

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **ETDM PROCESS**

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## 2.1 OVERVIEW

The purpose of the Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) process is to incorporate environmental considerations into transportation planning to inform project delivery. This process supports the environmental policy of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) “to help preserve and enhance Florida’s natural, physical, cultural, and social environment as we develop, implement, and maintain transportation facilities and services” (**Policy No.: 000-625-001-I**). The ETDM process provides agencies and other stakeholders the opportunity for early input and consideration of the environment in transportation planning. ETDM process objectives include:

- Early identification of potential issues for project scope development
- Timely decision making that includes consideration of environmental quality
- Full and early public and Environmental Technical Advisory Team (ETAT) member participation
- Linkage between planning and Project Development and Environment (PD&E) [including **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)**]
- Incorporation of appropriate dispute resolution mechanisms during the planning process

These objectives are accomplished through stakeholder involvement, early consideration of environmental effects, integrating processes which were previously conducted sequentially, using interactive techniques and innovative technologies.

The ETDM process facilitates early interaction among transportation planners; federal, state, and local agencies; Native American Tribes; and affected communities. Through this process, the FDOT provides the opportunity for early stakeholder input on qualifying<sup>1</sup> transportation projects, which helps support planning decisions and develop the PD&E project scope with a clearer understanding of the environmental setting and potential concerns.

Intergovernmental interaction is accomplished through an ETAT assigned to each of the seven FDOT Districts. Each ETAT includes representatives from Metropolitan Planning Organizations/Transportation Planning Organizations (MPOs/TPOs), federal and

### Key Features of the ETDM Process

- Early and continuous agency and community involvement
- Early identification of potential avoidance, minimization and mitigation opportunities
- Access to Geographic Information System (GIS) data in standardized formats
- Identification of potential key issues
- Maximized use of technology for coordination and project screening

<sup>1</sup> Refer to qualifying criteria provided in **Section 2.3.1** of this **Manual**.

state agencies, and participating Native American Tribes. Agency Operating Agreements (AOAs) between the FDOT/Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and other state and federal agencies document the interagency understandings and agency-specific requirements for participating as an ETAT member in the ETDM process.

ETAT members use the Environmental Screening Tool (EST) to review project information, identify potential project effects, and submit comments to FDOT. This web-based GIS database and mapping tool provides access to project information and data about natural, physical, cultural, and community resources in the project area. The comments and other information are made available to the public on the ETDM Public Access Site (<https://etdmpub.fl-a-etat.org>). See **Section 2.4** for more information about the EST.

A District ETDM Coordinator leads the ETAT in each District. MPO/TPO ETDM Coordinators work with the District ETDM Coordinator and the ETAT assigned to the District in which their MPO/TPO is located. Florida's Turnpike Enterprise (Turnpike) works with different ETATs depending on the location of their projects. For example, when the Turnpike has an ETDM project in District 4, the Turnpike works with the District 4 ETAT and communicates closely with the District 4 ETDM Coordinator. The District, Turnpike, and MPO/TPO ETDM Coordinators also work with other FDOT, MPO/TPO, or local government personnel to identify qualifying projects and facilitate project reviews in the ETDM process. Refer to **Section 2.5** for more information about the roles and responsibilities of the participants in the ETDM process.

As shown in **Figure 2-1**, the ETDM process is composed of the Planning Screen and the Programming Screen. The Planning Screen occurs when considering projects for inclusion or prioritization within a Cost Feasible Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The Programming Screen supports development of the FDOT Five Year Work Program. The results of the screening events link the transportation Planning phase and the PD&E phase. Each screening event centers on a project review and includes project preparation activities and follow-up tasks occurring before and after the review.

The ETDM Coordinator for the project sponsor (i.e., FDOT District, Turnpike, or MPO/TPO) uses the EST to notify the ETAT when a project is ready for review. At the same time, the information is published on the ETDM Public Access Site. During the review period, ETAT members and the public have the opportunity to provide input about potential project effects. FDOT or MPO/TPO personnel also begin to identify potential effects on surrounding communities. They seek to develop an understanding of community desires, concerns, as well as identify potential controversies related to the project. ETAT members perform multidisciplinary reviews specific to their area of expertise (e.g., wetlands or land use). These reviews help to:

- Determine the feasibility of a proposed project.
- Allow for early identification of potential avoidance, minimization, and mitigation opportunities.

- Focus the issues to be addressed during the PD&E phase.
- Create documentation and support information which may be carried forward into the PD&E phase.

At the end of the review period, the project sponsor (FDOT or the MPO/TPO) summarizes the comments gathered from the reviews. FDOT subsequently uses this information to focus the issues that need to be addressed during the PD&E phase and develop the scope of services for the PD&E Study.

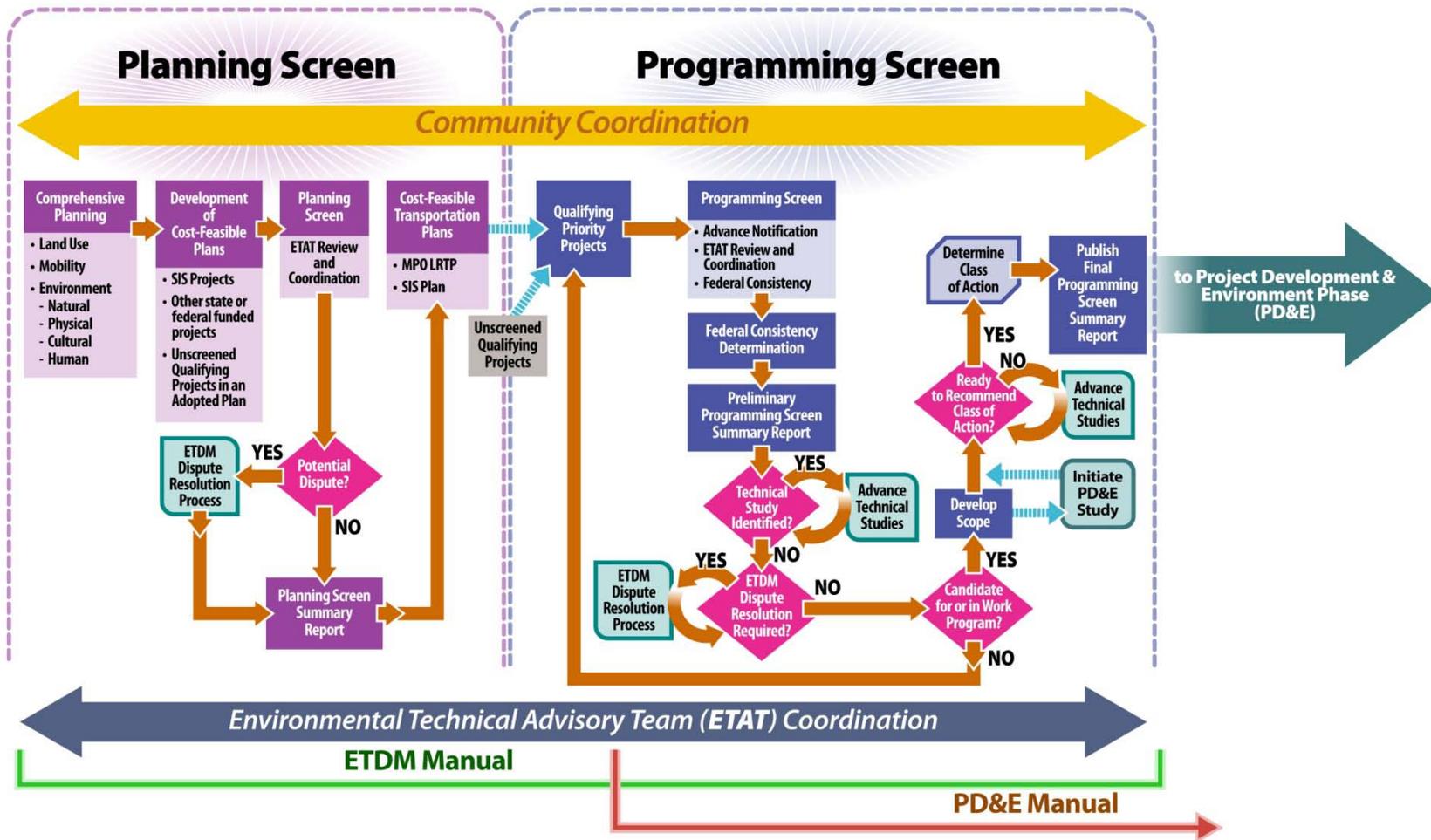


Figure 2-1: ETDM Process Diagram

## 2.2 TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS

The ETDM process supports the transportation Planning phase by providing opportunities for consideration of potential environmental effects. In order to provide the context for ETDM Planning and Programming Screens, this section summarizes Florida's transportation process and identifies the various plans from which qualifying ETDM projects may originate.

### 2.2.1 Overview

Planning helps create a broad vision for the future. The planning process engages civic leaders, businesses, and citizens. It provides information and strategies to help guide future development, deal with community problems, promote public health and safety, and protect natural, physical, cultural, and community (including social and economic) resources. A driving force for FDOT is the Florida Transportation Plan (FTP), which is composed of goals and objectives that provide the framework for planning decisions in the state including local comprehensive planning. In Florida, the local comprehensive plan is a community's legally binding vision for its future and includes a transportation element that helps advance transportation priorities. Under **Chapter 163, Florida Statutes (F.S.)**, each local government must maintain a local comprehensive plan to guide future economic, social, physical, natural, and fiscal development of the area. At a minimum, these comprehensive plans address the following elements (**Chapter 163.3177, F.S.**):

- Future Land Use
- Transportation
- General sanitary sewer, solid waste, drainage, potable water, and natural groundwater aquifer recharge
- Conservation, use, and protection of natural resources
- Recreation and open space
- Housing
- Coastal management (if applicable)
- Intergovernmental coordination

Transportation planning begins with the community vision and develops strategies for addressing mobility in such a way as to advance the area's long-term goals. It is a cooperative process encouraging involvement by system users such as the business community, community groups, environmental organizations, the traveling public, freight operators, and the general public. **Figure 2-2** illustrates the transportation planning process. Activities involved in transportation planning include (USDOT, 2007):

- Monitoring existing conditions
- Forecasting future population and employment growth, including assessing projected land uses in the region and identifying major growth corridors
- Identifying current and projected future transportation problems and needs and analyzing, through detailed planning studies, various transportation improvement strategies to address those needs
- Developing long-range plans and short-range programs of alternative capital improvement and operational strategies for moving people and goods
- Estimating the impact of recommended future improvements to the transportation system on environmental resources
- Developing a financial plan for securing sufficient revenues to cover the costs of implementing strategies

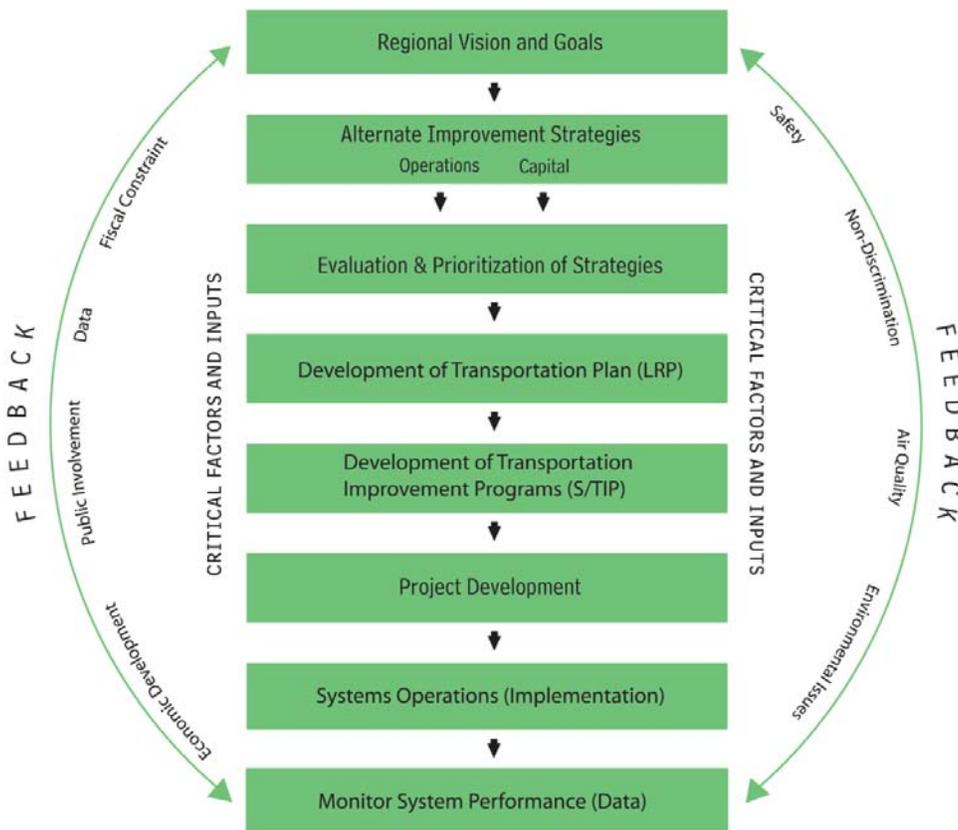


Figure 2-2: Transportation Planning Process (USDOT, 2007)

The outcomes of planning activities result in the identification of project priorities to address future transportation needs. These can be identified in the Strategic Intermodal System

(SIS) Plan, a MPO/TPO LRTP, or other long-range planning documents. As funding sources are identified, priority projects are advanced into the implementation phases through the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and in MPO areas the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The FDOT Five Year Work Program schedules the implementation plan for these projects, as described in **Section 339.135 F.S.**

## 2.2.2 Transportation Planning Agencies

Transportation planning in Florida is a cooperative process that involves various levels of government, users of the transportation system, and the private sector.

Counties and municipalities are responsible for planning, building, and maintaining local road systems. Local governments are also responsible for most public transit systems, airports, and seaports, either directly or in conjunction with special authorities created to manage and provide services.

FDOT is responsible for planning, operating, and maintaining the State Highway System (SHS). The department is also responsible for the SIS, which consists of corridors, facilities, and services of statewide and interregional importance. FDOT also assists local governments, metropolitan and regional agencies and the private sector in providing public transit, aviation, rail, seaport, bicycle, pedestrian, and other transportation facilities and services. A number of these activities support freight initiatives.

To support these activities, FDOT prepares and maintains the FTP. Statewide modal plans maintained by FDOT include the Transit Strategic Plan, Florida Aviation System Plan, Seaport Plan, and State Rail Plan. FDOT maintains the SIS Plan to help guide future investments in, and the management of, the SIS. FDOT also annually adopts the STIP, and a Five Year Work Program.

Every urbanized area with a population of more than 50,000 persons must have a designated MPO for transportation projects to qualify for FHWA or Federal Transit Agency (FTA) assistance (**23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 450.310(a)**). MPOs are transportation policy-making bodies made up of representatives from local government and transportation agencies with authority and responsibility in the metropolitan planning areas. The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) depends on the MPOs to ensure that federally funded transit and highway projects are products of a certified planning process. Within an MPO area, USDOT will not approve federal funding for urban highway or transit projects unless they are in the MPO's plan. Each MPO is responsible for developing a LRTP, TIP, and Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). For more information about Florida's MPOs, refer to the **FDOT MPO Program Management Handbook**.

USDOT oversees the formulation of national transportation policy. It also provides financial and technical support to state and local governments in the planning, design, construction, and maintenance of federal transportation systems.

These transportation agencies must conduct their planning activities cooperatively in order to support the entire transportation system. In metropolitan areas, the MPO is responsible for actively seeking the participation of all relevant agencies and stakeholders in the planning process; similarly, FDOT is responsible for activities outside metropolitan areas. The MPOs and FDOT also work together. For example, each FDOT District has an MPO Liaison who works with the MPOs within their geographic area to coordinate activities.

Pursuant to **23 United States Code (USC) Section 135**, FDOT has a documented process for consulting with non-metropolitan local officials during development of the long range statewide transportation plan and the STIP. Additional requirements for consulting with non-metropolitan local officials are included in **23 CFR Part 450**. Accordingly, FDOT coordinates its statewide transportation planning process, including the STIP, with planning activities in non-metropolitan areas and considers the concerns of local elected officials representing units of general-purpose local government. FDOT confers with identified parties in non-metropolitan areas, in accordance with established processes, considers their views, and periodically informs the parties about actions taken. **Florida's Consultative Planning Process for Non-metropolitan Areas** is available on the Office of Policy Planning website (<http://www.dot.state.fl.us/planning/policy/ruralsupport/>).

### 2.2.3 Key Planning Documents

As illustrated in **Table 2-1**, there are four key documents produced by the federal transportation planning process. These are augmented by state required documents as described below.

Table 2-1: Key Planning Products

Document	Who Develops?	Who Approves?	Time/ Horizon	Contents	Update Requirements	ETDM Screening
FTP	FDOT	Governor/ FDOT	At least 20 Years	Future Goals, Strategies	Not specified	Not specified
L RTP	MPO/TPO	MPO/TPO	20 Years	Future Goals, Strategies and Projects (including cost feasible element)	Every 5 Years (4 years for non- attainment and maintenance areas)	Qualifying Projects: Planning Screen for cost feasible element
STIP	FDOT	Governor/ USDOT	4 Years	Transportation Investments	Every 4 Years or as amended	Qualifying Priority Projects: Programming Screen
TIP	MPO/TPO	MPO/ Governor	5 Years	Transportation Investments	Every 4 Years or as amended	Qualifying Priority Projects: Programming Screen

The FTP is the official, statewide, multimodal, transportation plan covering a period of no less than 20 years (**23 CFR 450.104**). The 2060 FTP is Florida's current long-range statewide plan. It outlines the transportation needs, policies, and strategies for the state of Florida over the next 50 years. The FTP contains both the short and long-term goals

and objectives designed to anticipate future conditions and meet area transportation needs.

The LRTP is the transportation plan of a MPO/TPO which addresses no less than a 20 year planning horizon and includes both long-range and short-range strategies/actions that lead to the development of an integrated multimodal transportation system facilitating safe and efficient movement of people and goods (**23 CFR 450.322(a)(b)**). The LRTP is reviewed and updated every five years to confirm the transportation plan's validity and consistency with current and forecasted transportation and land use trends and conditions and to extend the 20-year planning horizon (**23 CFR 450.322(c)**). Priority, qualifying projects identified for inclusion or already included in the cost feasible (fiscally constrained) element of the LRTP, should complete an ETDM Planning Screen. For projects developed using the Alternative Corridor Evaluation (ACE) process, complete an ETDM Planning Screen as early as possible.

The TIP, required by **Chapter 339.175(8)(a), F.S.**, lists priority transportation projects covering a period of five years. It is developed and formally adopted by a MPO/TPO as part of the metropolitan transportation planning process, is consistent with the metropolitan transportation plan, and is required for projects to be eligible for funding under title **23 U.S.C.** and title **49 U.S.C. Chapter 53**. The first four years of the TIP are incorporated into the federally required TIP, with the fifth year included as informational for USDOT purposes (**23 CFR 450.324(a)**). To develop the TIP, the MPO/TPO solicits project requests from agencies responsible for providing transportation services and facilities, cooperatively ranking them, and selecting the highest priority projects that will fit into the estimated available funding. Priority, qualifying projects complete an ETDM Programming Screen which aids in the development of the scope of services for the PD&E Study. For projects initiating the ACE process at the Programming Screen, complete an ETDM Programming Screen as early as possible.

A STIP is a statewide prioritized listing/program of transportation projects covering a period of four years that is consistent with the FTP and both LRTPs and TIPs in MPO/TPO areas [required for projects to be eligible for funding under **Title 23 U.S.C.** and **Title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 (23 CFR 450.104)**]. For metropolitan planning areas, the STIP incorporates the TIP developed by the MPO (**23 CFR 450.216**). Priority, qualifying projects should complete an ETDM Programming Screen to aid in the development of the scope of services for the PD&E Study. For projects initiating the ACE process at the programming screen, complete an ETDM Programming Screen as early as possible.

Another MPO/TPO plan, the UPWP, refers to a statement of work identifying the planning priorities and activities to be carried out within a metropolitan planning area for a two-year period. Typically this plan is not used as the basis for identifying projects to complete various screening events. However, it does relate to the other MPO/TPO plans. At a minimum, an UPWP includes a description of the planning work and resulting products, who will perform the work, time frames for completing the work, the cost of the work, and the source(s) of funds (**23 CFR 450.104**).

As required by **Chapters 338 and 339, F.S.**, FDOT annually develops and adopts a Five Year Work Program listing the schedule of specific projects and services planned by FDOT. It includes projects from the STIP, MPO/TPO TIPs, and Priority Lists of non-MPO/TPO areas. The first four years of the Five Year Work Program are incorporated into the federally required STIP. For more information about including planning activities in the Five Year Work Program, refer to **FDOT Work Program Instructions, Part III, Chapter 23, Planning**.

## 2.2.4 Plan Consistency

As a project proceeds to the PD&E phase, it must be included in the appropriate plans and programs before receiving federal approval for its environmental document. Projects in MPO/TPO areas must be described in their LRTP and TIP. This may require early coordination with the MPO should an amendment to the LRTP be needed, and this effort should be incorporated into the project schedule. Projects in non-MPO areas must be included into the STIP. PD&E project team should coordinate with FDOT District MPO/TPO or Rural County Liaisons and either MPO/TPO or local government planning staff to compile and complete consistency information. The FDOT Office of Policy Planning provides guidance about plan consistency on their website at:

<http://www.dot.state.fl.us/planning/policy/metrosupport/>.

FHWA provides clarification about transportation planning requirements and their relationship to **NEPA** Process completion on their website at:

[http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/tpr\\_and\\_nepa/supplementmemo.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/tpr_and_nepa/supplementmemo.cfm).

## 2.3 SCREENING PROJECTS

This section describes the general process for screening ETDM projects, including project preparation, review, and post-review tasks. More details about the Planning and Programming Screens are described in **Chapters 3 and 4**, respectively.

### 2.3.1 Identifying Qualifying Projects

ETDM projects may originate from a variety of FDOT, MPO/TPO, or local government programs and plans, such as:

- SIS Cost Feasible Plan
- Statewide Bridge Replacement Program
- Transportation Needs Plans
- Master Plans
- Action Plans

- Corridor Plans
- TIPs
- LRTP
- Local Government Comprehensive Plans
- Capital Improvement Programs
- Priority Lists

The project sponsor (FDOT or MPO/TPO) selects qualifying projects and then enters project information into the EST. The ETDM process applies to certain types of state and federal transportation projects that meet additional conditions described in this section. To determine whether a project must complete the ETDM process, the project sponsor first considers the project type. Qualifying project types include:

- Roadway Projects
  - Additional through lanes which add capacity to an existing road
  - A new roadway, freeway or expressway
  - A highway which provides new access to an area
  - A new or reconstructed arterial highway (e.g., realignment)
  - A new circumferential or belt highway that bypasses a community
  - Addition of interchanges or major interchange modifications to a completed freeway or expressway (based on coordination with FHWA)
  - A new bridge which provides new access to an area, bridge replacements (e.g., non-Programmatic Categorical Exclusions)
- Public Transportation
  - Major capital improvements, including Intermodal Centers, Rail, and Transit Centers
  - Rail - new commuter rail, passenger rail, or new freight rail extending beyond current footprint
  - Transit - new facility, new terminal, New Start/Small Start/Very Small Start project extending beyond current footprint

- A new seaport, airport, or non-passenger rail project on the SIS

After determining the qualifying project type, the project sponsor uses the **ETDM Screening Matrix for Qualifying Projects**, shown in **Table 2-2**, to consider whether screening is required based on the transportation system, potential funding source(s), and the responsible agency (i.e., the agency required to meet federal, state, and other applicable requirements). Generally, qualifying SHS and SIS projects must complete the ETDM process when FDOT is the responsible agency, as do most other qualifying projects using federal or state funds (or requiring a federal authorization). The ETDM process is either a local option or not applicable when qualifying projects are using only local funds or if a local, non-FDOT entity is the responsible agency. In this discussion, “local” applies to any local government agency, other state agency, expressway or bridge authority, or private entity. Where “Local and FDOT” is referenced in **Table 2-2**, coordination should occur between the local agency and FDOT as the project advances.

Note that qualifying Local Agency Program (LAP) projects follow the ETDM process because they are funded with federal dollars, which necessitates FDOT oversight. For a project to be part of the LAP, federal funds must already be programmed in the Five Year Work Program. Refer to the **FDOT LAP Manual** for more information about LAP projects.

Table 2-2: ETDM Screening Matrix for Qualifying Projects

	Federal Dollars (any FHWA, FTA or FRA funds or federal authorization)		State Dollars (TRIP, Transit/ Intermodal System Grants, etc) No Federal Dollars Involved		Local Dollars Only	
	Responsible Agency	ETDM Screening	Responsible Agency	ETDM Screening	Responsible Agency	ETDM Screening
<b>System</b>						
Highways on the State Highway System (SHS) and on the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS)	FDOT	YES FDOT Lead	FDOT	YES	FDOT	YES
	Local		Local and FDOT	Local Option	Local and FDOT	Local Option
Highways on the SHS but not on the SIS	FDOT	YES FDOT Lead	FDOT	YES	FDOT	YES
	Local		Local and FDOT	Local Option	Local and FDOT	Local Option
Highways not on SHS but on the SIS	FDOT	YES FDOT Lead	FDOT	YES	FDOT	YES
	Local		Local and FDOT	Local Option	Local and FDOT	Local Option
Highways not on SHS nor on the SIS	FDOT	YES FDOT Lead	FDOT	YES	Local	N/A
	Local		Local	Local Option		
Major Transit Projects (new fixed guideway, New Starts) or Major Freight Projects	FDOT	YES	FDOT	YES	Local	N/A
	Local	Local Option	Local	Local Option		

**NOTE:** Local applies to any local government agency, other state agency, expressway authority, bridge authority or private entity

**Sections 2.3.1.1 and 2.3.1.2** of this *Manual* provide specific guidance on how to further apply the selection criteria for a Planning or Programming Screen. If there are any questions regarding whether a project should or should not be screened, please contact the Central Environmental Management Office (CEMO) to discuss the project details.

### 2.3.1.1 Additional Planning Screen Criteria

Only unscreened qualifying projects in or expected to be included in a Cost Feasible Plan undergo a Planning Screen. Ideally, all Planning Screens should follow the formulation of the Needs Plan and be completed before final approval of the LRTP, with highest priority projects being screened first. Usually, local government priority projects in non-MPO areas and qualifying bridge projects do not complete a Planning Screen. However, a Planning

Screen may be conducted for these projects at the discretion of the District, depending on the nature of the project and whether they qualify for screening.

FDOT is responsible for screening all qualifying SHS, SIS, and non-MPO/TPO qualifying priority projects. The MPO/TPO is responsible for screening qualifying MPO/TPO projects in their jurisdiction.

### **2.3.1.2 Additional Programming Screen Criteria**

In preparation of the STIP, a MPO/TPO TIP, or a Priority List of a county or municipality, MPO/TPO and FDOT ETDM Coordinators work with appropriate MPO/TPO, FDOT District, and other local government staff to identify qualifying projects to screen from transportation plans. This includes staff responsible for coordinating with planning agencies, managing project planning or development, and others who may have information to assist with the decision-making process. Depending on the organization, this task may involve personnel such as Planning Managers, MPO/TPO/Rural County Liaisons, PD&E Project Managers, planners, and environmental specialists.

A Programming Screen is required for all qualifying projects that will be included in the Five Year Work Program or those that are in the Five Year Work Program but have not started the PD&E phase. The Five Year Work Program is a schedule of specific transportation projects and services that will be provided during a five-year period. Transportation projects are selected annually for inclusion in the Five Year Work Program. It identifies:

- Which projects and services will be provided during the relevant five-year period,
- When and where such projects and services will be provided, and
- How these projects and services will be funded using available revenue.

The Five Year Work Program, required by **Chapters 338 and 339, F.S.**, is developed by the FDOT Central Office from the work programs of the FDOT Districts and Turnpike, drawing projects from MPO/TPO TIPs, local government Priority Lists, and various FDOT programs. The Five Year Work Program is published annually by the Office of Work Program and is fully described in the **FDOT Work Program Instructions**.

Before selecting projects for the Five Year Work Program, FDOT (in conjunction with MPOs, as appropriate) should set sufficient time horizons in their project schedules to allow for a Programming Screen on all qualifying projects.

Only unscreened qualifying projects in or expected to move forward into the Five Year Work Program undergo a Programming Screen. This may include projects previously reviewed in a Planning Screen as well as those not typically reviewed in a Planning Screen, such as bridge replacement projects or projects resulting from amendments to adopted transportation plans. Programming Screens should be performed before development of the project scope of services to assist in identifying the activities to be completed during the

PD&E Study. Ideally, Programming Screens should occur before the PD&E Study enters the Five Year Work Program, with highest priority projects being screened first or before the start of the PD&E phase. This does not imply that the PD&E Study can only be placed in the fifth year. Rather, projects that complete a Programming Screen should be able to be prioritized in such a manner that the PD&E phase can be programmed earlier. For example, it may be possible to program the PD&E Study in Years 1, 2, or 3, with subsequent phase(s) in Years 4 or 5. Refer to ***FDOT Work Program Instructions, Part III, Chapter 23, Planning***, for details. The scope of a project and its priority ultimately dictate how it is programmed.

### 2.3.2 Project Screening Release Schedule

Based on the list of projects selected for Planning or Programming Screens, FDOT ETDM Coordinators and Project Managers work with appropriate staff to develop a 12-month ETDM Screening schedule. The schedule identifies projects, the type of screening, and the anticipated screening release date for each project. Projects undergoing the ACE process should also be identified because they require additional activities, as discussed in ***Chapters 3 and 4*** of this ***Manual***. The schedule should be made available to the ETAT on the EST ETDM Calendar and updated as needed. FDOT Districts are encouraged to hold annual ETAT meetings (or web meetings) to discuss project specifics, release schedules, and program objectives. As changes occur to the list of projects or schedules, the FDOT ETDM Coordinators update the screening release schedule on the EST ETDM Calendar. Refer to the ***Environmental Screening Tool Handbook*** for instructions.

It is important to ensure the ETAT have enough time to review and provide comments. Therefore, it is recommended that no more than two projects be released at a time, and that project releases be scheduled at least two weeks apart. In addition, four months should be allowed per project to provide time for reviews, public involvement activities, possible review extensions, and preparation of the ***Summary Report***. During the development of the project screening release schedule, the FDOT ETDM Coordinator should collaborate with other Districts to ensure consideration of their needs, plan adoption dates, work program deadlines, and the workload of ETAT members who may be assigned to multiple FDOT Districts.

### 2.3.3 Planning Screen

In preparation of adopting the Cost Feasible Plans, MPO/TPO and FDOT ETDM Coordinators work with other FDOT and MPO/TPO personnel as well as local governments to identify qualifying projects as described above.

Prior to initiating the Planning Screen review, the project description, purpose and need, and logical termini for the project are added to the EST based on information from and in coordination with the applicable Planning office. During the 45-day project review period, ETAT members provide input about the project's purpose and need, their resource management plans, and potential project issues. Early input received during the Planning Screen enables the transportation planners to:

- Refine the initial project concept.
- Refine the project's purpose and need.
- Identify potential avoidance, minimization, or mitigation opportunities.
- Improve project cost estimates.
- Consider resource management plans and community values.
- Advance technical studies, if appropriate.

Following the project review, the ETDM Coordinator prepares a **Planning Screen Summary Report**. This report serves as a feedback mechanism which documents the FDOT responses to comments provided by the ETAT members. It can assist with subsequent interagency dialogue and aid in the development of LRTPs, Priority Lists, and the SIS Plan. The **Planning Screen Summary Report** includes a summary of ETAT member commentary identifying potential environmental issues and considerations for advancing the project. It also provides information about how FDOT or the MPO/TPO will address issues identified during the Planning Screen review. It additionally documents information from earlier studies and community outreach activities, which would support subsequent phases.

For certain projects, such as new alignments, the ACE process may begin during the Planning Screen. The ACE process provides FDOT with a consistent, documented method for corridor evaluation. Working with ETAT members and the Lead Agency (defined in **Section 2.5**), FDOT Districts establish methodologies to help identify reasonable alternatives for detailed analysis in the PD&E phase. With concurrence from the Lead Agency, these decisions may be carried forward into subsequent **NEPA** documents.

For more information about initiating the ACE process during the Planning Screen, see **Chapter 3, Section 3.6**, of this **Manual**.

### 2.3.4 Programming Screen

As described in **Section 2.3.1** of this **Manual**, a Programming Screen is required for all qualifying projects that will be included in the Five Year Work Program or those that are in the Five Year Work Program but have not started the PD&E phase. Programming Screens should be performed before creating the project scope of services so the screening results can be considered during its development.

The Programming Screen initiates the Advance Notification (AN) process, which FDOT uses to inform stakeholders about a proposed transportation action and to provide opportunity for their input and involvement in the project. This fulfills the project initiation notification as required by **Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU)**, the **President's Executive Order 12372 (Intergovernmental**

**Review of Federal Programs**), and the **Governor's Executive Order 95-359 (Florida State Clearinghouse)**. In addition, the AN may also provide notice of FDOT's intent to apply for Federal-aid on a project. The AN process also initiates the Federal Consistency Review process as required by **15 CFR 930** and begins FDOT's scoping process for the PD&E phase. Scoping is "an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to a proposed action" (**40 CFR 1501.7**). See **PD&E Manual, Part 1, Chapter 3, Preliminary Environmental Discussion and Advance Notification** for details about the AN process.

During the Programming Screen, FDOT distributes the AN package through the EST, or via a letter, as appropriate. ETAT representatives and other recipients of the AN package identify potential effects to environmental resources, anticipated technical studies and coordination documents, and the need for future agency or tribal involvement.

FDOT evaluates the input received and uses it to advance or focus analysis prior to the PD&E phase (as appropriate), develop the scope of services for the PD&E Study, and assist in determining the appropriate Class of Action (COA) as described in the **PD&E Manual, Part 1, Chapter 2, Environmental Class of Action Determination**. For ACE projects, the results may also assist in narrowing the list of reasonable alternatives requiring detailed study during the PD&E phase.

FDOT documents the results of the Programming Screen review and the COA determination in the **Final Programming Screen Summary Report**. FDOT uses the report as the transition document to the PD&E phase and makes it available to the PD&E project team, resource agencies, and the public.

### **2.3.5 Advancing to Project Development and Environment (PD&E)**

During the PD&E phase, FDOT performs preliminary engineering, conducts environmental reviews and public involvement activities; and prepares necessary studies and reports. During this phase, FDOT develops alternatives, evaluates potential impacts to natural, physical, cultural, and community resources, and documents compliance with federal and state environmental laws.

The **Title 23 U.S.C.** provides authority for, and encourages the integration of, planning information and products into the **NEPA** process. Therefore, the results of the Programming Screen can be used to support the PD&E Study in the following ways:

- Provide the foundation for purpose and need
- Define the general travel corridor and/or general mode(s)
- Distribute the Advance Notification

- Provide early input from stakeholders about transportation project alternatives and, for Environmental Impact Statements (EISs), the elimination of unreasonable alternatives
- Provide planning-level consideration of potential direct, indirect, and cumulative effects
- Identify mitigation opportunities
- Define the affected environment (existing conditions)
- Identify anticipated permits and technical studies
- Advance technical studies, if appropriate
- Identify the anticipated environmental COA

Recommendations made during Planning and Programming Screens are recorded in the EST, and published in the ***Final Programming Screen Summary Report*** for use in the PD&E phase. Generally commitments are not made during the planning phase. However, if a commitment is made, follow FDOT procedure ***Project Commitment Tracking 700-011-035-a***. At the completion of the PD&E phase, the environmental document is prepared, providing the environmental and engineering recommendations to guide final design. ***Chapter 5*** of this ***Manual*** describes the transition to the PD&E phase.

FDOT's ***PD&E Manual*** details the process and technical requirements for compliance with federal and state laws during the PD&E phase.

## 2.4 ENVIRONMENTAL SCREENING TOOL

The State of Florida has developed a comprehensive digital database, the Florida Geographic Data Library (FGDL), at the University of Florida's GeoPlan Center. The EST is a web application that uses FGDL data and provides for an interactive review of proposed transportation projects by ETAT members. Project team members and ETAT members access the EST through an internal secure site which is password protected to allow updates to the database. Other stakeholders may view the information on the read- ETDM Public Access Site (<https://etdmpub.fl-a-etat.org/est/>).

FDOT and the MPO/TPOs enter information into the EST to advance consideration of environmental effects on their qualifying transportation projects. ETAT representatives provide new and updated GIS data to the FGDL for use within the EST, as available.

The EST performs standardized GIS analyses and queries using information supplied by ETAT members and contained in the FGDL. Moreover, it:

- Integrates data pertinent to natural, physical, cultural, and community resources and transportation programs into a standardized format.
- Analyzes GIS data within project buffers to support ETAT member commentary.
- Provides a platform for dissemination of information among ETAT representatives and the public.
- Provides storage and access to ETAT reviews.

EST users receive automatic email announcements about the availability of new data or analyses, project review deadlines, and training opportunities. User guides, technical documents, program agreements, manuals, and handbooks related to the ETDM process are available within the EST Library to assist ETAT members. A staffed help desk is available during normal business hours to provide technical assistance. **Figure 2-3** schematically displays the concept for the EST.



Figure 2-3: ETDM Database Technology Concept

The FDOT strives to improve the quality, consistency, and currency of data available for analysis through the EST. The responsibility for data acquisition and management is further described in **Chapter 6** of this **Manual**. For instructions on how to use the EST, refer to FDOT's **Environmental Screening Tool Handbook**.

## 2.5 ETDM COORDINATION

Successful interaction between all entities and persons involved in the Planning and Programming Screens requires close coordination and teamwork. The EST facilitates communication and documents the results of the screening events. Additional interaction through interpersonal communication and team meetings helps to coordinate among FDOT, MPOs/TPOs, local governments, and ETAT members.

While the ETDM process requires interaction among a wide range of professionals involved in planning and project development processes, the responsibility for successful implementation rests with the following primary ETDM team members:

- PD&E Project Manager
- Environmental Administrator
- Project Development Engineer
- ETDM Coordinator
- Community Liaison Coordinator (CLC)
- Central Environmental Management Office
- Environmental Permit Coordinator
- FDOT Planning and MPO/TPO Staff
- ETAT Members
- Lead Agency Representatives

These team members play a key role in the ETDM process by providing project information, program expertise, quality assurance, coordination, and recommendations to support the screening event or the decision-making process. The team is responsible for coordinating with District management in advancing ETDM activities, as appropriate. The FDOT District identifies the personnel, roles, and responsibilities for this team as appropriate to support the ETDM process implementation within the District. This can include assigned consultant support. FDOT Districts, MPO/TPOs, and ETAT agencies have flexibility and discretion on how activities are assigned and accomplished. For example, a task listed under the ETDM Coordinator may be performed by the PD&E Project Manager. The important point is that the activity is accomplished and the ETDM Coordinator, as chair of the ETAT, is able to provide feedback and verify that the project advances through the process.

Other staff specialists, such as planners, engineers, SIS Coordinators, MPO/TPO/Rural County Liaisons, environmental specialists, and managers also play key roles in the ETDM process within FDOT and other ETAT member organizations. The FDOT and ETAT members are encouraged to identify personnel who will provide project information, support project development, or assist in the identification of potential project effects.

### **2.5.1 PD&E Project Manager**

The PD&E Project Manager executes and completes a project through the PD&E phase. This individual should be assigned during the Programming Screen and is the leader of the

project team. When assigned, PD&E Project Managers have the same roles and responsibilities in the ETDM process as the ETDM Coordinator for the projects they manage.

Tasks performed by the PD&E Project Manager include, but are not limited to tasks listed below (also see ETDM Coordinator tasks listed in **Section 2.5.4**):

- Refining the project purpose and need, description, and spatial representation (geometry loaded and seen in the EST)
- Working with FDOT ETDM Coordinators and environmental specialists to determine the Summary Degrees of Effect (SDOEs)
- Working with the MPO/TPO or Rural County Liaisons and District planning offices to ensure consistency with applicable transportation plans
- Working with the ETAT and environmental specialists on specific issues and comments
- Participating in any dispute/issue resolution
- Providing CLCs with any comments identified or community outreach activities conducted
- Reviewing all project information before being finalized and advanced by the ETDM Coordinator
- Working with FDOT ETDM Coordinators, environmental specialists, Project Development Engineers, and management to prepare scopes for PD&E phase technical studies and COA determinations
- Integrating review results and planning phase outcomes into PD&E documents
- Verifying that appropriate technical studies have been or are performed to address identified project issues

If the PD&E Project Manager is not assigned until the PD&E phase, the ETDM Coordinator and PD&E Project Manager meet to discuss the outcomes from the Planning and Programming Screens. For more information about PD&E Project Manager roles and responsibilities, refer to the ***FDOT Project Management Handbook***.

## **2.5.2 Environmental Administrator**

The Environmental Administrators provide guidance, coordination, and decisions to support every aspect of the ETDM process and the PD&E Phase. These responsibilities play a vital

part in the effectiveness and efficiency of ETDM operations. Their roles include, but are not limited to:

- Providing guidance on the appropriate COA and scope of services for the PD&E Study
- Assisting, leading, or supporting activities identified under other roles
- Reviewing and approving (signing) environmental documents during PD&E
- Coordinating with District management

In some districts, these ETDM responsibilities are delegated to the Project Development Engineer.

### **2.5.3 Project Development Engineer**

The Project Development Engineer is responsible for the Project Development program and process in all FDOT Districts. This individual is often a key member of the ETDM team, working with the Project Manager, ETDM Coordinator, and other personnel on tasks such as:

- Identifying projects for screening
- Establishing a project screening schedule
- Coordinating with the lead agency to determine the COA
- Determining the need for technical studies, permits and scope of work, including public involvement, dispute resolution, and quality assurance for PD&E Studies
- Coordinating with District management

### **2.5.4 ETDM Coordinator**

Each FDOT District, Turnpike, and MPO/TPO has a designated ETDM Coordinator. In general, the ETDM Coordinators work with the project team to manage qualifying projects through the ETDM process for their respective organizations. In conjunction with appropriate staff, they implement the ETDM process within their organizations.

In addition, the FDOT District ETDM Coordinators chair the ETAT for their geographic Districts. They may also conduct or coordinate ETDM training and provide technical assistance to other FDOT, MPO/TPO, local government, and ETAT members (consistent with statewide procedures and guidance).

The Turnpike ETDM Coordinator manages Turnpike projects through the ETDM process and coordinates with the geographic FDOT District office(s) where the projects are located.

The ETATs for the geographic FDOT Districts also review Turnpike projects located in those areas.

MPO/TPO ETDM Coordinators work closely with their FDOT counterparts as qualifying MPO/TPO projects advance from the Planning phase to the PD&E phase. Ideally, the MPO/TPO ETDM Coordinator sponsors MPO/TPO projects during the Planning Screen. As projects advance to the Programming Screen, the FDOT District takes the lead while continuing to seek input from the MPO/TPO.

Key activities of the ETDM Coordinators are listed below. Unless otherwise specified, these activities apply to all three types of ETDM Coordinators for their respective projects. When a Project Manager is assigned during a Planning or Programming Screen, the Project Manager can perform these activities for the specific project.

- Confirming timely information flow with CLCs, planners, environmental specialists, Project Managers, and other personnel within their organization who maintain information needed for the ETDM screens, participate in the project reviews, or use the results
- Working with appropriate staff to ensure timely exchange of project information from the MPO/TPOs and local governments to FDOT, as applicable
- Coordinating with appropriate management and staff to identify projects for screening and to establish a screening schedule
- Coordinating and working with the project team to perform quality assurance checks on information entered into the EST and ensuring accurate project information is entered into the EST, including project description, purpose and need, project GIS data, plan consistency, and schedules
- Coordinating with the appropriate planning staff or government liaisons to ensure the project is consistent with all relevant plans (i.e., STIP, TIP, LRTP)
- Identifying and uploading other relevant project information, such as planning studies, **Methodology Memorandum (MM)**, **Alternative Corridor Evaluation Report (ACER)**, etc.
- Engaging ETAT representatives to coordinate timely and meaningful reviews
- Verifying that ETAT representatives receive information about how project plans or concepts have been adapted to address their concerns, or communicating to the ETAT representatives the rationale for not incorporating their input
- Assisting with public involvement activities during the Planning and Programming Screens

- Coordinating sociocultural effects (SCE) evaluations with the CLC and identifying any prior efforts which should be documented in the EST through assistance from local government or other FDOT or MPO/TPO staff
- Coordinating considerations for a system-wide cumulative effects evaluation, when applicable
- Monitoring preliminary ETAT responses and conducting personal communication to clarify issues or respond to questions
- Monitoring relevant ETAT commentary to identify actions necessary to advance the project
- Identifying actionable commentary from the ETAT and transmitting to the appropriate staff as the project advances
- Preparing summary reports in coordination with other personnel to document potential project issues, ETAT member and public commentary, and recommendations to address those issues, including assigning a SDOE to each category within the EST

In addition to the above activities, the following activities apply to FDOT District and Turnpike ETDM Coordinators:

- Coordinating the Dispute Resolution process when applicable
- Ensuring ETDM group identifier is assigned per the ***FDOT Work Program Instructions, Part III, Chapter 23***
- Providing summary reports to PD&E Project Managers and environmental specialists to support preparation of the scopes for PD&E phase technical studies
- Supporting FDOT Managers, the Project Development Engineer, and Project Manager with Lead Agency coordination to determine the COA for projects screened through the ETDM process
- Providing information from the Programming Screen to FDOT Environmental Permit Coordinators to support the permitting process.
- Providing Programming Screen results to FDOT Project Managers to support coordination with the FDOT Work Program Administrator

### **2.5.5 Community Liaison Coordinator**

Each FDOT District, Turnpike, and MPO/TPO has a designated CLC. Specific titles for this person may vary (for example, SCE Coordinator), but the roles and responsibilities are

generally those described herein for the CLC. The CLC, in conjunction with the ETDM Coordinator, analyzes potential community impacts during the Planning and Programming Screens. Also known as SCE evaluation, this includes consideration of potential social, economic, land use, mobility, aesthetics, and relocation effects. The FDOT CLC evaluates potential sociocultural effects for bridge replacement projects, SIS, SHS, and non-MPO/TPO priority projects.

During the Planning Screen, the MPO/TPO CLC has these responsibilities for projects not on the SIS or SHS in each MPO/TPO area. During the Programming Screen, the FDOT CLC performs the SCE evaluations on these projects, with input from the MPO/TPO CLC. The FDOT District CLCs, MPO/TPO CLCs, and District MPO Liaisons work closely to identify and implement public involvement activities in MPO/TPO areas, as needed. In rural areas, the FDOT District CLC works with appropriate District personnel, such as the Rural County Liaison or public involvement staff, to identify and implement applicable public involvement activities based on the nature of the project and potential for community impacts. In addition, the FDOT CLC interacts with the community or MPO/TPO to verify that identified community effects are addressed in a manner consistent with community values and desires, and FDOT standards and resources. The ***Sociocultural Effects Handbook*** and ***Public Involvement Handbook*** describe practical applications and provide specific techniques to accomplish CLC activities.

The following activities may apply to the FDOT District, Turnpike, or MPO/TPO CLCs as they work on their respective projects. See ***Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6*** of this ***Manual*** for additional information.

- Working with the ETDM Coordinator and/or other staff in their organizations to gather community information required for the SCE evaluation
- Developing appropriate level of activities in consideration of potential project impacts, scope, and description, as well as potential for controversy
- Working with FDOT, MPO/TPO, and local government staff to gather public comments collected in earlier outreach activities, and documenting a summary of these comments in the EST
- Coordinating with the ETDM Coordinator assigned to the project and other FDOT District, MPO/TPO, or local government staff to develop and update Community Characteristics Inventories in the vicinity of planned projects, as needed
- Coordinating community outreach activities with the FDOT or MPO/TPO public information staff
- Conducting project SCE evaluations and entering results into the EST

- Working with appropriate staff in their organizations to communicate responses about transportation issues to the community during the Planning and Programming Screens
- Facilitating communication with community representatives regarding sociocultural effects in coordination with appropriate staff
- Monitoring and updating community coordination activities to improve effectiveness
- Recommending ways to resolve the community issues identified during SCE evaluations
- Updating the summary of public comments to include any input received during the Planning and Programming Screens

### **2.5.6 Central Environmental Management Office (CEMO)**

CEMO management and professional staff provide guidance, coordination, and support on every aspect of the ETDM process during the Planning phase as a link to advance projects to the PD&E phase. CEMO manages the ETDM program, the EST, the interagency agreements, statewide interagency coordination, and provides policy guidance, technical assistance, and training.

CEMO roles during ETDM include, but are not limited to:

- Developing and updating FDOT policies and procedures
- Coordinating with other functional areas within the Department
- Communicating and coordinating program activities with ETAT agencies
- Managing ETAT agency agreements
- Providing guidance and technical support
- Maintaining the ETDM Manual chapters and other supporting documents
- Conducting training
- Coordinating with District and central office staff to perform quality assurance checks on information in the EST
- Managing the ETDM performance management program, including the FDOT Quality Assurance Plan
- Managing the ETDM Help Desk

- Maintaining and enhancing the EST

### **2.5.7 Environmental Permit Coordinator**

The involvement of the Environmental Permit Coordinator provides another important linkage between the Planning and Project Development phases in support of environmental permitting activities.

Environmental Permit Coordinator roles during ETDM may include, but are not limited to:

- Identifying anticipated permits
- Developing and reviewing ETAT responses provided during project screening
- Considering mitigation opportunities
- Coordinating with ETDM Coordinator, Environmental Administrator, and Project Manager, as assigned
- Assisting in the identification of technical studies
- Providing guidance and technical support
- Engaging in interagency coordination, as needed

### **2.5.8 Other FDOT and MPO/TPO Staff**

FDOT and MPO/TPO ETDM Coordinators and Project Managers may look to other FDOT and MPO/TPO staff for assistance. Below are several additional participants in the ETDM process and the tasks they may support:

- SIS Coordinators
  - Identifying projects for review
  - Ensuring consistency with applicable plans
  - Assisting in the development of project concepts, including project description and purpose and need
  - Working with the FDOT ETDM Coordinator and CLC on SCE evaluations
  - Helping to prepare summary reports, including responses and commitments and potential scope of work

- Planners:
  - Providing data from early studies to support reviewed projects
  - Assisting with data entry, quality assurance review, and summary report preparation
- MPO/TPO or Rural County Liaisons
  - Coordinating the exchange of project information between MPOs/TPOs or rural counties and Districts, including project consistency and prioritization information
  - Working with MPOs/TPOs and local governments to ensure necessary plan amendments are conducted and approved by the overseeing Board prior to requesting Lead Agency signature on the environmental document
- Environmental Specialists
  - Providing data from early studies to support projects completing the ETDM process
  - Assisting with data entry [including Preliminary Environmental Discussion (PED)], quality assurance review, technical studies, and summary report preparation

### **2.5.9 Environmental Technical Advisory Team**

An ETAT has been established for each of the seven geographic FDOT Districts. Each ETAT is composed of representatives from participating agencies and Native American Tribes. The ETAT representatives are appointed by their respective agency or tribal government. They are responsible for coordinating reviews and communicating to support the planning and development of transportation projects. Specific agency responsibilities are detailed in each respective AOA.

The ETAT representatives review proposed transportation projects to identify potential issues; provide guidance for addressing these issues; assist in focusing future studies; and contribute information about the natural, physical, cultural, and community resources. The ETAT representatives maintain team communications on behalf of their organization and serve as points of contact from Planning through future project development phases (unless another contact is assigned).

The ETAT representatives have authority and responsibility to coordinate internally and provide comments on behalf of their organization. Communication within their organization may include coordination of statewide plans and initiatives. The ETAT representatives are expected to use all available information and sources to develop their comments. The ETAT representatives should contact FDOT with any questions that may enhance their

understanding of the project and assist in developing comments about potential project effects to resources. The role of the ETAT representatives changes from commenting during the ETDM process to coordinating during the PD&E phase and to environmental permitting during the Design phase. Example ETAT representative roles are shown in **Table 2-3**.

Table 2-3: ETAT Representative Roles

ETAT Typical Responsibilities	Planning Screen	Programming Screen
Verify that resource data provided by the ETAT organization is current in the EST	✓	✓
Review and comment on project purpose and need – indicate understanding	✓	✓
Review GIS analyses available in the EST	✓	✓
Review PED and AN, as available	✓	✓
Review other uploaded ancillary documents intended to support project review	✓	✓
Evaluate and comment on potential effects related to ETAT member resources	✓	✓
Recommend potential avoidance, minimization, and mitigation opportunities	✓	✓
Coordinate with FDOT for clarification or discussion regarding potential project effects	✓	✓
Recommend scope for cumulative effects evaluation results, if applicable	✓	✓
Recommend technical studies in support of focused project delivery		✓
Document and identify anticipated permits that may be needed in the EST		✓
Participate in ETAT dispute resolution activities, as needed	✓	✓

### 2.5.10 Lead Agency Representatives

The Lead Agency holds primary responsibility for the environmental document in the PD&E phase. FDOT is the Lead Agency for non-federal projects; otherwise, a federal agency will be the Lead Agency and per **Title 23 CFR**, FDOT serves as the co-lead. FDOT identifies whether or not a project will be processed as a federal or state project during COA determination at the end of the Programming Screen. Potential Lead Agencies are identified during the Programming Screen to expedite the COA process. It is recommended that a potential Lead Federal Agency is identified any time there is a possibility in which federal funds could be used on any phase of a project or if FHWA, Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), or FTA approval is going to be required. See **Chapter 4** of this **Manual** for more information about selecting the potential Lead Agency. The Lead Agency representative performs specific tasks in the ETDM process, including:

- Accepting the project purpose and need during the Programming Screen
- Agreeing to the **MM** and with eliminated alternatives, as warranted

- Inviting Participating and/or Cooperating Agencies, when applicable
- Authorizing the COA determination

## 2.6 ETAT REVIEW OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS

During the Planning and Programming Screens, ETAT representatives review project information and provide comments about potential effects to the natural, physical, cultural, and community resources. ETAT members are expected to provide detailed, actionable comments to support decisions as the project advances through the project delivery process. They use the EST to access information and provide comments to FDOT. While the EST contains an abundance of statewide GIS data, ETAT members are expected to use all available information to develop their official commentary. A few examples include historical documents that are not part of any electronic database, personal knowledge of an area, information from site visits, and direct coordination with the project sponsor (for example, phone calls, emails, and webinars).

During the Planning Screen, comments should provide information regarding agency plans, resource status, and identification of potentially critical issues. In the Programming Screen, the comments help to develop a project scope of services for future PD&E Studies. The comments may help in the identification of the range of reasonable alternatives by providing unique potential effect comments about each alternative, when more than one is presented. The ETAT representatives may also identify potential avoidance, minimization, and mitigation opportunities, if needed, and assist with permit application coordination.

At the conclusion of both the Planning Screen and the Programming Screen, the ETAT representative selects a Degree of Effect (DOE) for each alternative and issue. The summary reports document the ETAT recommendations for avoidance, minimization, or mitigation opportunities and any supplemental technical studies that may be needed. This documentation is entered into the EST, as described in **Chapters 3** and **4** of this **Manual**, using EST procedures described in the **Environmental Screening Tool Handbook**. ETAT comments recorded in the EST are also available to other ETAT representatives and to the public.

The ETAT representatives provide comments about potential effects to resources and issues identified in their AOA and/or in accordance with their regulatory authority. The following sections describe these ETDM issues and correlate to the detailed environmental analyses performed in the development of technical studies, which may be prepared during the PD&E phase (refer to the **PD&E Manual** for additional details).

### 2.6.1 Social and Economic

FDOT has a proactive policy and philosophy regarding the identification of sociocultural effects in project planning and development that accomplishes the following:

- Captures prior MPO/TPO SCE and public involvement information and includes it in the Planning and Programming Screens
- Ensures that community issues are identified and potential project effects are considered and addressed in the decision-making process
- Avoids, minimizes and/or mitigates, where feasible, adverse community effects
- Considers environmental and community effects from the earliest stages of planning and project development
- Enhances participation and consultation of communities affected by proposed projects throughout the project development process
- Identifies conceptual design issues to promote livable communities

The ETDM process supports the identification and evaluation of potential sociocultural effects of qualifying transportation projects. It is the responsibility of the FDOT and MPO/TPO CLCs to identify potential effects of transportation actions on affected communities. The issues considered and documented in the EST in support of a SCE evaluation include the following:

- *Aesthetic Effects*: Describe the area's existing aesthetic features and summarize the project's potential involvement (see ***PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 15: Aesthetic Effects***).
- *Economic*: Describe the known economic condition of the area, ongoing or planned economic development efforts, and the project's potential involvement (see ***PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 9: Sociocultural Effects Evaluation*** and ***Sociocultural Effects Evaluation Handbook***).
- *Land Use Changes*: Describe existing and future land use in the project area and how the project may affect it (see ***PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 9: Sociocultural Effects Evaluation*** and ***Sociocultural Effects Evaluation Handbook***).
- *Mobility*: Describe existing traffic conditions, travel modes, existing and planned transit routes in the area. Describe the project's involvement with the movement of people, goods (e.g., freight), and services (see ***PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 9: Sociocultural Effects Evaluation*** and ***Sociocultural Effects Evaluation Handbook***).
- *Relocation Potential*: Discuss the potential right-of-way needs for the project and whether relocations may be needed (see ***PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 9: Sociocultural Effects Evaluation*** and ***Sociocultural Effects Evaluation Handbook***).

- **Social:** Consider the community demographics (age, income, minority populations, etc.), underserved populations/environmental justice concerns, community cohesion, safety/emergency response, community character, community goals, etc., and describe potential involvement with them, as appropriate (see **PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 9: Sociocultural Effects Evaluation** and **Sociocultural Effects Evaluation Handbook**).

The **Sociocultural Effects Evaluation Handbook** provides specific techniques for identifying, reviewing, and evaluating sociocultural effects. This handbook is available on the FDOT CEMO website (<http://www.dot.state.fl.us/emo/>).

Public involvement is an important part of the SCE evaluation process. The CLCs in cooperation with the FDOT PD&E Project Manager, and other staff (as needed) shall establish an appropriate level of public involvement activities in consideration of potential project impacts, scope and description, and potential for controversy. Interactive public participation is the key to effective public involvement and includes disseminating as well as receiving vital information. To identify the most appropriate effective public involvement techniques throughout the ETDM process, refer to the **Public Involvement Handbook**, which provides guidance to implement the FDOT **Public Involvement**

**FDOT Public Involvement Opportunities  
(Procedure No. 000-525-050)**

The Florida Department of Transportation recognizes the importance of involving the public in information exchange when providing transportation facilities and services to best meet the state's transportation challenges. Therefore, it is the policy of the Florida Department of Transportation to promote public involvement opportunities and information exchange activities in all functional areas, using various techniques adapted to the local area conditions and project requirements.

**Opportunities Procedure No. 000-525-050.** This policy meets the requirements of **23 CFR 450.212(a) and 450.316(b)(1)**. The **Public Involvement Handbook** may be referenced at the FDOT CEMO website (<http://www.dot.state.fl.us/emo/>).

In addition to the Social and Economic issues examined through the SCE evaluation, the Natural Resources Conservation Service considers potential effects on farmlands as follows:

- **Farmlands:** Describe any farmlands in the project area and summarize their potential involvement (see **PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 28: Farmlands**).

## 2.6.2 Cultural and Tribal

The ETDM process incorporates consideration of cultural resources into the transportation planning process by allowing for the identification of known archaeological sites and historic

resources that are in proximity to a planned project. The process also allows for the evaluation of the likelihood of unrecorded resources within a project area. As ETAT members, the Florida Department of State - Division of Historical Resources/State Historic Preservation Officer (FDHR/SHPO) and Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs) provide comment on potential effects to cultural resources and interact with FDOT (and MPOs/TPOs, as applicable) during both the Planning and Programming Screens and PD&E phase.

Certain information in historic and cultural database systems is protected and not accessible to the public through the EST.

The ETDM process does not replace the **Section 106** process nor does it eliminate the need for a cultural resource assessment survey or other types of technical studies. Technical studies may also be recommended by the FDHR/SHPO or THPOs.

The ETDM cultural resource issues considered and documented during the ETDM process include:

- *Historic and Archaeological Sites:* Within the vicinity of the proposed project, identify any known sites listed or eligible for listing on the **National Register of Historic Places**. This includes, but is not limited to historic districts, objects, archaeological remains, and historic structures, including bridges. Describe the project's potential involvement and how cultural resources will be evaluated (refer to **PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 12: Archaeological and Historic Resources**).
- *Recreation Areas:* Identify any recreation areas, the project's potential involvement, and how they may be evaluated. It should be noted that for USDOT projects these properties may be potentially protected by **Section 4(f)** (refer to **PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 13: Section 4(f) Evaluations**).
- *Section 4(f) Potential:* For USDOT projects, identify properties potentially protected by Section 4(f). Also, identify any public parks, publicly owned recreation areas, and wildlife or waterfowl refuges located within the vicinity of the proposed project. Describe the potential involvement and how it may be evaluated in the PD&E phase (refer to **PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 13: Section 4(f) Evaluations**).

### **Section 106 Process**

**Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act** requires federal agencies to consider the effects of projects they carry out, approve, or fund on historic properties. Additionally, federal agencies must provide the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation an opportunity to comment on such projects prior to the agency's decision on them. **Section 106** procedures are defined in **36 CFR 800 – Protection of Historic Properties**.

With respect to Native American Tribal coordination, **Section 106** of the **National Historic Preservation Act**, and its implementing regulations, **36 CFR Part 800: Protection of Historic Properties** (effective January 11, 2001) require that federal

agencies consult with federally recognized Native American Tribes in all phases of the **Section 106** process when an agency undertaking *may* have the potential to affect Native American historic properties on or off tribal lands. In recognition of the need that Native American issues and concerns be treated in a manner that is consistent with current federal and state legislation, the FDOT, in partnership with the FHWA Florida Division, initiated a government-to-government relationship with federally recognized Native American Tribes to ensure compliance with **Section 106**. Please refer to the Native American Coordination website for the latest contacts, protocols, and guidance; located at: <http://www.dot.state.fl.us/emo/NA%20Website%20Files/Protocol.shtm>

### 2.6.3 Natural

The EST natural resource issues considered and evaluated in the Planning and Programming Screens include the following:

- *Coastal and Marine:* Identify any Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) in the project vicinity and potential for involvement with managed species inhabiting, or migrating through, the project vicinity as required by the **Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSFCMA)**. Identify possible involvement with Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPCs). Describe how the project may affect EFH (refer to **PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 11: Essential Fish Habitat**). Identify if the project is located in the vicinity of, or is located within, a coastal barrier resource as defined by the **Governor's Executive Order 81-105** and the **Coastal Barrier Resources Act (CBRA)** (refer to **PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 26: Coastal Barrier Resources**).
- *Floodplains:* State if the project is in the base floodplain or involves a regulated floodway, the project's potential involvement, and how they may be evaluated (refer to **PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 24: Floodplains**).
- *Water Quality and Quantity:* Provide a brief description of existing stormwater treatment, the project's potential involvement, and how they may be evaluated. Identify if the project is located within a sole source aquifer, and provide the name of the aquifer (refer to **PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 20: Water Quality**).
- *Wetlands:* Discuss potential involvement with wetland resources. If known, identify the location of jurisdictional wetlands as determined by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), Water Management Districts, and/or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) (refer to **PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 18: Wetlands and other Surface Waters**).
- *Wildlife and Habitat:* Identify threatened and endangered species that may inhabit or migrate through the project corridor, designated critical habitat involved with the project, wildlife habitat for listed species, and describe the project's potential involvement, and how they may be evaluated (refer to **PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 27: Wildlife and Habitat Impacts**).

## 2.6.4 Physical

The EST physical environment issues considered and evaluated during the Planning and Programming Screens include the following:

- *Air Quality:* Describe the air quality conformity designation of the project area. State if an air quality screening will occur (refer to ***PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 16: Air Quality Analysis***).
- *Contamination:* Identify by industry or commercial type any known Hazardous Material Generators and/or potentially contaminated sites (i.e., petroleum) within the vicinity of the project. State whether a Contamination Screening Evaluation will be conducted for the project (refer to ***PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 22: Contamination Impacts***).
- *Infrastructure:* Provide a brief description of existing infrastructure (e.g., utilities, railroads, and transit), the project's potential involvement, and how it may be evaluated (refer to ***PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 10: Utilities and Railroads***).
- *Navigation:* Identify if the project intersects a potentially navigable waterway, the project's potential involvement, and how it may be evaluated.
- *Noise:* Identify any potential noise sensitive sites within the vicinity of the project. Identify the likelihood of traffic noise impacts and if a noise study will be performed (refer to ***PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 17: Noise***).

## 2.6.5 Special Designations

ETAT representatives with jurisdiction over any of the resources listed below submit comments about potential involvement with these features through the EST Special Designations issue:

- Outstanding Florida Waters (OFW): Identify potential involvement with OFW (refer to ***PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 21: Outstanding Florida Waters (OFW)***).
- Aquatic Preserves: Identify potential involvement with Aquatic preserves (refer to ***PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 19: Aquatic Preserves***).
- Scenic Highways: Identify, by formal name, designated or candidate Scenic Highways in the project vicinity and potential involvement (refer to ***PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 29: Scenic Highways***).
- Wild and Scenic Rivers: Identify potential involvement with rivers listed in the Nationwide Rivers Inventory including Wild and Scenic Rivers (refer to ***PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 23: Wild and Scenic Rivers***).

## 2.7 DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS

### 2.7.1 Background

Florida's ETDM process was created under the authority of the ***Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21)***, specifically ***Section 1309 – Environmental Streamlining***. The purpose of ***Section 1309*** was to create a “coordinated environmental review process for highway construction projects” that require an EIS or any other type of federal approval; see ***Section 1309(a)***. ***Section 1309(c)*** directed agency heads to resolve environmental issues within 30 days.

***Section 1309*** was specific as to intent – environmental streamlining – but not specific as to operation. Congress essentially left it up to the federal agencies and the states to work out the details of streamlining. This process could be set out in memoranda of understanding between the various federal and state agencies with jurisdiction over highway construction projects. What was not specified, but was needed, was a process that came prior to elevating issues to the agency heads for resolution. Simply referring any and all disputes to the agency heads would not result in streamlining.

Consistent with the intent of ***Section 1309***, and in recognition of the mutual benefits to be obtained, FDOT and the signatories to the ***December 14, 2001 ETDM Process Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)*** agreed to implement dispute resolution on projects during the planning process. The intent is to identify mutually agreeable activities or conditions that will address the concern while meeting the transportation need. This will assist in project advancement. Dispute resolution activities may continue through future phases as more information becomes available. If there are unresolved disputes for projects undergoing ***NEPA*** review, and those disputes persist after completing the ETDM process, then the “issue resolution” process set out in ***Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (MAP-21)*** would be applicable. That process sets a series of forums for disputes to be resolved, and if not resolved, to which the disputes would then advance. There are also new potential financial penalties for unexcused delays by participating agencies. Refer to FHWA for guidance on the ***MAP-21*** issue resolution process.

A strong commitment exists among the participants in the ETDM process to resolve disputes within the ETAT, prior to elevating them to a higher authority (refer to ***Figure 2-4***). To facilitate meeting this commitment, disputes should be addressed as early as possible to make the best use of agency skills and resources. Projects with unresolved issues following the ETAT review and publication of the ***Preliminary Programming Screen Summary Report*** require dispute resolution. The FDOT ETDM Coordinator first uses the Informal Dispute Resolution process. If a dispute remains unresolved after following this process, the FDOT ETDM Coordinator initiates the Formal Dispute Resolution process.

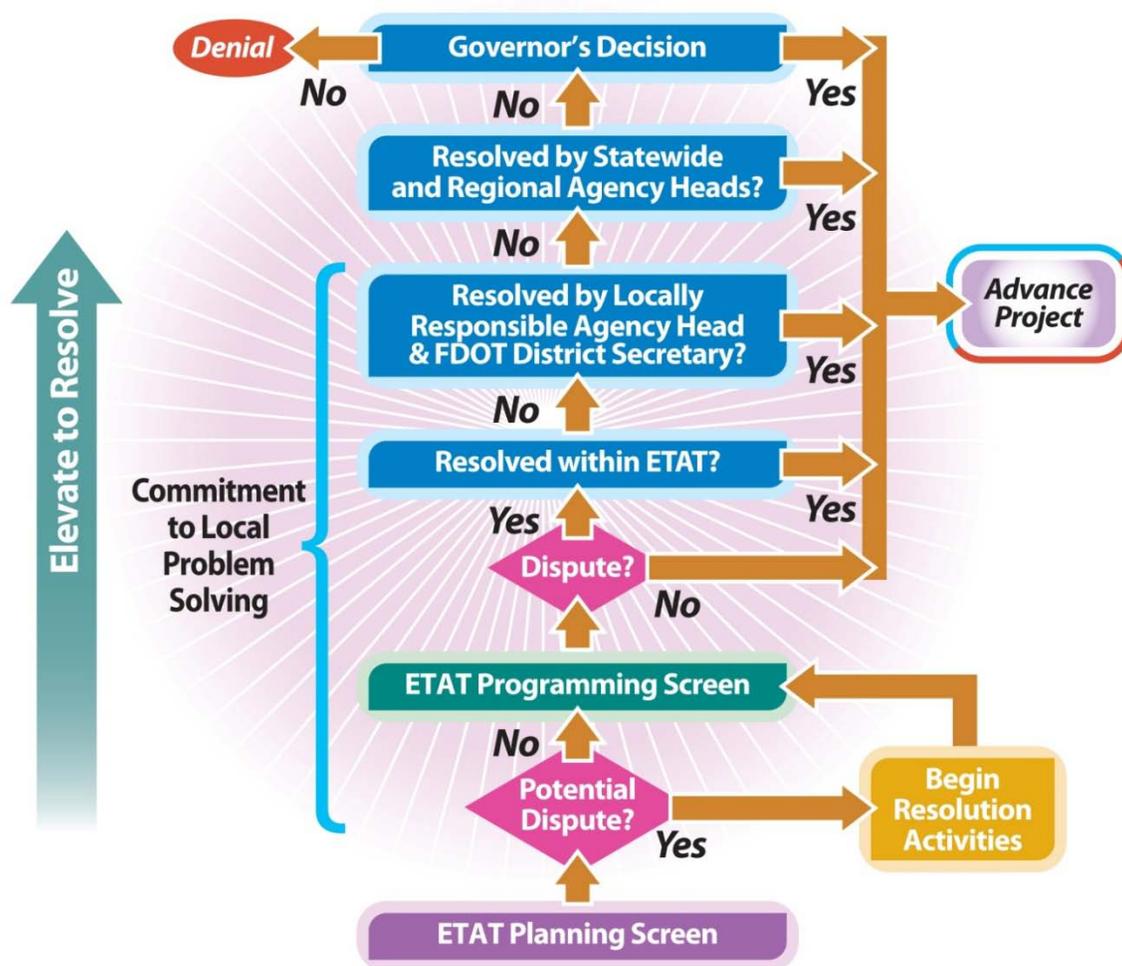


Figure 2-4: Dispute Resolution Process

Once resolved, the ETAT member who originally assigned the Dispute Resolution DOE can document concurrence by lowering the DOE (i.e., “Dispute Resolution” to “Substantial” or “Moderate”) for the issue, and the FDOT ETDM Coordinator can do the same by lowering the SDOE and republishing the summary report. Alternatively, should all parties agree, the ETAT representative may decide to not modify the original DOE, and only have the FDOT ETDM Coordinator lower the SDOE. The FDOT ETDM Coordinator records activities and results in the Dispute Resolution Log on the EST. The ***Environmental Screening Tool Handbook*** provides additional guidance on tracking and documenting the Dispute Resolution process.

## 2.7.2 Initiating Dispute Resolution

The Dispute Resolution process begins when the FDOT ETDM Coordinator in consultation with the Lead Agency assigns a Potential Dispute SDOE during the Planning Screen review or Dispute Resolution SDOE during a Programming Screen review. When assigning the SDOE, the ETDM Coordinator uses all known information including comments and DOEs from ETAT members. The ETDM Coordinator reviews the potential dispute commentary to determine its consistency with the definition of Potential Dispute (see **Chapter 3, Table 3-1, Potential Project Effects Degree of Effect Guidance – Planning Screen**) and in conjunction with the agency's regulatory authority as defined in their AOA.

An ETAT representative may, on a jurisdictional issue or through its regulatory authority, flag a project as potentially needing dispute resolution using the following triggers:

1. Project cannot be permitted (applicable to permitting agencies).
2. Project is contrary to a state or federal resource agency's program, plan, or initiative (including Florida's Coastal Management Program and Local Government Comprehensive Plans).
3. Project has significant environmental cost (applying a broad interpretation to the term cost, such as funding, environmental impacts, or quality of life).
4. Project purpose and need is disputable (only applicable to the Lead Agency - identified by the Lead Agency not accepting the purpose and need).

### 2.7.2.1 Process to Resolve Potential Disputes

Before assigning a Potential Dispute SDOE during a Planning Screen review, the FDOT ETDM Coordinator (and MPO/TPO ETDM Coordinator in MPO areas) reviews the potential dispute commentary to determine its consistency with the definition of Potential Dispute (see **Chapter 3, Table 3-1, Potential Project Effects Degree of Effect Guidance – Planning Screen**) and in conjunction with the agency's regulatory authority as defined in their AOA. The FDOT ETDM Coordinator contacts the ETAT representative that raised the potential dispute to discuss the concern and identify potential solutions to address the issue and advance the project.

When there is an inability to reach a suitable resolution, the issue is elevated to FDOT or MPO/TPO upper management, who then may:

1. Resolve the issue through coordination and documentation.
2. Advance the project with or without conditions (for a Planning Screen project).
3. Revise the project concept.

4. Complete a technical or feasibility study to address concerns.
5. Reject the project.

The **Planning Screen Summary Report** documents all agreements, understandings, or recommendations resulting from the dispute resolution efforts, and thus ensures they move with the project for the rest of its life cycle. The ETDM Coordinator is able to record all related activities in the EST.

An unresolved dispute during the Planning Screen, however, does not prevent a project from advancing to the Programming Screen. It simply identifies the project as having potential issues that may require attention during the Programming Screen. The Planning Screen Potential Dispute Resolution process is diagrammed in **Figure 2-5**.

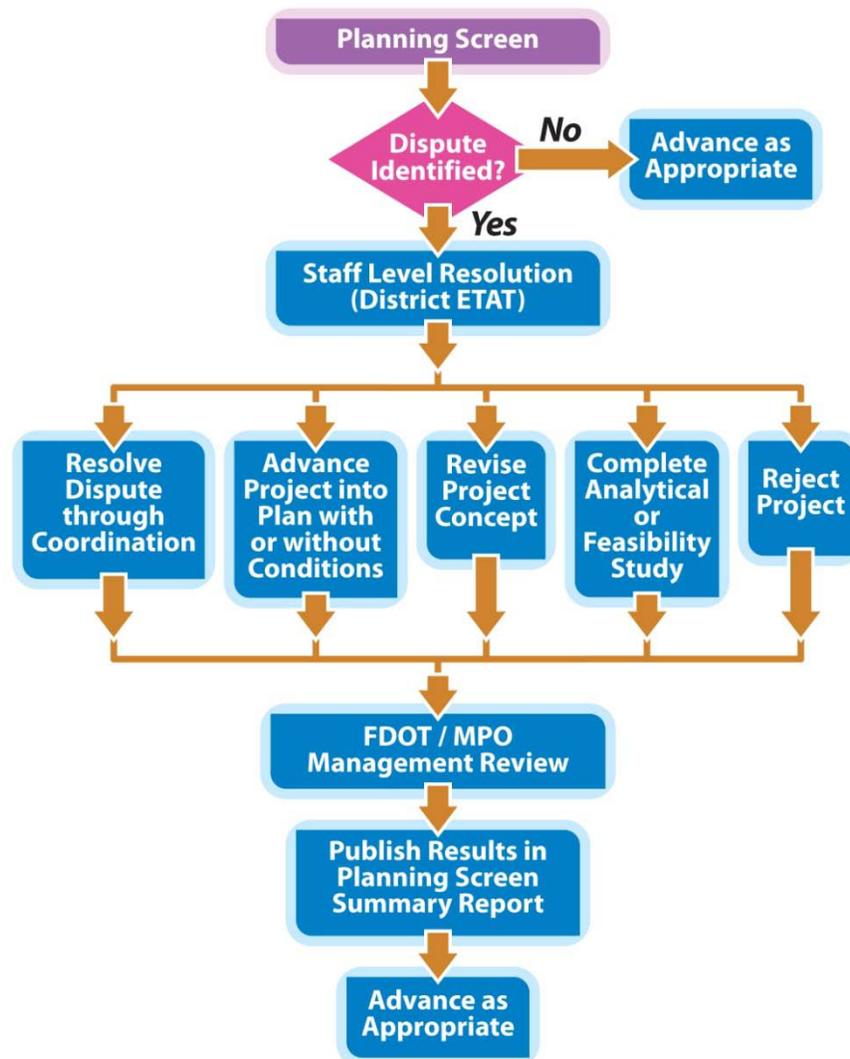


Figure 2-5: Planning Screen Potential Dispute Resolution Process

### 2.7.2.2 Informal Dispute Resolution

Before assigning a Dispute Resolution SDOE during a Programming Screen review, the FDOT ETDM Coordinator (along with the PD&E Project Manager and other Managers, as appropriate) reviews the commentary to determine its consistency with the definition of Dispute Resolution (see **Chapter 4, Table 4-1, Potential Project Effects Degree of Effect Guidance – Programming Screen**) and in conjunction with the agency's regulatory authority. After assigning a Dispute Resolution SDOE, the FDOT ETDM Coordinator forms a sub-team of the ETAT (including the State Clearinghouse, if consistency is an issue) to review each dispute issue as part of the Informal Dispute Resolution process. FDOT leads this sub-team; participation is at the discretion of each agency, depending on the level of interest or concern. The sub-team includes those agencies that identified the concerns for a given project, plus one or more willing and neutral ETAT representatives to help mediate the dispute. The sub-team undertakes a course of action to address identified disputes and issues, which may include:

1. Resolving the issue or dispute through consultation and documenting the resolution.
2. Recommending FDOT complete an environmental or technical study for ETAT review.
3. Advancing the project with conditions.

Any agreements, understandings, and/or recommendations resulting from these proceedings are documented and accompany the project as it moves through later project phases. **Figure 2-6** diagrams the Informal Dispute Resolution process.

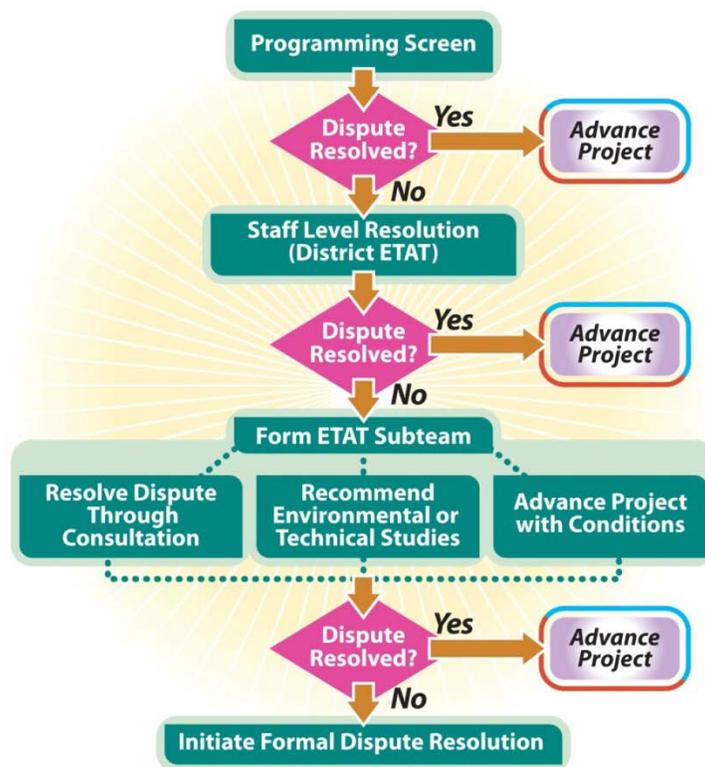


Figure 2-6: Informal Dispute Resolution Process

### 2.7.2.3 Formal Dispute Resolution

If a dispute cannot be resolved through the Informal Dispute Resolution process, the dispute enters into the Formal Dispute Resolution process diagrammed in **Figure 2-7**. The FDOT ETDM Coordinator prepares a **Position Paper**, and the agency with the issue or conflict prepares an **Issue Paper**. The locally responsible ETAT agency head who raised the dispute and the FDOT District Secretary review both papers and then attempt to resolve the issue(s), if possible.

If they are not able to do this, the dispute moves to the statewide or regional agency heads. The statewide and regional agency heads review all relevant project information, including any technical reports and studies, before rendering a decision. The course of action may include:

1. Resolving the issue or dispute through consultation and documenting the resolution.
2. Recommending FDOT complete an environmental or technical study for ETAT review.
3. Advancing the project with conditions

#### 4. Rejecting the project.

The agency heads, in consultation with the Governor, will make the final decision on unresolved disputes. Should a federal agency disagree with the Governor's decision, the Federal Dispute Resolution process may be initiated.

Nothing in this Dispute Resolution process affects the statutorily prescribed duties and obligations of any agency or any agency's responsibility or ability to discharge fully such duties and obligations under all applicable laws and regulations. The Dispute Resolution process seeks to fulfill all statutory obligations in seeking solutions to complex issues among agencies.

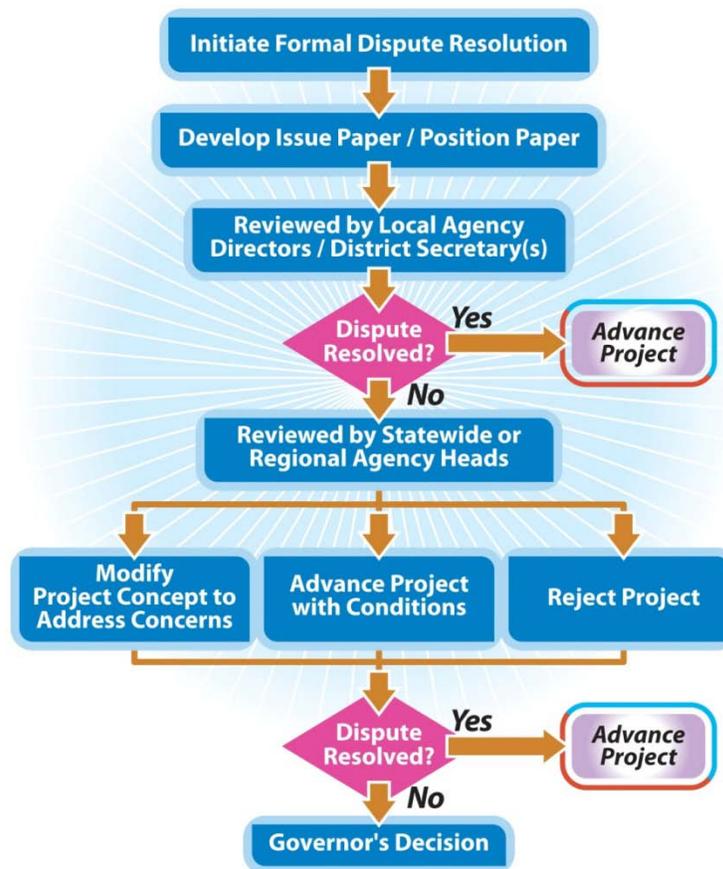


Figure 2-7: Formal Dispute Resolution Process

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## **2.9 HISTORY**

03/2006 Original publication

07/2013 Updated to reflect current legal requirements and practices