



SOLICITATION OF VIEWS

DOTSC – Training Presentation

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*“THE NDDOT CONSIDERS
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT A KEY TO A
SUCCESSFUL PROJECT”*

- NDDOT DESIGN MANUAL II-04



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT:

- Informational Mailings
- Project Websites
- Open Houses
- Public Meetings
- Solicitation of Views Mailing



SOLICITATION OF VIEWS MAILING

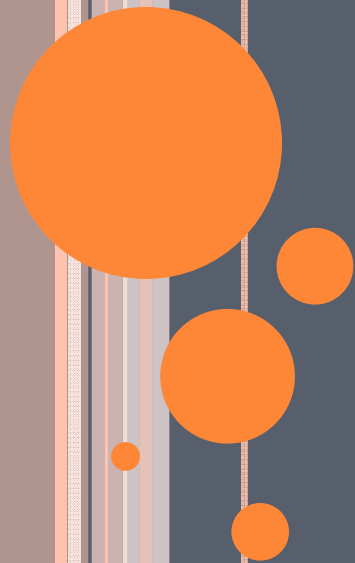
Why are SOV letters sent? What makes them important to project design?

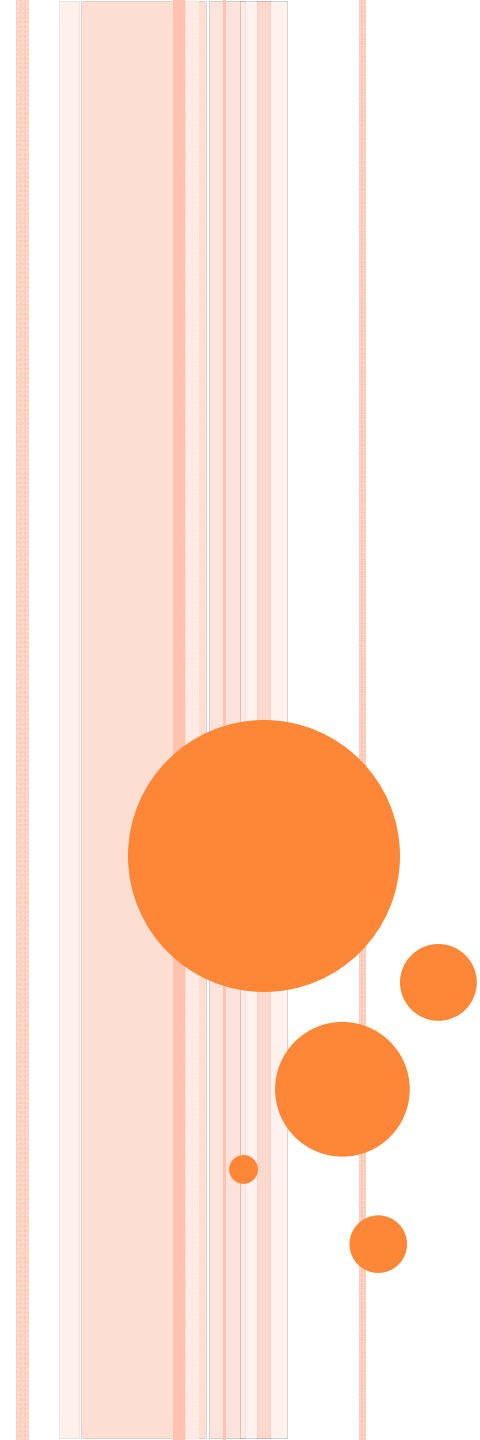
How do you write an SOV letter? How do you send an SOV mailing?

Microsoft Word Mail Merge – More than you ever wanted to know...



WHAT IS A
SOV MAILING
AND
WHY DO
WE SEND IT?





WHAT IS A SOLICITATION OF VIEWS LETTER?

WHAT IS A SOLICITATION OF VIEWS (SOV) LETTER?

- Sent before or during the Draft PCR
- Explains the proposed project
 - Location
 - Scope
 - Timeline
 - Project Map



WHAT IS A SOLICITATION OF VIEWS (SOV) LETTER?

- Asks individuals and agencies for input
- Six Different Types
- Templates @ Design Manual
Forms Page





TYPES OF SOV LETTERS:

LETTER #1 - GENERAL

- All-purpose letter
- Contains basic information
- Sent to most agencies



LETTER #2 – US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

- Request determination of water and wetlands
- Section 404 Permit may be needed
- Co-Written with the Environmental Section
 - Information about waters and wetlands



LETTER #3 – US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

- Requests identification of prime and unique farmland within the project limits
- Farmland Impact Rating Form



LETTER #4 – STATE HEALTH DEPARTMENT

- Includes current and forecast traffic counts
- Requests determination of the project's impact on air quality
- Requests information on water quality and hazardous waste sites



LETTER #5 – STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION

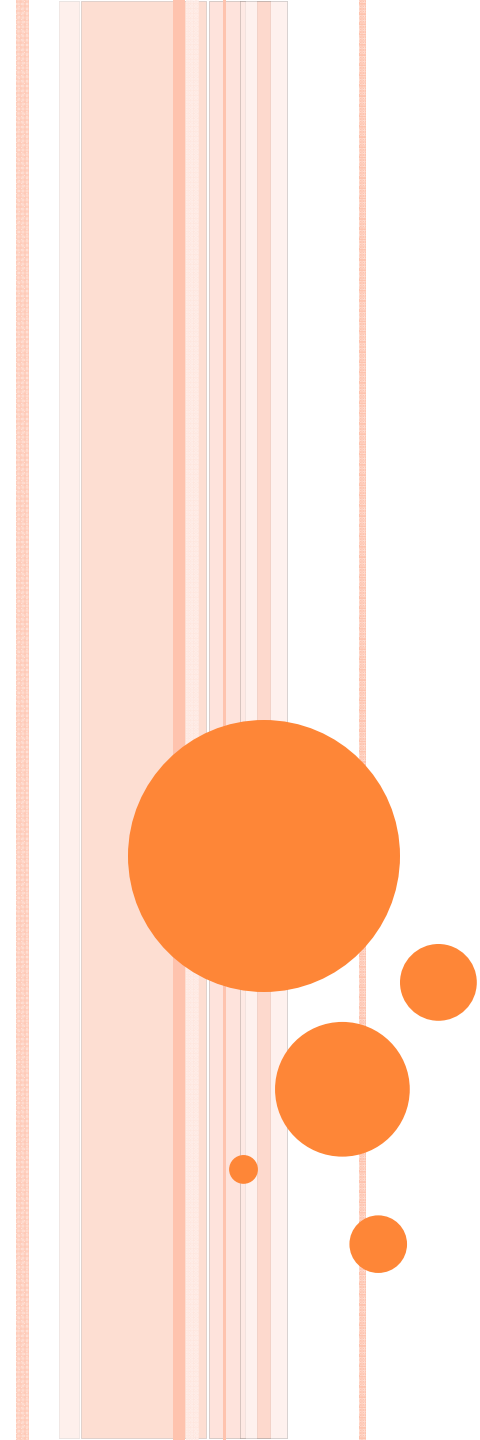
- Requests determination of cultural impacts of a project
- Co-Written with the Cultural Resource Section
- Includes legal location, quadrangle map, detailed earthwork information



LETTER #6 – STATE WATER COMMISSION

- Are any permits needed relating to impacts on
 - Floodplains
 - “Sovereign Lands”
 - Dams
 - Dikes
 - Other water structures



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WHY IS THE SOV IMPORTANT TO PROJECT DESIGN?

SAFE, ACCOUNTABLE, FLEXIBLE, EFFICIENT TRANSPORTATION EQUITY ACT: A LEGACY OF USERS (SAFETEA-LU)

- Federal Law Passed in 2005
- Streamline the Environmental Process



“THESE CHANGES, HOWEVER,
COME WITH SOME ADDITIONAL STEPS
AND REQUIREMENTS OF
TRANSPORTATION AGENCIES.”

- A SUMMARY OF HIGHWAY PROVISIONS IN SAFETEA-LU
BY FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION



SAFE, ACCOUNTABLE, FLEXIBLE, EFFICIENT TRANSPORTATION EQUITY ACT: A LEGACY OF USERS (SAFETEA-LU)

- Added more “participating agencies”
- Allows more state, local, and tribal agencies a formal role and rights in the environmental process.
 - Requires DOT provide an opportunity for public and interagency involvement
 - Requires DOT to establish a plan for coordinating public and agency participation.



NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT

- Any Federally funded project must...
 - Take into account any historic landmarks
 - Give State Historical Society an opportunity to comment on the project



THE SOV MAILING IS IMPORTANT TO DESIGN

- Fulfills the Federal Requirements
 - Contacts relevant agencies and individuals
 - Gathers information (to avoid design difficulties)
 - Determines the need for permits



THE SOV MAILING IS IMPORTANT TO DESIGN

- Response to SOV Letters
 - Considered in Design
 - If appropriate, addressed in the PCR
 - Included in PCR Appendix



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HOW TO CREATE A SOV MAILING:

DOWNLOAD LETTERS @

[HTTP://WWW.DOT.ND.GOV/MANUALS/DESIGN/DESIGNMANUAL/REFERENCE-FORMS.HTM](http://www.dot.nd.gov/manuals/design/designmanual/reference-forms.htm)

- There are six letters requesting information
- All letters contain instructions
- Many are similar and information can be duplicated



FILLING OUT THE LETTERS

- Use language that non-engineers will understand
- Include a project map that clearly displays the Township and Range
- “Return by” date should be 30 days after the day when the letters are sent



CO-WRITTEN LETTERS

- Send Letter #2 to Environmental Section electronically
- Send Letter #5 to Cultural Resource Section electronically





WHO DO WE SOLICIT FOR VIEWS?

DOWNLOAD MASTER SOV LIST @

[HTTP://WWW.DOT.ND.GOV/MANUALS/DESIGN/DESIGNMANUAL/REFERENCE-FORMS.HTM](http://www.dot.nd.gov/manuals/design/designmanual/reference-forms.htm)

- It is a list of agencies and persons that are regularly solicited for views on NDDOT projects
- Frequently Updated
- Any recommendations or additions can be sent to the Environmental Section



CREATE A PROJECT-SPECIFIC LIST

- Go through list to eliminate unnecessary recipients and to add needed ones (check the usage codes)
- *“A special effort should be made on projects to seek out and include the interests of minority groups or individuals.”*
 - NDDOT Design Manual II-04.01.02



CREATE A PROJECT-SPECIFIC LIST

○ Usage Codes

- 100 – Must send
- 200 – Depends on type of project
- 300 – Send if project is near a municipality
- 400 – Must send
- 500 – Depends on location of project
- 600 – Must send, contact Utilities Engineer for mailing information



CREATE A PROJECT-SPECIFIC LIST

- Remember to include city and county officials and local airports
 - A list of ND city websites is at <http://www.nd.gov/category.htm?id=122>
 - There are two directories which list local government information
 - Make sure the websites and directories are current





PREPARE THE MAILING:

PREPARE LETTER #1 FOR MAILING

- Create separate document for the first page of Letter #1
- Run mail merge on the first page using the Merge Wizard under the “Mailings” tab
 - When asked to “select recipients” browse for the SOV List you have created
 - Be sure to filter out people who will be sent a different letter
 - Display the mail merge results (if they aren’t already) by clicking “Preview Results”



PREPARE LETTER #1 FOR MAILING

- Print out the first pages on NDDOT letterhead
- Print out one set of the remaining pages
- Sign and make copies of the signed page to combine with the first pages



PREPARING THE OTHER LETTERS (#3, #4, #6)

- No mail merge is needed for these letters
- Check names and addresses against SOV List
- Print out and sign these letters.
 - Remember to print the first pages on NDDOT letterhead



MAKE 2 COPIES OF EACH LETTER (#1, #3, #4, #6)

○ Letter #1

- The copy of Letter #1 should not have a name and address filled in
 - Attach a copy of the SOV List to the copy of Letter #1
- ## ○ Place one copy of each letter in a folder to be sent to Central Office
- ## ○ Place the second copy in the Project File



DOWNLOAD SOLICITATION ENVELOPE @

[HTTP://WWW.DOT.ND.GOV/MANUALS/DESIGN/DESIGNMANUAL/REFERENCE-FORMS.HTM](http://www.dot.nd.gov/manuals/design/designmanual/reference-forms.htm)

- Click “Select Recipients” and “Use Existing List” to select the SOV List
- Display the mail merge results (if they aren’t already) by clicking “Preview Results”
- Print out on NDDOT envelopes



CHECK WITH THE SOV LIST TO
BE SURE EVERYTHING PRINTED
CORRECTLY

Z-FOLD AND STUFF ALL
LETTERS

SEAL, COUNT AND BIND THE
ENVELOPES TOGETHER



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MICROSOFT WORD – MAIL MERGE:

WHY USE MAIL MERGE?

- Create a document set that has
 - Same kind of information
 - Each one with different content
- Best for
 - Letters
 - Labels
 - Envelopes



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HOW TO USE MAIL MERGE: