

Hear Every Voice

Case Study: Driving95: I-95 Planning and Finance Study



Planning and finance study. A high-level evaluation study addressing planning and finance that will result in a master plan for future development of the I-95 Corridor.

A 182-mile corridor on Interstate 95 in North Carolina, traversing rural, suburban, and urban environments.

North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), Michael Baker Corporation (consultant)

Project Budget: \$6.4 million*

Public Participation Budget: \$2 million *

*estimated

source: Brooks, 2011

Context: Implemented between 1950 and 1980, Interstate 95 is a four-lane interstate in North Carolina. The north-south I-95 corridor is an important highway for residents and visitors. It is also part of a major vehicle corridor spanning the length of the Eastern Seaboard. The 182-mile stretch in North Carolina transects urban, suburban, and rural landscape conditions. Large-scale rehabilitation or widening in this corridor has been minimal following the original construction. In 2009 NCDOT determined that I-95 needed a holistic evaluation from state line to state line (http://www.driving95.com/about_study.html). In the spring of 2010, NCDOT and its project consultant kicked off a two-year study, the I-95 Corridor Planning and Finance Study. "The study encompasses the entire length of I-95 in North Carolina, and when concluded in the fall of 2011, will provide NCDOT with a master plan for the future development of I-95" (http://www.driving95.com/about_study.html). NCDOT will use the recommendations resulting from this study to begin development of individual TIP (Transportation Improvement Program) projects. The Driving95 Project study components include: public involvement, an in-depth needs assessment, a corridor plan, and a finance plan.

Public Involvement: Public involvement was part of the project process from the beginning of the study. NCDOT and its consultant, Michael Baker Corporation, employed a comprehensive project "branding" strategy, and a strategic plan for public involvement. Various tools and techniques to gather input and provide opportunities to engage the public were used. People were provided opportunities to engage through a project website, social media, public meetings, and by phone.

From the Driving95 website:

The Public Involvement effort for the study spans the entire project and will incorporate diverse strategies to engage and inform you, including a website, social media applications (e.g., Facebook, Twitter), brochures, posters, project briefings and presentations.

Our Public Involvement goal for Driving95 is to listen to your view! This is your road, and as commuters, travelers and community members, your vision for I-95 is important to us. A series of public workshops held along the corridor will focus on this endeavor. Keep an eye out for a meeting near you.

Project Details

Location

Organizations

Budget

Case Summary

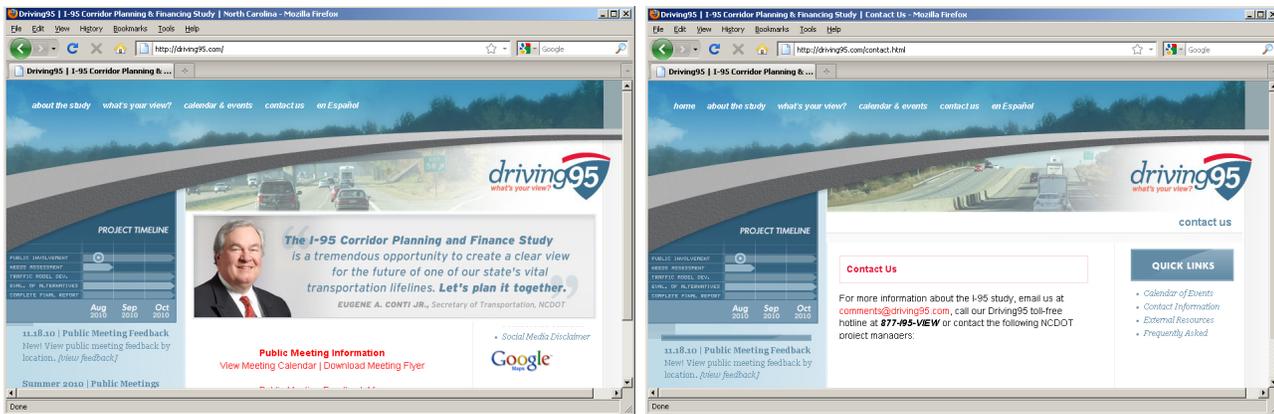
Internet

Meeting Activity

Social Media

Phone-based

Internet: A project-specific website was created to communicate important dates, meetings, and milestones of the project. Various videos were used, including project-specific messages from North Carolina's Secretary of Transportation. The public could view project frequently asked questions, reports, press coverage reports, additional outreach materials such as flyers and brochures, and project videos. The public could subscribe to an RSS feed and link directly to social media project outlets. Additionally, people could provide comments on various aspects of the project through a project e-mail address listed on the website, by calling a toll-free phone number, and by downloading printable forms and sending them to project staff.



Social Media: Driving95 project staff employed consistent use of Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube.

Twitter: Driving95 project staff created a Twitter handle (@Driving95) and hashtag (#Driving95) to deliver information to and track comments from Twitter users. The @Driving95 handle allowed Twitter users to follow the project, and the #Driving95 hashtag allowed project staff to follow all comments that used the hashtag in the comment field. Additionally, Twitter provided a platform for project staff to dialogue with Twitter users, jumping into an online conversation about the Driving95 project.



Internet

Meeting Activity

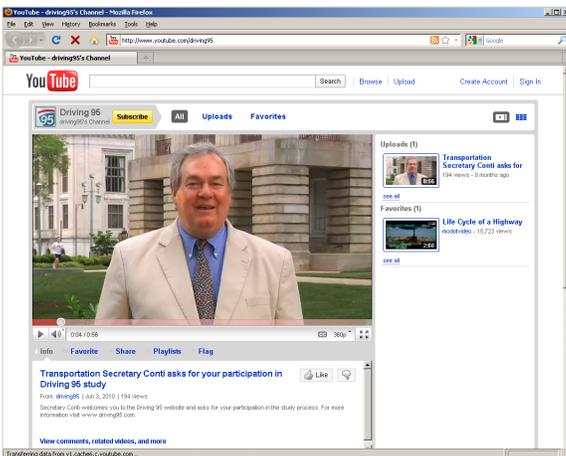
Social Media

Phone-based

Facebook: The Driving95 Project Facebook page provided another format for online, two-way communication about the Driving95 project. Project staff not only provided information about the project, but they also engaged in online dialogue and highlighted public comments received in other venues (e.g., public meetings, phone calls, e-mails, and other social media platforms).



YouTube: A YouTube channel was set up on behalf of the Driving95 Project. Project-specific videos were posted to this channel, as well informational videos on the general topic of highway life cycle. Interested members of the public could view videos, subscribe to this YouTube channel, and provide comments in this format.



Social media use was part of the over-arching public involvement plan. The key to project engagement in social media outlets is: providing clear and concise project information, monitoring social media feeds and public comments, and actively engaging with the public through social media platforms (Schell, 2011).

Internet

Meeting Activity

Social Media

Phone-based

Meetings: Project briefings and presentations were held during the summer months of 2010. Seven “Citizens Informational Workshops” were held at key locations along the corridor. Spanish translators were available at all public meetings (Brooks, 2011). The meetings allowed the public to view study information and maps, talk with NCDOT representatives, and submit comments or questions about the project (Brooks, 2011).



image: Driving95 Facebook 2010 Public Meetings Album



image: Driving95 Facebook 2010 Public Meetings Album

Phone: A project-specific toll-free number was active for the length of the project. The automated hotline provided members of the public with an opportunity to request more information or a return phone call by project staff to field questions and comments.

Brooks, S. 2011. M. Baker Corporation. Personal communication, March 21, 2011.

North Carolina Department of Transportation. 2010. Driving95 Project Website. http://www.driving95.com/about_study.

Schell, L. 2011. North Carolina Department of Transportation. Personal communication, March 8, 2011.

1. Driving95 website: <http://www.driving95.com>

2. North Carolina Department of Transportation Social Media Information: <http://www.governor.state.nc.us/eTownhall/Blog/author/LisaSchell.aspx>

3. North Carolina Department of Transportation Newsroom Feeds: <http://www.ncdot.org/newsroom/feeds/>

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References

Resources

Internet

Meeting Activity

Social Media

Phone-based