

Develop Analysis Tools.

The CIA Research Design Team and FHWA will develop research to provide appropriate tools for analyzing the effectiveness of CIA techniques. During the workshop and in other arenas, the effectiveness of CIA techniques has been questioned as it relates to cost-savings and streamlining the transportation planning and project development process. Analysis of the CIA process, refining the process, and dissemination of information by the Design Team may also support other areas.

Develop a National Program of Applied Research.

Research results should suggest policy and practice growth and change areas that benefit programs and communities. Potential topics include:

- @ time saved by "doing it right the first time";
- @ CIA issues, e. g. construction, aesthetic values, traditional/cultural values, community cohesion, economics, quality of life, landuse, environment (air, noise, other animal and plant life or "greens");
- @ civil rights,
- @ Native American issues,
- @ relocation issues,
- @ growth management,
- @ secondary and cumulative impacts,
- @ organizational development,
- @ community development,
- @ comprehensive planning,
- @ the Federal continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3 "C") planning; local; MPO; and NEPA processes, and
- @ tools to measure the effectiveness of CIA.

Develop Syntheses of State DOT CIA Practices including in-house, contracted, and contract wording.

FHWA Awards Program

- < Provide special awards, recognition, grants, designations, and incentives. Honorees should include:
 - @ management and agency personnel involved with CIA,
 - @ communities, and
 - @ consultants.

- < Partner with State DOTs on program development,
 - @ provide framework CIA program initiatives and
 - @ provide funding to assist in carrying out initiatives.

Flexibility in Highway Design Coordination

Work with State DOTs to coordinate the integration of community impact assessment and the flexibility in highway design efforts.

Investigate Potential Computer Models/Modeling of CIA.

Make presentations at Key State and National Conferences.

- < American Public Transit Association (APTA)
- < American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO)
- < American Planning Association (APA)
- < American Society for Public Administration (ASPA)
- < Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO)
- < Citizen Groups - local and national
- < Environmental Agencies
- < Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE)
- < Interest Groups
- < National Association of Regional Councils (NARC)
- < National Governors' Conference

Hold Periodic Regional and National Conference Calls Between Practitioners.

Hold National, Biennial CIA Conferences/Workshops for Practitioners.

Hold Statewide/District-wide CIA Workshops for Communities and Agencies.

Hold Periodic Transportation Town Meetings on Issues, Needs, and Impressions.

Participate in District State DOT CIA Workshops.

Create Question and Answer Sheets on CIA.

Create Networking Media.

- < Newsletter Articles
- < Clearinghouse
- < Website with Practitioner Chat Room
- < State DOT Practitioners and FHWA CIA Specialists and Technical Contacts
- < Maintain a Bibliography of Relevant CIA Research Items

Create a Photo Library of “Community” and “Human” Before-and-After Pictures.

Conduct an International Scanning Tour of CIA Best Practices.

Actively Promote Multiple CIA-Interest Messages (Context-Sensitive Design, Flexible Design, Useful Public Involvement, Title VI/Environmental Justice, etc.).

Create Lists of CIA-Related Programs and Contact People – local/State/National; Livable Communities, Sustainable Development, Reverse Commute, Welfare to Work, Transportation and Community and System Preservation (TCSP) Pilot Program,

Empowerment Zones/Enterprise Communities, Bicycle and Pedestrian Activities, Noise, Air Quality, Wild and Scenic Rivers, Scenic Byways, Historic Preservation, Water Quality, etc.

Seek to establish CIA subcommittees in the American Public Transit Association (APTA), Association of American State and Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO), the Transportation Research Board (TRB), the Association of Metropolitan Planning Officials (AMPO), the National Association of Regional Planning Councils (NARC), and other transportation professional organizations.

Submit CIA-related Topics as Research Ideas and Research Project Problem Statements to the National Cooperative Highway Research Program, Transit Cooperative Research Program, and Other Research Programs.

< Partner with State DOTs and MPOs on CIA research development.

Promote CIA Techniques through the New Federal Resource Centers.

Integrate CIA into Other Regulatory Assessment Areas.

Identify and Disseminate Information on “Best Practices.”

Promote the “Greening of the Agencies.”

Emphasize CIA in Policy Statements and Revisions to Regulations.

Provide FHWA Staff Support to Help Develop Process.

Promote Public Involvement Throughout Agencies – Continuous Process.

Appendix A: CIA Research Design Team* and Meeting Attendees

Michael E. Burns
Engineer of Highway Design
Maine Department of Transportation
16 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0016
(207) 287-3172
(207) 287-6737
michael.burns@state.me.us

Buddy Cunill*
Transportation Policy Administrator
Florida Department of Transportation
605 Suwannee Street, MS 37
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0450
(850) 922-7207
(850) 922-7217
Buddy.Cunill@DOT.State.FL.US

Jan H. Grenfell
Environmental Impact Specialist
Louisiana Department of Transportation and
Development
Environmental Section
P.O. Box 94245
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9245
(504) 929- 9183/90
(504) 929-9188
sect28@premier.net

C. Leroy Irwin*
Manager
Florida Department of Transportation
605 Suwannee Street, MS 37
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0450
(850) 922-7201
(850) 922-7217
leroy.irwin@dot.state.fl.us

Eugene W. Cleckley
Resource Center Director
Federal Highway Administration, HRC-SO
61 Forsyth Street, SW., Suite 17T26
Atlanta, GA 30303-3104
(404) 562-3570
(404) 562-3700
eugene.cleckley@dot.fhwa.gov

Wade Duchene
FHWA Environmental Protection Specialist
Federal Highway Administration
Office of Human Environment
Environmental Operations Division
400 7th Street, SW., Rm. 3301, HEP-30
Washington, DC 20590
(202) 366-2048
(202) 366-3409
wade.duchene@dot.fhwa.gov

Jesse W. Hall
Assistant Environmental Manager
South Carolina Department of Transportation
P. O. Box 191
Columbia, SC 29202-0191
(803) 737-1872
(803) 737-9868
halljw@dot.state.sc.us

John F. Isom*
Senior Environmental Scientist
Arkansas State Highway and
Transportation Department
P. O. Box 2261
10324 Interstate 30
Little Rock, AR 72203
(501) 569-2281
(501) 569-2009
jfid176@ahtd.state.ar.us

Greg P. King*
History, Architecture, and Community
Studies Branch Chief
Caltrans Environmental Program
1120 N Street MS 27
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 653-0647
(916) 653-6126
greg.king@dot.ca.gov

Robert Laravie*
Environmental Manager
New York State Department of Transportation
Hunters Point Plaza 47-40 21st Street
Long Island, NY 11101
(718) 482-6726
(718) 482-4660
RLARAVIE@gw.dot.state.ny.us

Ed Mierzejewski
Deputy Director
University of South Florida
Center for Urban Transportation Research
4202 E. Fowler Avenue, CUT 100
Tampa, FL 33620-5375
(813) 974-9797
(813) 974-5168
mierzeje@cutr.eng.usf.edu

Donald Sparklin*
Project Environmental Manager
Maryland Department of Transportation
State Highway Administration
707 North Calvert Street MS C-301
Baltimore, MD 21202
(410) 545-8564
(410) 209-5004
Dsparklin@sha.state.md.us

Brenda C. Kragh*
Social Science Analyst
Federal Highway Administration
Office of Human Environment
Environmental Operations Division
400 7th Street, SW., Rm. 3301, HEP-30
Washington, DC 20590
(202) 366-2064
(202) 366-3409
Brenda.Kragh@fhwa.dot.gov

Judith Lindsey-Foster*
Supervisor, NEPA Unit
Maine Department of Transportation
Office of Environmental Services
16 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0016
(207) 287-5735
(207) 287-8757
judy.lindsey-foster@state.me.us

Barbara Stevens*
Illinois Department of Transportation
Bureau of Design and Environment
2300 South Dirksen Parkway Room 330
Springfield, IL 62764
(217) 785-4245
(217) 524-9356
StevensBH@nt.dot.state.il.us

Blanche S. Sproul
Environmental Manager
South Carolina Department of Transportation
P. O. Box 191
Columbia, SC 29202-0191
(803) 737-1395
(803) 737-9868
SproulBS@dot.state.sc.us

Terrence A. Taylor*
Miami-Dade
Metropolitan Planning Organization Secretariat
Stephen P. Clark Center
111 NW First Street, Suite 910
Miami, FL 33128-1904
(305) 375-4507
(305) 375-4950
mpotery@co.miami-dade.fl.us

Lynne M. Whately
Senior Planner
Carter-Burgess
1020 E. Lafayette Street, Suite 206
Tallahassee, FL 32301
(850) 877-8711
(850) 877-0348
whatellm@C-B.com

Lynn R. Zollinger, P.E.
Chief Environmental Engineer
Utah Department of Transportation
4501 South 2700 West
Salt Lake City, UT 84119
(801) 965-4327
(801) 965-4564
lzolling@dot.state.ut.us

Beverly G. Ward
Deputy Director for ETS
University of South Florida
Center for Urban Transportation Research
4202 E. Fowler Avenue, CUT 100
Tampa, FL 33620-5375
(813) 974-9773
(813) 974-5168
ward@cutr.eng.usf.edu

Kristine Williams
Senior Research Associate
University of South Florida
Center for Urban Transportation Research
4202 E. Fowler Avenue, CUT 100
Tampa, FL 33620-5375
(813) 974- 9807
(813) 974-5168
krwillia@cutr.eng.usf.edu



Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR)
College of Engineering
University of South Florida
4202 East Fowler Avenue, CUT 100
Tampa, FL 33620-5375
(813) 974-3120
(813) 974-5168
www.cutr.eng.usf.edu

