

Public Involvement Frequently Asked Questions

General DelDOT Questions:

1. **Why does DelDOT build “center turn lanes?”** – Two-way left-turn lanes, often inappropriately called “center turn lanes,” offer significant access control and efficiency benefits. Dedicated two-way left-turn lanes are considered a Proven Safety Countermeasure by the FHWA as they are statistically proven to reduce the total number of crashes on certain roads. Separating left turn movements helps delineate driver intentions and supports driver expectancy in areas with frequent mid-block left turns. Combining lefts in both directions allows for a reduced roadway footprint. Two-way left turn lane applicability is determined and designed based on particular location constraints.
2. **How does DelDOT time traffic signals?** – The Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) times traffic signals to improve traffic flow, reduce congestion, and ensure safety. They achieve this through a detailed process that includes the following steps:
 - a. **Collecting Traffic Data:** DelDOT uses sensors, cameras, and manual counts to measure vehicle and pedestrian movement throughout the day. This helps them understand traffic patterns and volumes as they change.
 - b. **Setting Signal Timing Plans:** Depending on the location, signals may operate on fixed timing schedules or use real-time data to adjust based on the number of vehicles or pedestrians waiting.
 - c. **Coordinating Signals:** On major roads, signals are often synchronized to create a "green wave," allowing vehicles to pass through multiple intersections without stopping.
 - d. **Using Engineering Analysis and Software:** DelDOT follows the Federal Highway Administration's Traffic Signal Timing Manual and applies methods like critical movement summation (CMS) to analyze traffic volumes. They also use simulation software to optimize signal timings for smoother traffic flow and reduced delays.
 - e. **Adjusting Phases and Cycles:** Signals are programmed to balance the needs of different movements, such as left turns, through traffic, and pedestrian crossings, ensuring safe and efficient operation.
 - f. **Monitoring and Refining:** DelDOT continuously monitors signal performance and makes adjustments based on observed traffic conditions or reports of issues from drivers.

Through this comprehensive approach, DelDOT ensures that traffic signals adapt to changing conditions, keeping Delaware’s roads safe and efficient.

3. **Can DelDOT install a traffic signal/ yield/ stop condition at this intersection?** – DelDOT can evaluate changing, modifying, or adding intersection controls, but must follow the regulatory requirements in the Delaware Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (DE MUTCD). This includes analyzing the warrants for the intersection control, reviewing crash history, and current and proposed traffic volumes. At public workshops, the design team should encourage the requestor to note their suggested traffic control change in their comment form. If that particular intersection falls outside of the project’s current limits, it will be shared with the respective Division/Section for further consideration.
4. **Why does DelDOT build roundabouts?** – DelDOT builds roundabouts for their safety, efficiency, and versatility benefits. When compared to traditional at-grade intersections, roundabouts operate more efficiently than all-way stop control (AWSC) or signalized intersections with the same

footprint. Roundabouts can also be used in a litany of different situations, such as freeway interchange ramp terminals, urban environments, and even high-speed rural intersections. Additionally, a roundabout's design can be modified to the specific challenges of each intersection making them a more versatile solution than typical at-grade intersections. Most importantly, roundabouts are an FHWA recognized Proven Safety Countermeasure. Compared to a traditional intersection, roundabouts reduce conflict points for all users including vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians. The conflict point with the highest rate of fatality and injury crashes is the left-turn movement across traffic, which is not present in a roundabout. Because of the overall reduction in conflict points, roundabouts can reduce fatal and injury crashes at an intersection by 80%. There are currently more than 35 state-maintained roundabouts in use in Delaware. Additional information on the benefits of roundabouts is provided on DelDOT's roundabout webpage located here: <https://deldot.gov/Programs/roundabouts/index.shtml>.

5. **How does DelDOT decide transit stop locations?** – Delaware Transit Corporation (DTC) determines bus stop locations following a comprehensive internal review process. Potential coordination may involve external stakeholders such as transit users, elected officials, property owners, and intergovernmental partners. Internally, DTC staff across multiple departments — Planning, Safety, Operations, and Facilities—conduct an evaluation to assess the proposed location's operational feasibility, safety, and integration with pedestrian infrastructure. Planning analyses the surrounding land uses, projected ridership demand, and the current and/or potential bus routes that would serve the location to assess the demand and network integration. Safety and Operations each evaluate whether transit vehicles can safely access and serve the stop and identify any required safety enhancements or operational treatments. Facilities assesses the engineering, construction, and cost requirements necessary to implement the stop in compliance with federal standards, including all ADA requirements. When an external stakeholder requests a bus stop, DTC may engage them in the review process to ensure that their objectives and concerns—whether advocating for the addition or removal of a stop—are understood and considered. Decisions regarding passenger amenities, such as benches or shelters, are guided by quantitative thresholds related to ridership and population density, as specified in DTC's Bus Stop and Passenger Facilities Policy.
6. **Why doesn't DelDOT install more guardrail to protect the public?** – Barrier warrants are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Guardrail, while being considered crashworthy, still constitutes a fixed object and can lead to negative outcomes if struck. For any barrier to be installed, it must be evaluated and determined preferable to impact relative to the feature it is protecting. Crash statistics and site-specific and corridor features must also be considered when evaluating the justification for proposed guardrail.
7. **How did you arrive at the alternative being presented? Were other alternatives considered?** – As part of the project development process, the design team will perform a scoping and alternatives assessment. This process requires the design team to identify existing transportation deficiencies within the study area, project goals and objectives, and associated project constraints. The design team will then consider and evaluate various alternatives that address the transportation deficiencies identified while meeting the project's goals and objectives. The end result of the process is the selection of a cost-effective preferred alternative. The design team should be prepared to discuss any alternatives that were considered in addition to the Department's preferred alternative at any planned public engagement.

8. **What is going on at Insert location not part of the project?** – The project team should research and be abreast of on-going and proposed transportation related activities around the project's location ahead of any planned public engagement. The traveling public looks at the roadway network holistically and will often have questions about adjacent intersections, projects, and corridors that may not be within the intended scope of the public engagement.
9. **How are we paying for this construction?** – DelDOT projects are primarily funded through state funds and federal funds. The majority of state funds used for DelDOT projects are generated through toll roads, DMV fees, and motor fuel taxes. The amount of state funds vs. federal funds used on an individual project varies and is based on many factors.
10. **Why does it look like no work is being done whenever I drive by a construction site?** – Construction is not a static process, nor is it limited to surface activities. Many projects may have subsurface work activities, including utility construction and storm sewer installation, which may not make progress readily apparent. Further, construction activities are not limited to a single space; work operations may be occurring elsewhere in the project, or simultaneously in multiple locations within the project area, which may give the appearance that “no work is being done” at an isolated spot. Construction is phased to make the best use of the time and materials available while balancing construction crew exposure and impact to the traveling public. DelDOT performs construction inspection to monitor the work effort and to ensure the contract work is being performed and progressing as intended.

Right-of-Way Related Questions:

NOTE: In general, it is recommended that only representatives from DelDOT's Real Estate section answer questions about the acquisition process.

1. **Can you describe the right-of-way acquisition process?** – The design team should defer this question to DelDOT's Real Estate section. If the Real Estate section is not available, the design team may acknowledge that state and federal law both require that all acquisitions be performed in accordance with the Uniform Act.
2. **What happens if I refuse to sell my land that is required for the project to the State?** – There are several scenarios that could occur in this situation. DelDOT can try to redesign the project so that the acquisition of the land in question is not required or so that lesser property rights are needed. If the project cannot be redesigned, DelDOT does have eminent domain authority which would allow it to acquire the property. If eminent domain is used to acquire property, the acquisition must be performed in accordance with the Uniform Act as per state and federal law.
3. **How will DelDOT reimburse me for impacts to features on my property?** – As part of the acquisition process, DelDOT takes inventory of and appraises impacted features on a parcel. This appraisal is provided to the owner for concurrence with DelDOT's offer letter. Once the offer letter is provided, the owner can request additional information or further discussion on each feature.
4. **Can you explain the difference between a temporary construction easement, permanent easement, and fee simple acquisition?** – DelDOT utilizes three main types of acquisitions on capital projects: FEE simple (R/W), permanent easement (PE), and temporary construction easement (TCE). FEE Simple is land or property that is acquired outright and devoted to transportation purposes. Areas acquired in FEE simple are usually for physical construction features such as roads, curbs, sidewalks, and drainage structures. PE provides DelDOT certain

rights to the land as described in the easement agreement, but the property owner retains the FEE simple ownership of the land. Uses for PE can include utilities, sidewalks, and drainage features that will require future maintenance. A TCE is an agreement granting temporary use of an area for construction. TCEs are typically used to allow performance of site grading and site access. TCEs are extinguished when the time period within the agreement elapses.

Project Scoping Questions:

1. **Why are you doing this project?** – Conveying a project’s purpose and need is critical to the public’s understanding of a project. The design team should be ready to discuss transportation challenges within the project area, the studies and reports that corroborate those challenges, and how the proposed improvements will go about solving the challenges.
2. **Why did DelDOT select the project limits shown?** – As part of the project development process, the design team performs a scoping and alternatives assessment. This process requires the design team to identify existing transportation deficiencies within the study area, project goals and objectives, and associated project constraints. The design team then considers and evaluates various alternatives that address the transportation deficiencies identified while meeting the project’s goals and objectives. The end result of the process is the selection of a cost-effective preferred alternative.
3. **Can you add additional bike lanes or pedestrian facilities?** – As part of the project scoping process, the design team identifies and evaluates the needs of all users of the transportation network. This evaluation is guided by DelDOT’s Complete Streets policy, which states that projects and improvements are to be planned, designed, constructed, operated and maintained in a way that enables safe and efficient access for all users. All additional requests should be evaluated in accordance with DelDOT’s Complete Streets Policy.
4. **How will this project affect the environment/ community?** – DelDOT’s typical project development process requires the project team to consider a project’s effects on the environment and community. Projects which use federal funds, or which require a federal action or approval, require that these impacts be assessed and documented as part of the NEPA process. This question will likely require a project specific answer; therefore, the design team should consider this question prior to all planned public engagements. Projects are required to adhere to local and federal permitting requirements as well based on the effects.
5. **Why doesn’t DelDOT build a larger/ smaller scoped project instead of what is proposed?** – As part of the project development process, the design team performs a scoping and alternatives assessment. This process requires the design team to identify existing transportation deficiencies within the study area, project goals and objectives, and associated project constraints. The design team then considers and evaluates various alternatives that address the transportation deficiencies identified while meeting the project’s goals and objectives. The end result of the process is the selection of a cost-effective preferred alternative.

General Project Questions:

1. **How will the project affect my access to the roadway?** – The design team should assess the project’s impact to nearby residents’ driveways before planned public engagements. DelDOT must provide continuous access to all properties in both the construction phase and in the permanent condition.

2. **Is the project's proposed access management necessary at my business entrance? I'm going to lose a lot of money for a modification that I don't think is appropriate.** – The design team should assess the project's impact to nearby businesses' entrances before planned public engagements. In both the construction phase and the permanent condition, DelDOT must provide continuous access to the property. Depending on the severity and duration of the impacts during the construction phase, the business owner may be entitled to compensation as part of the acquisition process. Compensation amounts cannot be discussed with the property owner until after a formal appraisal is completed.
3. **Will DelDOT move or modify my residential driveway as part of the project, at my request?** – If the residential driveway is located within the limits of the project, DelDOT should evaluate whether the modification requested by the owner aligns with the project's purpose and scope. If the residential driveway modification cannot reasonably be accommodated by the project, the owner should be referred to the respective Public Works office for permitting of the residential driveway modifications. Requests for additional residential driveways should also be referred to the respective Public Works office for permitting.
4. **Will DelDOT move or modify my commercial entrance as part of the project, at my request?** DelDOT will not move or modify an existing commercial entrance at the request of an owner if it is not part of the project's purpose and need. For requests that are beyond the project's purpose and need, the owner should be referred to DelDOT's Development Coordination Section. Through this process, the requested entrance modifications will be coordinated with the project and may be incorporated into the project at the owner's expense or treated as two separate construction projects, subject to DelDOT's discretion.
5. **Can I move my driveway as part of the project?** – DelDOT cannot move or modify an entrance if it is not part of the project's purpose and need. However, an existing entrance can be modified or a new entrance added through DelDOT's development coordination process. The project and any owner desired access modifications should be coordinated but treated separately.
6. **Will the project discharge more drainage onto my property?** – DelDOT is required to assess and maintain existing drainage patterns in accordance with the State Code, unless the area is required for a stormwater management facility. In general, the project will document the existing and proposed drainage patterns and verify compliance with all applicable Delaware laws and regulations.
7. **Can you remove existing guardrail as part of the project?** – The design team evaluates the condition and need for existing roadside safety hardware as part of the project scoping process. Through this analysis, DelDOT determines if existing guardrail or other hardware is warranted, requires maintenance or upgrades, and is a preferred alternative to potentially impacting the feature that it is intended to protect.
8. **Can DelDOT add or remove signage within the project area?** – Signage in the State of Delaware is regulated by the DE MUTCD. As part of the project development process, signage within a project area is evaluated for compliance with the current DE MUTCD and added or removed accordingly.

9. **How will EMS get through the area after construction?** – Access to emergency services is a critical concern of residents. Prior to planned public engagements, the design team is encouraged to consider access to emergency services for all residents and especially those whose ingress and egress to main thoroughfares are altered by the project. It is also a good practice to get input from local emergency services as part of the project development process as well.
10. **You are bringing the road closer to my property. Can you build something to mitigate the increased noise?** – DeIDOT is federally required to maintain and follow a noise abatement policy. DeIDOT's policy is contained in its Noise Policy Implement. Projects that involve the expansion of existing highways or construction of a highway on new location, or a highway that has a significant alignment change (horizontal or vertical) are required to develop existing and proposed condition noise models. A comparison is then made between the existing and proposed noise levels to determine whether noise abatement should be provided.
11. **You are bringing the road closer to my property. Can you put in guardrail to protect my property?** – DeIDOT does not use barrier to protect private property. Barrier itself can pose a threat to an errant vehicle and cannot be installed to simply provide a boundary between the traveled way and private property.
12. **How long will this project take to design and build?** – Prior to a planned public engagement, the design team should prepare to discuss the project milestones including anticipated PS&E, advertisement, construction start, and construction finish dates. It is also good practice to assess the feasibility of the schedule at this juncture based on remaining tasks in the project development process to ensure the most accurate information is conveyed to the public.
13. **How much will the project cost?** – The design team should review the current construction estimate prior to planned public engagements to ensure the most accurate information is conveyed to the public.
14. **When is construction going to start?** – The design team should review the project schedule prior to planned public engagements. It is also good practice to assess the feasibility of the schedule at this juncture based on remaining tasks in the project development process to ensure the most accurate information is conveyed to the public.
15. **What type of additional public outreach will DeIDOT perform to keep us informed of any future changes?** – The answer to this question will vary based on project as public engagement activities should be tailored to meet each individual project's needs. The design team is encouraged to establish a road map for planned public engagements at project initiation and revisit that plan throughout the project development process. DeIDOT's [Project Public Involvement Plan Worksheet](#) can be used to help develop this public engagement road map. The design team can also direct the public to the project website to receive updates on the project after the meeting and to inform them of any additional planned public outreach.
16. **Who should be my primary contact if I have any more questions?** – The primary contact for the project is the DeIDOT Project Manager. Questions not specific to the project should be directed to the Division of Community Relations at dotpublic@delaware.gov or 302-760-2000.

17. **Can you provide me with the most current construction plans and technical documents?** – While all files can be requested through the FOIA process, at the discretion of the DeIDOT Project Manager, construction plans and other technical documents may be shared with the requesting party. Depending on the requestor, the project, and completeness of the information requested, it may be beneficial to require an electronic file release waiver prior to providing the files.
18. **How will the project affect the utilities within the area?** – The design team should evaluate a project's impacts on utilities in the project area in preparation for planned public engagements. The public will often have concerns over outages of services required to relocate utilities and the final configuration of utilities adjacent to their properties. The cost for utility relocations is typically borne by the utility owner unless a specific condition for reimbursement in the Delaware Code is met.
19. **Will this project impact _____ local event _____?** – The design team should research locally significant events that may be directly affected by or coincide with the construction phase prior to planned public engagements. If there is overlap with proposed events, the design team should work with the event and other stakeholders to mitigate the impact to the event.
20. **Will this project increase/ decrease traffic through the area?** – This is a common question from the public and should be evaluated prior to planned public engagements. The design team should identify any potential traffic pattern modifications that will be made as part of the project and assess whether traffic will be increased, decreased, or unaffected. The design team is also encouraged to review current and future traffic projections of the project area.

Construction Phase Questions:

1. **What is the project's proposed construction phasing?** – Even early in the project development process, the design team should be prepared to discuss construction phasing at any planned public engagement. The construction phase is when the traveling public and nearby residents are most impacted by the project, so there will certainly be questions. Often times, the questions posed will be very specific and relative to an individual property.
2. **Will this project impact transit services?** – The State's contractor is required to maintain access to existing bus stops or provide alternative bus stops during construction in accordance with DeIDOT's standard contract language. However, the design team is to coordinate with DTC, especially if there is a bus stop within the project area to ensure the service is maintained as much as feasible. Additional coordination may be required to ensure the stop can be accessed safely and that transit buses can properly navigate the work zone.
3. **Will this project impact school bus service?** – The State's contractor is required to maintain access during construction in accordance with DeIDOT's standard contract language. However, it is important for the project team to coordinate with local school districts to ensure there is no interruption to service caused by the project.
4. **How will DeIDOT maintain access to my home/ business during construction for myself and other services?** – Before planned public engagements, the design team should evaluate the planned construction phase ingress and egress of property owners. DeIDOT's standard contract language requires the contractor to maintain access to residences and businesses within the construction zone; however, additional information and detail can be included in the plans to

ensure the construction phase is as least intrusive as possible to impacted residents. Construction activities which may impact access, such as pipe installation, will be coordinated with the individual residences or businesses to minimize any impacts.

5. **How will EMS get through the area during construction?** – Access to emergency services is a critical concern of residents during the construction phase. Prior to public engagements, the design team is encouraged to consider access to emergency services for all residents and especially those impacted by long-term detours and closures. It is also a good practice to discuss the proposed phasing with local emergency services to ensure they are involved in the project development process and can provide continuous access to residents.
6. **Will vibrations from the project affect my property?** – State of Delaware regulations provide protections against excessive vibrations. The design team is to consider the project's potential to produce excessive vibrations as part of the project development process. Protections can be put into place by prescribing or not allowing certain construction methods or by requiring the contractor to provide vibration monitoring during the construction phase.
7. **How much noise will construction of the project generate?** – Construction noise is regulated by the Delaware Code but can be modified based on county or other municipal ordinances. Delaware code limits the noise generated by construction activities to a maximum of 85 dBA at the receiving property for a period of one hour. This is roughly the equivalent of a garbage disposal. Noise levels are further reduced by the Delaware Code between the hours of 10 pm and 7 am to 55 dBA. This is roughly the equivalent of normal conversation.
8. **Will DelDOT allow work at night?** – The decision to utilize night work must be made on a project-by-project basis. If the project necessitates or could benefit from night work, the design team will assemble and distribute a night work survey to potentially impacted residents in accordance with the Delaware Bond Bill epilogue. The survey allows the public to vote on whether night work should be allowed for the contract. If the majority of residents are in favor of night work, DelDOT may allow the contractor to perform some activities at night so long as high noise activities do not impose an excessive nuisance. It is worth noting that if night work is allowed, not all activities will be occurring at night. As with all construction tasks, the process is not static and will not be directly impacting every parcel throughout the duration of the construction phase.
9. **Why is the project taking so long to build? Will the project ever end?** - The initial duration of a project is set by DelDOT and accounts for all anticipated work, average weather impacts, and the labor costs to complete the work. As a baseline, work is generally phased in a sequence to remove conflicts with existing facilities prior to installing new facilities and may include some temporary work to maintain connections and access during the project. When scoping the project and determining impacts to the public, DelDOT may consider modifying the baseline duration and the impacts such a modification may have to the project budget. Once in construction, additional work may be identified, projects may encounter unanticipated conflicts, or weather conditions may be worse than average which will alter the project duration. Specific language within the contract ensures any altered duration is justified and reasonable.