

CHAPTER 9 : RELOCATION & DISPLACEMENT

Transportation projects often require new right-of-way, and the acquisition of land, homes, or businesses. Relocation is the act of displacing residents, community facilities, or businesses from structures or land taken by eminent domain for transportation projects. Direct relocation impacts may range from limited incidental taking, to disruption of the function of a residence or business, to the acquisition and total demolition of structures.

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Right-of-Way Manual requires Right-of-Way Office staff to prepare a Conceptual Stage Relocation Plan (CSRPlan) for all transportation projects, except projects such as roadway resurfacing that are processed as a Type 1 Categorical Exclusion. (For a detailed discussion on making a class of action determination, see Chapter 3 of the Florida Department of Transportation's Project Development Manual) and Part II, Chapter 11 of the PD&E Manual. The PD&E Manual requires Environmental Management Office staff to incorporate the CSRPlan into the environmental document and to *assess all potential relocation impacts* that could result from each project alternative, both positive and negative. This process is to include full consideration of all substantive issues raised by the CSRPlan. In addition, environmental management staff are to coordinate development of the environmental document with the development of the CSRPlan. This chapter describes potential relocation impacts and suggests assessment techniques and mitigation strategies for addressing those potential impacts.

Through close consultation with ROW staff, coordinate development of the Conceptual Stage Relocation Plan with the environmental document.

UNDERSTANDING POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Relocation impacts involve modifying relations between people and their homes, neighbors and the institutions they frequent. Typically, there are three groups affected by residential and commercial relocations:

- Relocated households
- Relocated businesses/community facilities; and
- Impacted neighborhoods, both those neighborhoods subject to relocations and those neighborhoods into which households, businesses, or community facilities are relocated.

Impacts of Residential Relocations

Potential impacts to households being relocated can be financial or social and psychological in nature. Potential negative financial impacts to relocated households include increased living expenses, increased property taxes,



moving expenses, and increased travel costs to and from work. Negative financial impacts related to residential relocation are identified in the CSRP and are handled in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended.

Not all potential financial impacts to relocated households are negative, however. Potential positive relocation impacts include the sale of a property which may have otherwise been difficult to sell on the open market, decreased living and travel expenses, decreased property taxes, ownership of more valuable property, and relocation to decent, safe, and sanitary housing.

Potential social/psychological impacts to members of relocated households generally pertain to changes in the living environment and the emotional attachment to a particular home or neighborhood. Although the prevailing attitude is that residential relocation is a negative impact, this is not always the case. In many instances, individuals and families required to relocate due to a project improve their quality of living because of a better housing situation than the one they left behind.



However, residential relocation can have serious adverse effects, particularly for certain groups of residents. Long-term residents, persons with disabilities, and elderly persons often have particular difficulty adjusting to required relocation. Residents with mobility limitations, such as persons with disabilities and low-income individuals, may find it difficult to meet daily needs due to the loss of facilities and services they depend on. These individuals also tend to have greater reliance on community-based social networks. Elderly persons have particular difficulty adjusting to new surroundings and establishing new social ties.

Groups Having More Difficulty Adjusting to Relocation Include:	
Elderly	Non-English Speaking
Physically and Mentally Disabled	Ethnic and Racial Minority
Low-Income	Long-Term Residents
Households with School-Age Children	

Several studies support the following conclusions about the adverse impacts of relocation and displacement on low-income, minority and other special groups:¹

- The impact of displacement for right-of-way acquisition is often more pronounced in low-income neighborhoods or in areas which contain large numbers of the poor, elderly, or ethnic and racial minorities, yet highway locations are more likely to be chosen through such neighborhoods due in part to lower acquisition costs;

¹ U.S. Department of Transportation, The Environment Assessment Notebook Series: Social Impacts, 1975, 127.

- One major factor that inhibits the ability to adjust to relocation is the shortage of affordable, decent, safe, and sanitary housing. A situation that exists in some urban areas;
- In areas where financial compensation programs are adequate, the major impact of displacement is not financial, but social and psychological, due to a sense of “localism” among inhabitants of urban neighborhoods. Additionally, persons who have resided in an area for a long period of time or who have been home owners tend to experience a greater sense of loss when compelled to relocate;
- Certain groups such as senior citizens, low-income residents and non-English-speaking people often have strong community ties and depend upon important support networks that can be severed upon relocation;
- Households with school-age children may consider relocation especially disruptive if school transfers would be involved;
- Elderly and disabled persons tend to experience a variety of problems in adjusting to relocation, such as anxiety, depression and difficulty in establishing new friendships at a new location. The physical strain of relocation also bears most heavily on elderly and disabled persons;
- Lower income and less educated persons tend to experience special difficulties during relocation, including feelings of anxiety and alienation;
- Minorities often experience difficulty in finding suitable relocation homes. These problems are aggravated where the former neighborhood contained close family relatives or when the relocatee is not fluent in English; and
- Adverse reactions to the relocation process tend to increase for all groups as a function of the distance between new and former residences, and where work trips and other major travel trips are increased in length.

Impacts of Business or Community Facility Relocations

Potential relocation impacts on businesses tend to be financial, although social/psychological impacts can occur. Potential relocation impacts for other community facilities (churches, recreation centers, clubs, schools, etc.) tend to be both financial and social/psychological.



Relocation impacts, particularly financial impacts, tend to be more of a concern for small family-owned businesses or businesses that cater to a specific clientele within the study area. This is often of concern for minority owned or ethnic businesses which cater to a local client base and for whom separation from that client base can jeopardize the existence of that business. This is in contrast to national restaurant chains, for example, that have a broad client base and tend to rely more heavily on vehicular traffic. These types of commercial establishments can survive relocation, particularly with some financial assistance, by simply identifying a new location with adequately high levels of vehicular traffic or roadside visibility.

Negative financial impacts related to business/community facility relocation are to be identified in the Conceptual Stage Relocation Plan and are handled in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended. Potential financial impacts to relocated businesses include:²

- Cost to find and obtain a suitable replacement site and build or redesign a facility to meet specific needs;
- Moving expenses;
- Cost of lost customers;
- Cost to promote new location in order to attract new business and inform established client base of new location; and
- Cost to replace employees not able to continue working at the new location.

The financial impacts of relocation on community facilities tend to be similar to those of small businesses. This is particularly true of those facilities that depend on membership dues or user fees to fund, in part or in total, operating expenses. For example, a local church may depend on the financial generosity and volunteer labor of members from the local neighborhood. Relocation of that church to a distant site may pose a serious financial risk for that church.

Potential social/psychological impacts can arise when a business relies on being in a specific location for its identity. An example would be a restaurant that is well known for a spectacular view. Relocation from that specific site, affording that specific view, can severely impact the ability of that business to successfully continue. Also, businesses that rely on local clientele and being part of a specific neighborhood can have great difficulties surviving a move. An example would be a Hispanic grocery store located in a Hispanic neighborhood. Relocation to a site less accessible to the residents of that neighborhood would not only separate that business from its target clientele (a financial impact), but could also result in a social/psychological impact due to reduced interactions with neighborhood customers.

Businesses Most Likely To Experience Difficulty Relocating Include:	
Small Businesses	Family Owned
Cater to a Local Client Base	Ethnic Businesses
Site and Neighborhood Dependent	Minority Owned

The social/psychological impacts of relocation to a community facility can be significant. Many community facilities are supported by and supportive of specific neighborhoods. Relocation out of those neighborhoods can remove the reason for some community facilities to exist. For example, the mission of a specific Boys and Girls Club in a predominately African-American neighborhood may be to provide a safe haven for young neighborhood children to play and learn after school before parents return home from work. Relocation of that

² Based on Illinois Department of Transportation, Environmental Technical Manual: Socio-Economic Impact Assessment, 1992, 37-38.

Boys and Girls Club to a site outside of the neighborhood would impair its ability to accomplish that mission.

Community/Neighborhood Impacts

Relocating households, businesses and community facilities can adversely affect the normal functions of both the sending and receiving neighborhood or community. The bulk of the impact is usually borne by the sending neighborhood. The intensity of the impact increases with the number of properties requiring relocation.

Potential social/psychological impacts are similar to those discussed in Chapter 6, Social Impacts. Relocating households from a neighborhood can reduce the amount of social support and neighbor-to-neighbor interaction that takes place and can generally reduce the cohesiveness of the community. Business or community facility relocations can remove local facilities on which neighborhood residents rely for essential services and can reduce the sense of community. Residential relocation and displacement can also involve issues related to the Fair Housing Act, Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act, which prohibits discriminatory conduct affecting fair housing opportunities. Title VIII involves fair housing opportunities or the provision of services associated with housing like police and fire protection and transportation.

Financial impacts typically revolve around the ability of local residents remaining in the study area to maintain employment with a business or community facility that has been relocated. Potential impacts to existing employees include:³

- Increased travel expenses to reach the new employer location. For example, an employee may now have to purchase a vehicle or transit passes to reach the employer's new location, an expense that was not required when the employer was within walking distance of the employee's neighborhood;
- Increased commuting time; and
- Loss of employment. This impact could be sizable if the displaced establishment employed several members of a particular neighborhood and could also affect neighborhood businesses if impacted households find it necessary to reduce expenditures due to the loss of local employment opportunities. Conversely, the displacement of a large employer could create employment opportunities for residents of the neighborhood into which the employer has been relocated.

Summary

Potential adverse relocation impacts include, but are not limited to:

- Reduction in the level of community cohesion and social interaction through the loss of population, businesses, or community facilities;

³ Based on Illinois Department of Transportation, Environmental Technical Manual: Socio-Economic Impact Assessment, 1992, 37-38.

- Loss of low-income or affordable housing;
- Loss of community social support networks;
- Reduction in potential community employment opportunities;
- Loss of access to quality schools, child care, medical care, or other services provided by displaced businesses/community facilities;
- Disproportionate financial or social/psychological impacts on certain populations (low-income, minorities, elderly, disabled);
- Reduction in local business activity;
- Loss of appropriate sites for particular businesses;
- Loss of loyal customer base for relocated businesses; and
- Loss of customer base for remaining neighborhood businesses;

Potential positive impacts of relocation activities include, but are not limited to:

- Increase in property values due to the removal of blighted areas;
- More desirable housing accommodations or residential locations for relocatees;
- More desirable business sites for relocated businesses;
- Removal of unsafe structures;
- Removal of uses that are nonconforming under local regulations; and
- Additional income for owners of undesirable properties that may not have otherwise sold.

DATA SOURCES

Almost all data required to assess relocation impacts should be available as the product of other data collection efforts including:

- Data collected and mapped during development of the community profile, as described in Chapter 4;
- Data collected and analyzed for the CSRP, available from the Right-of-Way Office; and
- Data available from supplemental data collection efforts and assessment activities related to the assessment of social impacts, as described in Chapter 6.

If additional information is required from specific households, businesses or community facilities, directly contact the individuals involved. For example, if it is unclear whether a local business primarily employs neighborhood residents, interviewing the business owner would be the most appropriate way to collect that information.

The data available from the community profile (Chapter 4) includes:

- Relevant demographic, economic, and housing information;
- An inventory and map of community facilities and services;
- A detailed accounting of all properties and structures to be relocated (including specific demographic household data and other relevant information for businesses and community facilities); and
- A summary of community issues and attitudes.

Additionally, the results of the social impact assessment (Chapter 6) provide information regarding the importance of various community facilities to local residents, the existing level of community cohesion in study area neighborhoods and other relevant information. The FDOT Planning Office or the MPO may have relevant background material on project planning issues.

The CSRPs should also contain helpful data, including:

- An estimate of types of households and businesses to be displaced;
- Available area housing and displaced housing needs;
- Relocation advisory services information;
- Proposed actions to remedy insufficient relocation housing, including commitments to last resort housing; and
- An identification of publicly owned lands (see Right-of-Way Manual) that may require consideration for functional replacement of real property in public ownership.
- Summary of discussion with businesses, groups and social agencies related to impacts to remaining businesses, potential sources of funding and other incentives which will be furnished to assist businesses and relocation impacts to special populations.

ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES

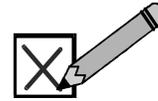
The effort expended assessing potential relocation impacts should correspond to the anticipated intensity and significance of the impacts. If potential relocation impacts become a primary community concern, extra effort should be expended to define the extent of those impacts. The following steps are recommended for assessing potential relocation impacts:

1. **Summarize findings from other sources relative to potential relocation impacts.** Many of the assessment techniques related to relocation are the same as for other impacts described elsewhere in this handbook, the PD&E Manual, and the Right-of-Way Manual. This includes the assessment of community/neighborhood impacts (see Chapter 6), the assessment of civil rights impacts (see Chapter 9) and the assessment of financial impacts to households and businesses/community facilities (see CSRPs report).
2. **Complete the relocation impact assessment checklist.** The checklist is located at the end of this section. Complete the checklist for each proposed project alternative. The checklist is designed to assist in the organization

of collected data and to prompt critical consideration of potential relocation impacts. Modify the checklist to meet specific project needs and be used only as a general guide. There is no quantitative scoring or evaluation mechanism associated with the checklist. The answers to the checklist questions simply indicate the likelihood for relocation impacts. Follow-up questions are asked to qualify the answers and to provide additional useful information for determining potential impacts and developing mitigation strategies. For example, the checklist asks if elderly residents are being relocated because they tend to have more difficulty adjusting to relocation. The follow-up question asks how many elderly residents will be relocated. Although relocation of any elderly residents is undesirable, the relocation of many elderly residents is a significant adverse impact. Incorporate the checklist findings into the summary of potential relocation impacts.

3. **Present the summarized findings to study area stakeholders for their input.** Ask them to identify any additional potential impacts that the analyst did not detect, if any and incorporate their input into the summary
4. **Use the results of the relocation impact assessment to guide project development.** Explore the potential for revising alternatives or otherwise addressing the impacts identified. Mitigation efforts may be employed where project impacts are unavoidable. Incorporate the results into the Community Impact Assessment report and summarize in the environmental document.

Checklist for Assessing Potential Relocation Impacts



1. Will the project require the relocation of:
 - a. Long-time neighborhood residents (generally 5+ years tenure)
If yes, how many? _____ Yes No
 - b. Elderly residents (generally 65+ years old)
If yes, how many? _____ Yes No
 - c. Disabled residents
If yes, how many? _____ Yes No
 - d. Low-income residents (generally poverty level)
If yes, how many? _____ Yes No
 - e. Ethnic or racial minority residents
If yes, how many? _____ Yes No
 - f. Non-English speaking residents
If yes, how many? _____ Yes No
 - g. Households with school-age children
If yes, how many? _____ Yes No
2. Are there households qualifying more than once under question 1?
(a low-income, elderly, for example) Yes No
If yes, how many? _____
Explain _____

3. Are adequate, comparable replacement housing or building sites available
for relocatees in or near their current neighborhood? Yes No
If no, how close is comparable replacement housing or building sites? _____
4. Will the project relocate residents such that their access to current
employment is impaired? Yes No
If yes, how many? _____
Explain _____

5. Will the project relocate residents such that their access to schools, medical care, childcare or other essential goods and services is impaired? Yes No

If yes, how many? _____

Explain _____

Business/Community Facility

1. Will the project require the relocation of a community facility such that the purpose for the facility is reduced or otherwise impaired? Yes No

If yes, which facility or facilities? _____

2. Will the project require the relocation of a business that depends upon it's specific location for business? Yes No

If yes, which business(es)? _____

Public Lands

1. Will the project require the acquisition of right-of-way from public lands? Yes No

If yes, please explain? _____

MITIGATION AND PROBLEM SOLVING

Relocation impacts from transportation projects are often unavoidable. There are a variety of strategies available to reduce adverse relocation impacts. The list below describes some of those strategies, though there are certainly others. The key to successfully addressing the relocation impacts resulting from a transportation project is to understand the nature of the potential impacts and to *develop mitigation strategies in cooperation with the relocatees and the affected neighborhoods.*

Financial Strategies

Mitigation for relocation impacts is usually in the form of financial remuneration or compensation for property loss and relocation expenses, as outlined in the “Uniform Relocation and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970, as amended.” This act applies to all federal or federally assisted activities that involve displacement caused by rehabilitation and demolition activities. Details regarding the principal benefits and services to relocatees are discussed in the PD&E and Right-Of-Way Manuals.

Design Strategies

Design strategies include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Adjust the project profile and section to reduce the overall project right-of-way requirement;
- Adjust the horizontal alignment to avoid site specific takings;
- Reduce the design speeds to reduce right-of-way requirements;
- Reduce the scope of the project to reduce the required right-of-way; and
- Encourage joint development of excess or underutilized project right-of-way to increase the availability of local land for relocation purposes. For example, lost neighborhood parkland or parking could be replaced on project right-of-way, perhaps under an elevated structure. Replacement office, commercial/retail and housing accommodations can be located in project right-of-way, perhaps as part of a transit station. Co-location and joint development is particularly appropriate in urban areas where developable land is scarce.

Replacement/Restoration Strategies

Replacement and restoration strategies include, but are not limited to the, following:

- Provide replacement land and structures when the market cannot accommodate the needs of relocatees;
- Provide improved or replacement access to businesses and centers of employment. For example, a shuttle service could be established to facilitate employee retention;

- Construct replacement facilities prior to demolition of those being displaced, in order to reduce the disruption caused by relocation; and
- Restore development catalysts to generate new employment opportunities in areas losing existing employment opportunities. For example, restoring historic properties adjacent to project right-of-way could increase tourism, increasing employment opportunities.

Planning/Programmatic Assistance Strategies

Planning assistance strategies include, but are not limited to the, following:

- Identify potential replacement units in existing housing and commercial stock;
- Identify appropriate sites where additional units of housing and commercial structures can be constructed;
- Fashion a plan to manage future development induced by the transportation project that may replace lost community services and employment opportunities, in cooperation with local planning officials;
- Develop a comprehensive relocation program to:
 1. Reduce losses of employment and income to the community by matching individual needs with community-wide resources; and
 2. Provide information concerning the availability, cost and location of decent, safe and sanitary replacement housing and appropriate business and community facility relocation sites; and
- Draft site-reuse feasibility studies to assist local businesses and community facilities in determining the feasibility of potential relocation sites.

Regulatory Strategies

Regulatory strategies can be instituted to encourage development that will replace lost employment opportunities or community services, mitigating some of the relocation impacts on local communities and neighborhoods. Authority for developing land development regulations, area financial incentives, or property taxation policies lies with local governments. Therefore, employing these strategies would require their full involvement.

Regulatory strategies include, but are not limited to the, following:

- Zoning regulations that place conditions on the type of development that can occur;
- Taxing policies that can encourage one type of land use over another;
- Land cost write-down programs that can make targeted forms of development less expensive;
- Corridor management strategies which can combine land use and transportation regulations that encourage certain forms of development; and
- Special incentive programs that provide financial and other incentives for developers to implement desired forms of development.

CONCLUSION

Upon completing the assessment of potential relocation impacts, the following actions should be completed:

- Document all relevant actions taken, findings reached and commitments made as part of the assessment of relocation impacts;
- File all relevant documentation related to the assessment of relocation impacts in the official project file;
- Incorporate the relevant findings of this assessment into the project development process in order to minimize relocation impacts of the final project on local households, businesses, community facilities and neighborhoods; and
- Incorporate the documentation developed as part of the relocation assessment process into the relevant section of the environmental document under development for this project, per the PD&E and Right-Of-Way Manuals.