

**CHAPTER 4
PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

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4. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

4-1 OVERVIEW

All of the major environmental documents as well as the *Project Development Summary Report* contain a section where the project is described and the proposed action is discussed. The Project Description is included in the Introduction section of the *Project Development Summary Report*. The draft and final EIS each have a section referred to as "Alternatives including the Proposed Action," which describes the proposed project (Part 2, Chapter 3). The Environmental Assessment (EA) includes a section titled "Description of the Proposed Action" that describes the project, Part 2, Chapter 3. All of these sections briefly describe the existing roadway and the proposed project concept under study. These introductory sections are very short sections, usually involving only a paragraph or two. These sections also state if any major structures or special design features are proposed.

Prior to the PD&E process, an approved purpose and need and description of the project are contained in the ETDM *Programming Screen Summary Report*. This description of the project should be used as the basis of the PD&E study.

If the description of the project, project needs or objectives change notably (e.g., logical termini expanded, need, new impacts, etc.) during the Project Development phase, the Lead Agency must be consulted to determine if the AN should be re-submitted through the Programming Screen and if the Class of Action (COA) is still appropriate.

4-2 PROCEDURE

4-2.1 Content of the Project Description Section

This section must include the following information:

1. A brief description of the existing roadway;
2. The limits of the proposed project, its length, and logical termini;
3. The names of the City and County where the project is located; and
4. A description of the proposed improvements, including the number of lanes, type of median, and any major structures.

Accompanying this section is a Project Location Map which defines the project limits in graphic form. The map should also display any landmarks mentioned in describing the proposed project or action (i.e. cities, towns, rivers) to aid in geographical identification.

Provided below, is an example of the type of narrative usually found in this section.

"This project involves a (3.1 mile) segment of SR-XX extending north from SR-YY to SR-ZZ (Figure 1). The highway is to be improved from an existing, rural, two (2) lane facility to a rural, four (4) lane, divided facility with provisions for future expansion to an ultimate six (6) lane, divided section with a curbed median. There are no bridge structures located on this portion of SR-XX; however, bridge widening or replacement is anticipated for side street connections to SR-XX, SR-YY, and SR-ZZ over the Any Drainage District Canal."

4-2.2 Determination of Logical Termini

The establishment of the logical project termini is a major aspect of describing the proposed action, and should be accomplished during the ETDM process. The logical termini should be considered early in the process, prior to submitting the Advance Notification (AN). If the project is a federal aid project, the determination of logical termini will be coordinated with the FHWA during the preparation of the ***Programming Screen Summary Report*** and agreed upon when the Class of Action is determined.

Logical termini are defined as the end points to a transportation improvement allowing for the review of environmental impacts. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) gives three general principles for establishing project length and logical termini. They are:

1. The project must be of sufficient length as to address the environmental impacts on a broad scope. This length may be longer than the length of the capacity need.
2. The project length allows for "independent utility", i.e., be usable and be a reasonable expenditure even if no additional transportation improvements in the area are made.
3. The project length does not restrict consideration of other reasonably foreseeable transportation improvements.

Typically, the logical termini of a project are located at a major traffic generator, such as an intersecting roadway. At these points the traffic pattern will experience a substantial change in direction or volume. The determination of logical termini should consider the purpose and need for the project. It would be expected that the

determination of logical termini for isolated safety type projects would not require as broad of scope of analysis as a major capacity improvement. Examples of termini that may not be considered logical without further discussion are county lines, rivers, and city limits.

When describing the logical termini, it is common to describe the termini points broadly, such as “the intersection at SR-XX.” The limits of the proposed project, however, may extend past the logical termini. An example would be the transition of a four lane widening project back to an existing two lane roadway past the intersection identified as the logical termini.

A concept related to the determination of logical termini in a **NEPA** document is the identification of corresponding “project limits” in the “Cost Feasible Element” of an adopted metropolitan **Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)**. The logical termini for a project in a “Non-attainment” or “Maintenance” area for air quality need to be consistent with the project limits in the conforming adopted plan for that metropolitan area. If these are not consistent, this difference will need to be resolved. The resolution of this issue needs to include the Department, the MPO, and the FHWA.

4-3 REFERENCE

1. U.S. DOT, Federal Highway Administration, October 30, 1987. Guidance for Preparing and Processing Environmental and Section 4(f) Documents, FHWA Technical Advisory T6640.8A.
2. 23 C.F.R., Part 771, Environmental Impacts and Related Procedures.