

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | |
|-----|----------------------------------|-----|
| 1.1 | PURPOSE..... | 1-1 |
| 1.2 | AUTHORITY..... | 1-1 |
| 1.3 | SCOPE..... | 1-2 |
| 1.4 | INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE | 1-2 |
| 1.5 | DISTRIBUTION AND REVISIONS | 1-3 |
| 1.6 | TRAINING | 1-3 |
| 1.7 | FORMS | 1-4 |
| 1.8 | REFERENCES..... | 1-4 |
| 1.9 | HISTORY | 1-5 |

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this **Manual** is to provide transportation planners, project analysts, project managers, and other practitioners with sufficient information to consider as they review qualifying transportation projects during the Efficient Transportation Decision Making Process (ETDM) Planning and Programming Screens. It sets the standard procedure by which qualifying projects are screened through the ETDM process. This **Manual** also provides guidance for the potentially affected community and stakeholder involvement in the transportation planning phase during project development.

This **Manual** supports project development in conjunction with related State Environmental Management Office (SEMO) Handbooks, the Environmental Screening Tool (EST), and the two-part [Project Development and Environment \(PD&E\) Manual \(Procedure Number 650-000-001\)](#). The [PD&E Manual](#) describes the process for satisfying the requirements of the **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)** and other related state and federal laws, rules, and regulations.

Transportation professionals use this **Manual** during the Planning phase of transportation project delivery, specifically the ETDM Planning and Programming Screens. The **Manual** is organized as follows:

Chapter 1 – Describes the purpose and organization of the **Manual**

Chapter 2 – Describes the ETDM process in general

Chapter 3 – Details Planning Screen procedures

Chapter 4 – Details Programming Screen procedures

Chapter 5 – Discusses the transition from the ETDM process to the PD&E phase

Chapter 6 – Describes procedures for managing data through the EST

Acronyms – Provides a list of acronyms used in the **Manual**

This **Manual** and the [PD&E Manual](#) are both available at the FDOT State Environmental Management Office (SEMO) website (<http://www.dot.state.fl.us/emo/>).

1.2 AUTHORITY

This **Manual** was developed under the authority of **Section 334.044, Florida Statutes (F.S.)** and **Section 339.155, F.S.**, and supports objectives identified in the following:

1. **Title 23 United States Code (U.S.C.), Highways, as amended**
2. **23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR Part 450** [Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Planning Assistance and Standards]
3. **49 CFR Part 613** [Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Planning]
4. **23 CFR Part 771** (Environmental Impact and Related Procedures)
5. **Title 42 U.S.C. Chapter 55, National Environmental Policy, as amended**
6. **40 CFR §§ 1500 – 1508** (Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing **NEPA**)
7. State and federal agency ETDM agreements (various dates)

FDOT began developing the ETDM process in 1999 to support environmental streamlining objectives identified in **Section 1309** of the **Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) (Pub. L. No. 105-178)**. Subsequently, in December 2005, the FHWA determined that Florida's ETDM process was consistent with federal legislation under the **Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU)**, **23 U.S.C § 135(d)**, which requires the protection and enhancement of the environment as well as the promotion of consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns, and grandfathered the process as satisfying **Section 6002b** of **SAFETEA-LU**. The ETDM process supports **Subparts B (Sections 1201-1203)** and **C (Section 1301-1323) of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21)**.

On March 16, 2006, the FDOT Secretary approved [Procedure Number 650-000-002](#), which established statewide use of the **Manual**. The approved procedure also established the process by which this **Manual**, or portions thereof, will be subsequently revised and updated.

1.3 SCOPE

The following organizational entities are affected by or are most likely to use this **Manual**: FDOT District Environmental Management, Planning, and Design offices and their FDOT Central Office counterparts. **Manual** users outside FDOT could also include the FHWA - Florida Division, the FTA, Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPOs), Transportation Planning Organization (TPOs), other ETAT members, consultants, and other state and federal agencies to support their role in the ETDM process.

1.4 INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

This **Manual** is hereby incorporated by [Procedure No. 650-000-002](#) and made a part of the **Standard Operating System** of FDOT ([see Procedure No. 025-020-002](#))

1.5 DISTRIBUTION AND REVISIONS

SEMO is responsible for the preparation and maintenance of this **Manual**. Copies of this **Manual** may be obtained by downloading and printing from the FDOT SEMO website (<http://www.dot.state.fl.us/emo/>).

Frequent changes in federal and state environmental laws require flexibility to update this **Manual** often and quickly. At a minimum, this **Manual** will be reviewed annually and updated, if required. Updated versions of the **Manual** will be posted on the SEMO website.

SEMO is responsible for all **ETDM Manual** revisions, which will be accomplished through the ETDM Committee. The Committee is composed of each District ETDM Coordinator, Turnpike ETDM Coordinator, SEMO Manager, SEMO Natural and Community Resources Administrator, SEMO Project Screening and Technologies Administrator, and a FHWA Florida Division representative. The FHWA representative serves as a non-voting member. The SEMO Manager chairs the ETDM Committee. The committee is notified by email, and a majority opinion is obtained before approving major revisions. Committee representatives have one vote, and six committee members comprise a quorum. A majority vote is required to approve a change to this **Manual**. The SEMO Manager is responsible for the deciding vote. Revisions to standards and policies set by the FHWA, and laws, rules, or regulations will not be subject to this majority vote.

Any major changes or substantive revisions or additions (e.g., policy changes, new chapters) to this **Manual**, as determined by the ETDM Committee, will be approved by the FDOT Executive Committee through the process established by FDOT in [Procedure No. 025-020-002, Standard Operating System](#)

The SEMO Project Screening and Technologies Administrator will issue minor revisions or corrections to this **Manual** after approval by the ETDM Committee and consultation with other affected parties. Prior to issuance, these revisions will be coordinated with ETDM Coordinators and ETAT members, as appropriate.

1.6 TRAINING

Training courses available from FDOT pertaining to this **Manual** include **Efficient Transportation Decision Making Overview (BT-19-0045)** and courses on the use of the EST. This training is required for users of the secure EST website and is highly recommended for others engaged in the ETDM process.

FDOT offers additional courses covering procedures supportive of the FDOT environmental programs and the ETDM process. Training opportunities on related subjects may become available based on user-identified needs. See the SEMO website (<http://www.dot.state.fl.us/emo/>) for more training opportunities. Additional training is available through the EST for authorized users.

1.7 FORMS

Results of the Planning and Programming Screens completed during the ETDM process are documented within the EST. Interaction with this database system is managed by the FDOT ETDM Coordinators, who are responsible for advancing projects through the Planning and Programming Screens and working with the Project Managers to maintain the project database during the PD&E phase. Persons involved with the Planning and Programming Screens provide input directly into forms and fields that exist within the EST. Results are permanently stored in FDOT's archive system, the Environmental Electronic Document Management System. All forms required by the ETDM process are provided within the EST. Information about accessing and using the EST is available in the [Environmental Screening Tool Handbook](#).

1.8 REFERENCES

23 CFR Part 450. Planning Assistance and Standards.

23 CFR Part 771. Environmental Impact and Related Procedures.

40 CFR §§ 1500 – 1508. Regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act.

42 U.S.C. Chapter 55. National Environmental Policy.

49 CFR Part 613. Federal Transit Administration Planning.

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Florida Department of Transportation. 2015. Project Development and Environment Manual (Procedure Number 650-000-001). Accessed at <http://www.dot.state.fl.us/emo> on 8/11/2015.

Florida Department of Transportation. State and federal agency Master Agreements and Agency Operating Agreements regarding ETDM, various dates. Accessed at <https://etdmpub.fla-etat.org/est/?startPagelD=493&categoryList=85#> on 11/11/2015.

Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21). 2012.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969.

Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). 2005.

Section 334.044, Florida Statutes. Florida Transportation Plan.

Section 339.155, Florida Statutes. Transportation Planning.

Title 23 U.S.C. (as amended). Highways.

Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). 1998.

1.9 HISTORY

03/2006: Original publication

07/2013: Updated to reflect current laws, requirements, and practices

12/2015: Edited to reduce redundancy with Chapter 2 and references to CEMO changed to SEMO

CHAPTER 2

ETDM PROCESS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | |
|---------|--|------|
| 2.1 | OVERVIEW | 2-1 |
| 2.2 | TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS..... | 2-5 |
| 2.2.1 | Overview..... | 2-5 |
| 2.2.2 | Transportation Planning Agencies | 2-7 |
| 2.2.3 | Key Planning Documents..... | 2-8 |
| 2.2.4 | Plan Consistency | 2-10 |
| 2.3 | SCREENING PROJECTS | 2-10 |
| 2.3.1 | Identifying Qualifying Projects..... | 2-10 |
| 2.3.1.1 | Additional Planning Screen Criteria | 2-13 |
| 2.3.1.2 | Additional Programming Screen Criteria | 2-14 |
| 2.3.2 | State-Wide Acceleration and Transformation (SWAT)..... | 2-15 |
| 2.3.3 | Federal Involvement | 2-15 |
| 2.3.4 | Programming ETDM Activities for Funding | 2-16 |
| 2.3.5 | Project Screening Release Schedule | 2-16 |
| 2.3.6 | Planning Screen | 2-17 |
| 2.3.7 | Programming Screen..... | 2-19 |
| 2.3.8 | Advance Notification (AN) Process | 2-19 |
| 2.3.9 | Rescreening Projects..... | 2-20 |
| 2.3.10 | Advancing to Project Development and Environment (PD&E)..... | 2-20 |

| | | |
|--------|--|------|
| 2.4 | ENVIRONMENTAL SCREENING TOOL..... | 2-22 |
| 2.5 | ETDM COORDINATION | 2-23 |
| 2.5.1 | PD&E Project Manager..... | 2-24 |
| 2.5.2 | Environmental Administrator..... | 2-25 |
| 2.5.3 | Project Development Engineer | 2-26 |
| 2.5.4 | ETDM Coordinator..... | 2-26 |
| 2.5.5 | Community Liaison Coordinator..... | 2-28 |
| 2.5.6 | State Environmental Management Office (SEMO) | 2-30 |
| 2.5.7 | Environmental Permit Coordinator..... | 2-30 |
| 2.5.8 | Other FDOT and MPO/TPO Staff | 2-31 |
| 2.5.9 | Environmental Technical Advisory Team..... | 2-32 |
| 2.5.10 | Lead Agency Representatives | 2-33 |
| 2.6 | ETAT REVIEW OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS | 2-34 |
| 2.6.1 | Social and Economic | 2-35 |
| 2.6.2 | Cultural and Tribal | 2-37 |
| 2.6.3 | Natural | 2-39 |
| 2.6.4 | Physical | 2-39 |
| 2.6.5 | Special Designations | 2-40 |
| 2.7 | ETDM ISSUE RESOLUTION PROCESS..... | 2-41 |
| 2.7.1 | Overview..... | 2-41 |
| 2.7.2 | Initiating Issue Resolution..... | 2-42 |
| 2.7.3 | Process to Resolve Potential Issues..... | 2-43 |
| 2.7.4 | Informal Issue Resolution | 2-44 |

| | | |
|-------|-------------------------------|------|
| 2.7.5 | Formal Issue Resolution | 2-45 |
| 2.8 | REFERENCES | 2-48 |
| 2.9 | HISTORY | 2-50 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | | |
|------------|---|------|
| Table 2-1: | Key Planning Products | 2-8 |
| Table 2-2: | ETDM Screening Matrix for Qualifying Projects | 2-13 |
| Table 2-3: | ETDM Project Schedule and Management (PSM) Codes..... | 2-17 |
| Table 2-4: | ETAT Representative Roles..... | 2-32 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| | | |
|-------------|--|------|
| Figure 2-1: | ETDM Process Diagram | 2-4 |
| Figure 2-2: | Transportation Planning Process (USDOT, 2015) | 2-6 |
| Figure 2-3: | ETDM Database Technology Concept..... | 2-23 |
| Figure 2-4: | Issue Resolution Process..... | 2-42 |
| Figure 2-5: | Planning Screen Potential Issue Resolution Process | 2-44 |
| Figure 2-6: | Informal Issue Resolution Process..... | 2-45 |
| Figure 2-7: | Formal Issue Resolution Process | 2-46 |

CHAPTER 2

ETDM PROCESS

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 “protect and preserve the quality of life, and the natural, physical, social and cultural resources of the State, while expeditiously developing safe, cost effective, and efficient transportation systems” ([Environmental 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 qualifying¹ transportation projects, which helps support planning decisions and develop the PD&E project

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

¹ Refer to qualifying criteria provided in **Section 2.3.1** of this **Manual**.

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 state agencies, and participating Native American Tribes. Agency agreements 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 best 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 and 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.

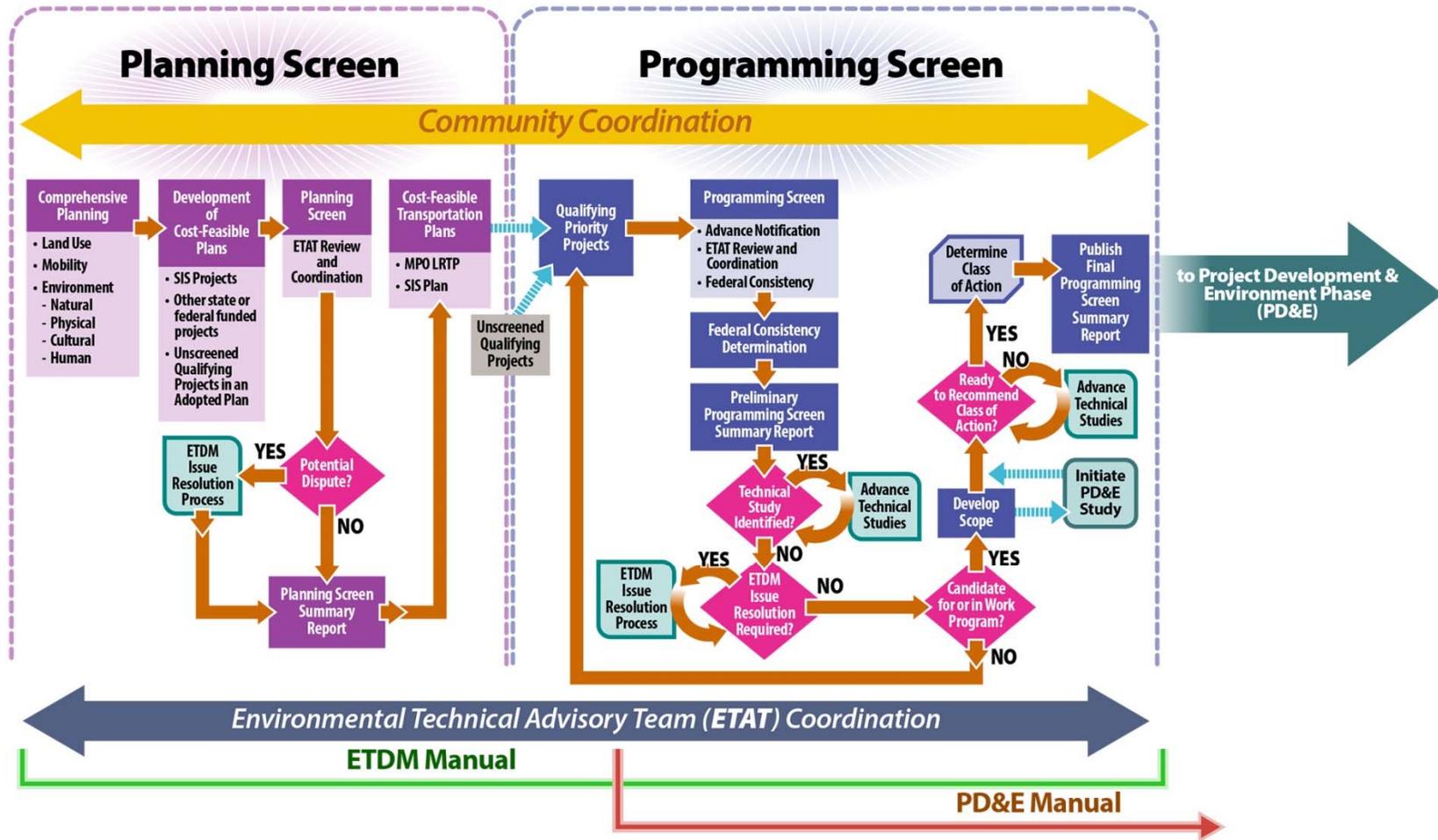


Figure 0-1: ETDM Process Diagram

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 planning process and identifies the various plans from which qualifying ETDM projects may originate.

2.2.1 Overview

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 projects 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 which 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 (**Section 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 (USDOT, 2015). Activities involved in transportation planning include:

- 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

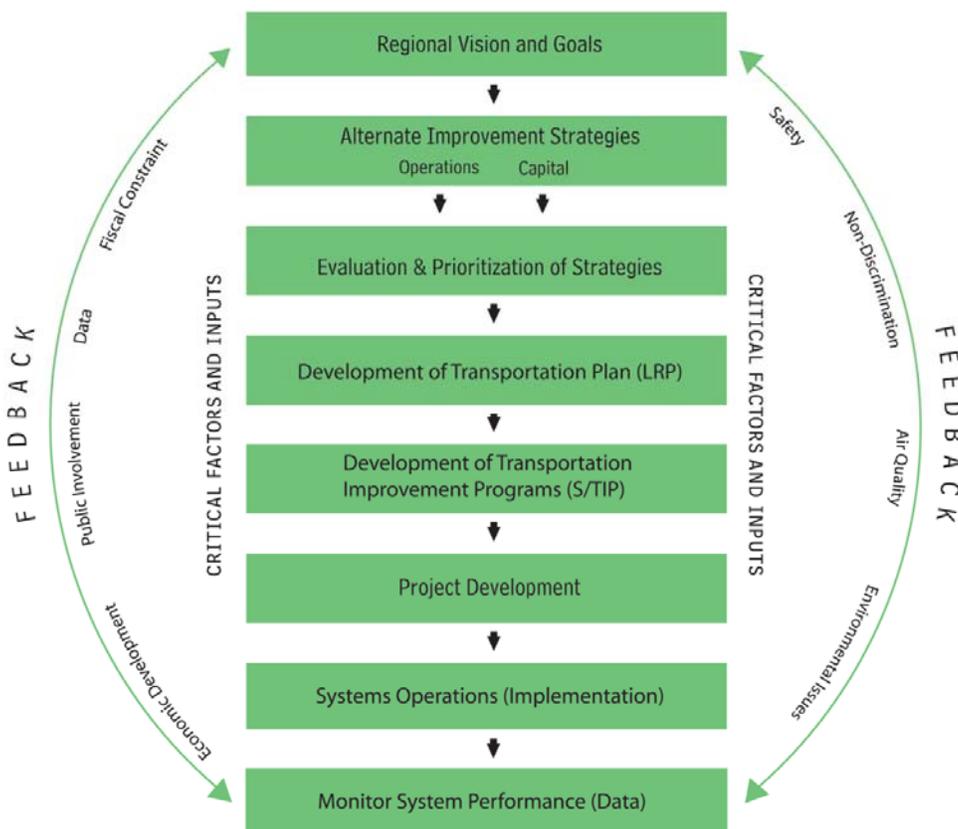


Figure 0-2: Transportation Planning Process (USDOT, 2015)

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, Florida Statutes**.

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 (U.S.C.) § 135**, FDOT has a documented process for consulting with non-metropolitan local officials during development of the long range statewide transportation plan (LRSTP) 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 0-1: 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 | Annually | Qualifying Priority Projects: Programming Screen |
| TIP | MPO/TPO | MPO/ Governor | 5 Years | Transportation Investments | Annually | 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 § 450.214**). 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 (see **Chapter 3, Section 3.6** of this **Manual** for information about the ACE process during the Planning Screen).

The TIP, required by **Section 339.175(8)(c), 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. § 134** and **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. § 134 Chapters 1-6** and **Title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 (23 CFR § 450.200)**]. For metropolitan planning areas, the STIP incorporates the TIP developed by the MPO (**23 CFR § 450.216(e)**). 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. The 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 **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)** Process completion on their website at: 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
- 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 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 0-2: 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 |
| System | | | | | | |
| 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 below 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 State Environmental Management Office (SEMO) 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 FDOT Work Program responds to the MPO TIP priority lists, i.e., their priorities are considered for inclusion in the work program. The MPO TIP then incorporates the projects from the adopted FDOT Work Program. 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 State-Wide Acceleration and Transformation (SWAT)

Each year, State-Wide Acceleration and Transformation (SWAT) teams meet in the FDOT Districts to decide which projects are good candidates for state funded only and consider the project management approaches to inform development of Scopes of Services and schedules for all PD&E studies. The SWAT team members typically include representatives from Work program, Intermodal Systems Development (ISD)/Planning, Environmental Management Office (EMO), and Design staff. The planning meeting may include other staff experts or SEMO staff at the request of the District SWAT team. These participants are experts who ensure that project decisions get broad input and early buy in and benefit of experience in various disciplines. The SWAT team communicates frequently with the ETDM Coordinator, who may either be a standing District SWAT member or drawn upon as a resource to advance early project activities. The ETDM Coordinator will be advised of whether the project will advance with state funds or FHWA funds, collaborated with to assure ETDM screening events are run prior to PD&E Study Advertisement and coordinated with regarding content, comments and responses of the screening events which assist in schedule and scope of services development.

See *PD&E Manual, Part 1, Chapter 10, State, Local, or Privately Funded Project Delivery* and [FDOT Quick Guide: Transforming our State Pre-Construction Process](#) for more information about the state pre-construction process.

2.3.3 Federal Involvement

Prior to starting an ETAT review, the project team updates the project information in the EST to indicate the level of federal involvement by identifying the following:

- State or FHWA Environmental Review Process
- State or Federal Funding
- Federal Permits

Certain ETDM projects must follow the FHWA environmental process:

- On Interstate
- Using or involving Interstate right-of-way (e.g., air rights, adjacent, etc.)
- Projects within and impacting federal lands such as National Parks or Forests, etc.
- FHWA funds are expected to be on the project (includes any phase of project development or implementation)

Refer to [**FDOT Work Program Instructions, Part III, Chapter 25, PD&E**](#), for detailed criteria.

When the project team identifies that only state funds will be allocated for delivery of the project, they must also flag the project within the Work Program database as Not Federal Eligible (NFE). These projects must follow the state environmental review process. FDOT must be the lead agency and the Environmental Document must be a State Environmental Impact Report (SEIR).

Projects may still follow the **NEPA** process if a federal permit is required, even though FHWA will not be the lead federal agency. Coordination with the permitting agency is required to develop an appropriate environmental document supporting their decision making process.

2.3.4 Programming ETDM Activities for Funding

ETDM activities support planning decisions and are considered planning-level activities. Therefore, ETDM activities should be programmed for funding as planning projects, separate from PD&E activities for a specific project. ETDM activities may include, but are not limited to, preparation for completion of or further coordination or activities supporting ETDM Planning or Programming Screens, Alternative Corridor Evaluation (ACE) activities, and advancement of technical or feasibility studies prior to a PD&E Study. This applies to consultant services or in-house costs to specifically perform and support the ETDM Planning and Programming Screens. FDOT has flexibility to determine the best source of funds to cover ETDM activities. Funds may be placed in a districtwide reserve box specifically for advanced activities; or the District may identify funds in other districtwide consultant contract boxes sufficient to cover the related ETDM tasks. For detailed instructions, see [**FDOT Work Program Instructions, Part III, Chapter 23, Planning, Section A.4, Efficient Transportation Decision Making \(ETDM\)**](#).

2.3.5 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*.

FDOT tracks ETDM work as part of the FDOT Production Schedule. The project team should work with project schedulers to use the required Project Schedule and Management (PSM) codes listed in **Table 2-3** for ETDM screening activities.

Table 0-3: ETDM Project Schedule and Management (PSM) Codes

| PSM Code | Activity to Track | Description |
|----------|---|--|
| 700 | ETDM/ETAT PROGRAMMING SCREEN START | ENTER START DATE FOR SCREENING EVENT |
| 701 | ETDM PROGRAMMING PRELIMINARY SUMMARY REPORT PUBLISHED | ENTER DATE FOR PRELIM PROGRAMMING SCREEN PUBLISH |
| 702 | ETDM PROGRAMMING FINAL SUMMARY REPORT PUBLISHED | ENTER DATE FOR FINAL PROGRAMMING SCREEN PUBLISH |

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 has 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.

2.3.6 Planning Screen

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

Prior to initiating the Planning Screen review, the purpose and need, project description, Preliminary Environmental Discussion (PED), 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 review a project's purpose and

need and provide comments about potential project effects to the natural, physical, cultural, and community resources related to their statutory and regulatory authority. ETAT members provide comments about a proposed project based on their expertise, respective agency authority, plans, programs, and technical reports. Commentary should reflect understanding of context and intensity of potential involvement with a resource based upon the proposed activities. The PED should be prepared in a way that assists the ETAT in this understanding. 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 should discuss and review ETAT responses with the District Environmental Administrator and Project Manager to be aware of initial comment, have the opportunity for additional clarification with individual ETAT members if needed, and prepare FDOT responses to ETAT commentary. Once internal review is complete, the ETDM coordinator publishes the **Planning Screen Summary Report**. This report serves as feedback to the ETAT members and summarizes key recommendations and results from the screening event. The FDOT also has opportunity to advance studies or analysis to support the Programming Screen. 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**.

2.3.7 Programming Screen

The Programming Screen builds upon the information produced during the Planning Screen, if applicable (not all projects complete a Planning Screen). The Programming Screen is required for all qualifying projects (defined in **Section 2.3.1**) being considered for inclusion in FDOT's Five Year Work Program, or prior to initiation of the PD&E Study. The Programming Screen 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**). Programming Screens should be performed before creating the project scope of services so the screening results can be considered during its development.

During the Programming Screen, ETAT representatives provide technical assistance, comments about potential project effects, acknowledge understanding or ask for clarification of the purpose and need, and assist FDOT in scoping technical studies necessary to satisfy the requirements of the PD&E phase.

FDOT uses the EST to notify agencies and stakeholders to proceed with their review. When applicable, the notice for the Programming Screen begins a 45-day comment period to allow for the distribution, discussion, and receipt of agency responses. Upon receipt of this notice, all ETAT representatives will review and comment on the information associated with the Programming Screen. 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 screening assists in narrowing the list of reasonable alternatives requiring detailed study during the PD&E phase.

At the end of the Programming Screen, the ETDM Coordinator publishes the **Preliminary Programming Screening Summary Report** to document the initial screening event and **Final Programming Screen Summary Report** when a class of action (COA) determination has been made. These reports serve as feedback to the ETAT members and document the results of the screening. The final report also supports development of a project's scope of work based on the ETAT reviews, considerations, and recommendations received during the screening and are intended to be adopted as a planning product for use in the **NEPA** process.

2.3.8 Advance Notification (AN) Process

FDOT uses the AN process to inform agencies and other interested parties of a proposed transportation action, conduct the Federal Consistency Review (as appropriate), and support project scoping **NEPA** or State Environmental Impact Reports (SEIR)]. This fulfills the project initiation notification as required by **Title 23 U.S.C.**, as amended. In addition, the AN may also provide notice of FDOT's intent to apply for federal aid on a project, initiating the Federal Consistency Review process as required by **15 CFR Part 930**.

FDOT distributes the AN package through the EST, or via a letter, as appropriate. Recipients of the AN package have 45 days to provide input about potential project effects, identify potential technical studies, and document the need for future agency or tribal involvement. The Florida State Clearinghouse (SCH) has another 15 days to review the Consistency Reviewer's comments in the EST. The SCH then submits a Federal Consistency Review determination with the Florida Coastal Management Program (FCMP). The SCH also issues a notice of inconsistency (when applicable). The AN package may be distributed concurrently with the Programming Screen notification, or separately at any point after publishing the ***Preliminary Programming Screen Summary Report***. See ***Chapter 4*** of this ***Manual***, and [***PD&E Manual, Part 1, Chapter 3, Preliminary Environmental Discussion and Advance Notification***](#) for details about the AN process.

2.3.9 Rescreening Projects

In certain situations a project may need to go through the Programming Screen again. Rescreening should take place when the project has not moved into the PD&E Study and:

- It has been four years or longer since the previous Programming Screen review
- There is a change in project termini (expanded) and/or
- There is a change in project concept(s) (e.g., revised alignments, the addition of an interchange, etc.)

Examples of changes to the project concept to consider for rescreening may include:

- Editing line work (e.g., adding segments, deleting segments, splitting an alternative into multiple segments, and adding a new leg)
- Adding alternative modes (i.e., road, transit, pedestrian, rail, etc.)
- Changing the configuration (e.g., changing "Lanes Undivided" to "Lanes Divided", etc.)
- Changing the current or planned number of lanes
- Modifying the previously identified Needs Configuration

The project is not required to go back through the Programming Screen once the PD&E Study has been initiated. Coordinate with SEMO about project-specific questions.

2.3.10 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 as described in the [***FDOT PD&E Manual***](#). 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. ETAT members provide technical assistance upon request by FDOT. The COA determination dictates the type of environmental document prepared during the PD&E phase. Federal Environmental Documents are developed in compliance with the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing *NEPA* and **23 CFR Part 771**. See [PD&E Manual, Part 1, Chapter 2](#) for more information about environmental COA determinations. For state, local, or privately funded transportation projects, see [PD&E Manual, Part 1, Chapter 10](#).

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, the FDOT project team follows FDOT procedure [Project Commitment Tracking 700-011-035](#). 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-only ETDM Public Access Site (<https://etdmpub.flu-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 0-3: 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)
- State 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 assigning 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 administrator of the ETDM process, is able to coordinate and provide feedback and verify that the project advances through the process. The ETDM Coordinator should assure the Project Manager and District Environmental Administrator have the opportunity to review ETAT commentary as well as shape and review FDOT responses and the resulting summary report.

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 issue resolution
- Providing CLCs with comments identified or community outreach activities conducted
- Reviewing 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
- Determining whether a non-federal transportation project should be classified as a State Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) or a Non-Major State Action (NMSA)
- 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, issue 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 are responsible for administering 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 lead 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 administers 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 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 Issue 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 Program website](#) and [Public Involvement Handbook](#) describe practical applications and provide specific techniques to accomplish CLC activities. Ideally, the Socio-Cultural Effects Evaluation/FDOT commentary should be completed prior to ETAT Screening.

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 information 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 input received during the Planning and Programming Screens

2.5.6 State Environmental Management Office (SEMO)

SEMO 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. SEMO manages the ETDM program, the EST, the interagency agreements, statewide interagency coordination, and provides policy guidance, technical assistance, and training.

SEMO 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 Agency Operating Agreement (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 2-4**.

Table 0-4: 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 – acknowledge understanding or ask for | ✓ | ✓ |

| ETAT Typical Responsibilities | Planning Screen | Programming Screen |
|--|-----------------|--------------------|
| clarification | | |
| Review GIS analyses available in the EST | ✓ | ✓ |
| Review PED and AN, when available | ✓ | ✓ |
| Review other uploaded ancillary documents intended to support project review | ✓ | ✓ |
| Identify resources of concern and provide focused comments and actionable recommendations to avoid or minimize potential effects to jurisdictional resources. | ✓ | ✓ |
| Evaluate whether identified resources can be eliminated from further detailed analysis during the PD&E Study | ✓ | ✓ |
| Identify potential avoidance, minimization, and mitigation opportunities | ✓ | ✓ |
| Coordinate with FDOT for clarification or discussion regarding potential project effects | ✓ | ✓ |
| Attend and participate in ETAT meetings and project coordination meetings | ✓ | ✓ |
| For scoping purposes, provide comments regarding cumulative effects to a resource and provide information for the Lead Agency's consideration when evaluating cumulative effects | ✓ | ✓ |
| Identify potential permits and technical studies necessary to advance transportation projects | | ✓ |
| Review and comment on the Methodology Memorandum (MM) and Draft Alternatives Corridor Evaluation Report (ACER) during the Alternative Corridor Evaluation (ACE) process | ✓ | ✓ |
| Make recommendations and provide technical assistance to FDOT to support future permit activities | | ✓ |
| Participate in interagency issue resolution teams, as applicable | ✓ | ✓ |

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 state projects. For federal projects, a federal agency will be the Lead Agency, and per **Title 23 U.S.C.**, FDOT will serve as the co-lead. For local projects (excluding LAP) the local agency may be the 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. A potential Lead Federal Agency should be identified when federal funds will be used on any phase of a project or if FHWA, Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), or FTA approval will 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:

- Inform and coordinate with SEMO and District environmental offices on agency initiatives, programs, training opportunities, guidance, and rule changes that may impact FDOT

- Attend and participate in ETAT meetings and project coordination meetings, as appropriate
- Review and approve project purpose and need
- Review, comment and approve the Alternative Corridor Evaluation (ACE) **Methodology Memorandum (MM)**
- Review and comment on the Draft **Alternative Corridor Evaluation Report (ACER)**
- Approve elimination of unreasonable alternatives not meeting the purpose and need or evaluated through application of the approved **MM** and documented in the **ACER**
- Invite Participating and/or Cooperating Agencies, as appropriate
- Review and approve the Class of Action (COA) for the federal Environmental Document development in the **NEPA** study
- Review and adopt planning products for use during **NEPA**
- Participate in interagency issue resolution teams, as applicable
- Perform agency-specific actions, reviews, and approvals during the ETDM Screenings as described in the AOA, including providing comments and recommendations regarding proposed transportation projects in the EST

FDOT uses the Lead Agency's responses, comments, and recommendations to support project scoping and to identify coordination needs or additional activities in future project phases.

2.6 ETAT REVIEW OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS

During the Planning and Programming Screens, ETAT representatives review project information and provide comments about potential direct and indirect effects to resources under their jurisdiction. ETAT members are expected to provide specific 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. ETAT members are expected to supplement information in the EST with additional sources and personal knowledge. 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 also help to identify 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 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). See **Chapter 3 Planning Screen** and **Chapter 4 Programming Screen** for more specific details about ETAT review tasks during the ETDM screening events.

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
- Identifies and addresses community issues during 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](#)).
- *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](#)).
- *Mobility*: Describe existing travel 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](#)).
- *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](#)).
- *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](#)).

The [Sociocultural Effects Program website](#) provides specific techniques for identifying, reviewing, and evaluating sociocultural effects. This website is available at <http://www.dot.state.fl.us/emo/pubs/sce/sce1.shtm>.

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

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.

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 farmlands in the project area and summarize their potential involvement (see [PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 28: Farmland](#)).

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 (defined in **36 CFR Part 800**) 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:

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 Part 800 – Protection of Historic Properties**.

- *Historic and Archaeological Sites:* Within the vicinity of the proposed project, identify 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 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 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](#)).

With respect to Native American Tribal coordination, **Section 106** of the **National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)**, 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 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 and Surface Waters:* Discuss potential involvement with wetland and surface water 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 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 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](#)).
- 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 ETDM ISSUE RESOLUTION PROCESS

2.7.1 Overview

The ETDM Issue Resolution process seeks to find solutions to complex issues among agencies by identifying mutually agreeable activities or conditions that will address a resource concern (natural, physical, social or cultural) while meeting the transportation need. Issue resolution activities may continue through future project delivery phases as detailed analysis begins and more information becomes available. Participation in the ETDM process does not abrogate or limit an agency's authority or responsibility to protect resources over which it has jurisdiction or authority or require it to act in a way contrary to law, regulation, rules, policy or practice.

A strong commitment exists among the participants in the ETDM process to resolve issues within the ETAT, prior to elevating them to higher level management (see **Figure 2-4**). To facilitate meeting this commitment, potential 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 commencement or continuation of the ETDM issue resolution process.

Initially, the ETDM Coordinator works with the appropriate ETAT representative(s) to informally resolve the disputed issue(s) at the agency staff level before elevating the discussion to the Formal Issue Resolution process. The agency heads (or governing board, as applicable), will make the final decision on how to address unresolved issues.

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 Issue Resolution Log on the EST. The [Environmental Screening Tool Handbook](#) provides additional guidance on tracking and documenting the Issue Resolution process.

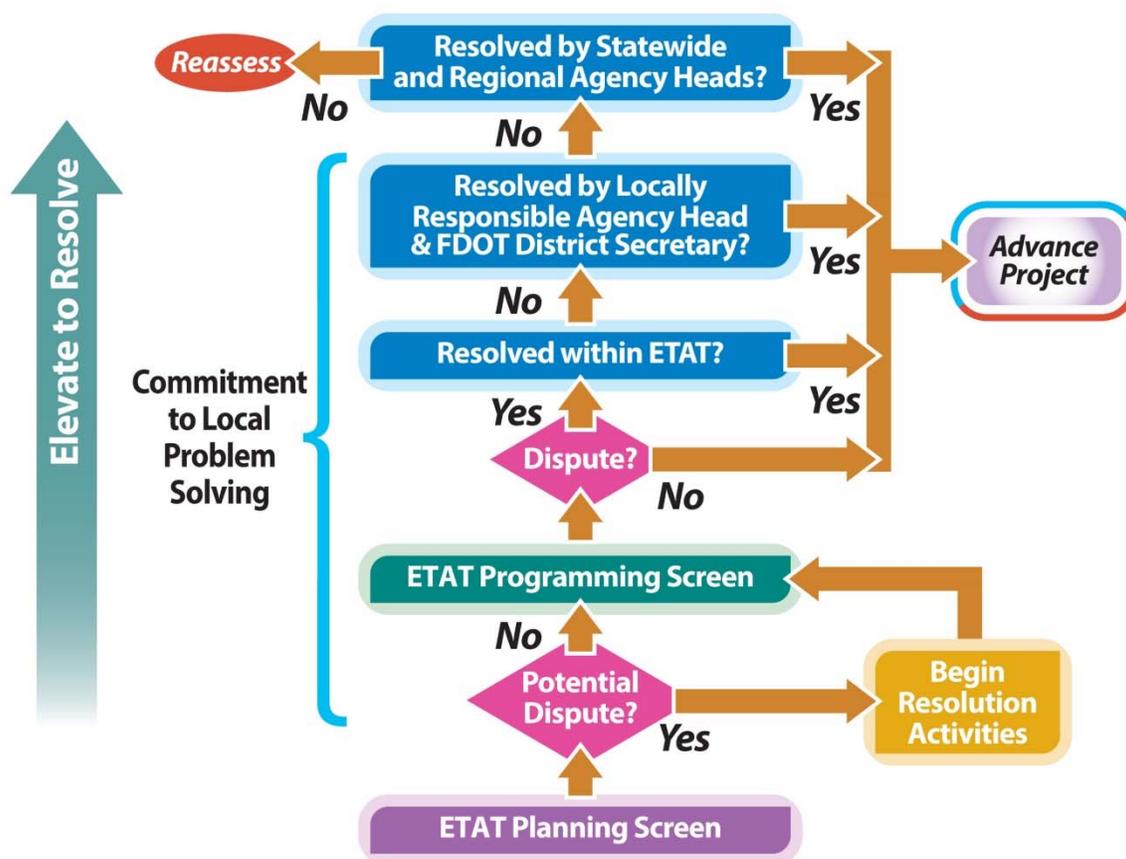


Figure 0-4: Issue Resolution Process

NOTE: Issue Resolution identifies mutually agreeable activities or conditions addressing a resource concern while meeting the transportation need. Issue resolution activities may continue through future project delivery phases

2.7.2 Initiating Issue Resolution

The informal issue resolution process begins when the FDOT ETDM Coordinator, in consultation with the Lead Agency, assigns a Potential Dispute SDOE in the Planning Screen or Dispute Resolution SDOE during a Programming Screen review. When assigning the SDOE, the ETDM Coordinator uses known information including comments and DOEs from ETAT members. The ETDM Coordinator reviews the ETAT commentary to determine its consistency with the definitions of Potential Dispute or Dispute Resolution, and in conjunction with the agency’s regulatory authority. For definitions, see **Chapter 3, Table 3-1, Potential Project Effects Degree of Effect Guidance – Planning Screen** or **Chapter 4, Table 4-1, Potential Project Effects Degree of Effect Guidance – Programming Screen**

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

1. Project is considered to be unpermittable (applicable to permitting agencies)

2. Project is identified to be contrary to a state or federal resource agency's program, plan, or initiative (including Florida's Coastal Management Program or Local Government Comprehensive Plans).
3. Project has the potential for significant environmental cost (e.g., monetary, environmental effects, or quality of life)
4. Project purpose and need is questionable (only applicable to the Lead Agency - identified by the Lead Agency not accepting the purpose and need)

2.7.3 Process to Resolve Potential Issues

After reviewing potential dispute commentary received during a Planning Screen Review, the FDOT ETDM Coordinator contacts the ETAT representative that raised the potential issue 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

Agreements, understandings, and/or recommendations resulting from the issue resolution efforts are documented in the **Planning Screen Summary Report** and accompany the project as it moves to the Programming Screen.

An unresolved issue 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 Issue Resolution process is diagrammed in **Figure 2-5**.

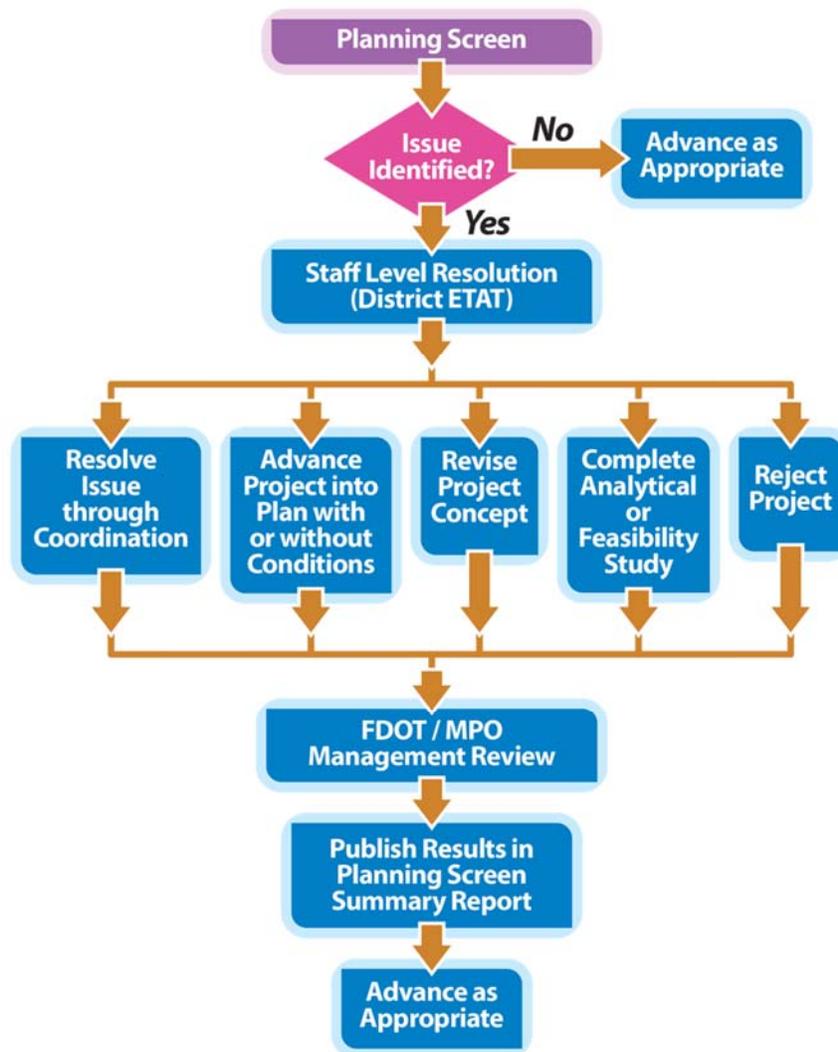


Figure 0-5: Planning Screen Potential Issue Resolution Process

2.7.4 Informal Issue Resolution

After assigning a Dispute Resolution SDOE during the Programming Screen, the FDOT ETDM Coordinator forms a sub-team of the ETAT (including the State Clearinghouse, if consistency is an issue) to review each issue as part of the Informal Issue 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 discussions. The sub-team undertakes a course of action to address identified issues, which may include:

1. Resolving the issue through consultation and documenting the resolution

2. Recommending FDOT complete an environmental or technical study for ETAT review
3. Advancing the project with conditions

Agreements, understandings, and/or recommendations resulting from the Informal Issue Resolution process are documented in the **Programming Screen Summary Report** and accompany the project as it moves to PD&E. **Figure 2-6** diagrams the Informal Issue Resolution process.

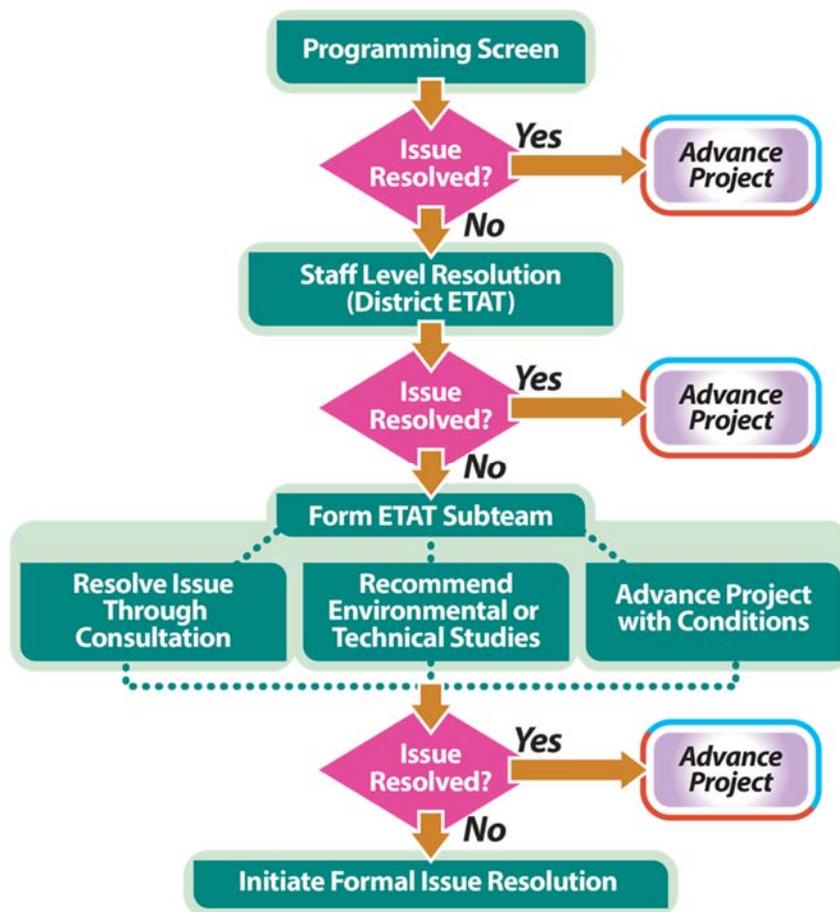


Figure 0-6: Informal Issue Resolution Process

2.7.5 Formal Issue Resolution

If an issue cannot be resolved through the Informal Issue Resolution process, the discussion enters into the Formal Issue 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 (or governing board, as applicable) who raised the issue and the FDOT District Secretary review both papers and then attempt to resolve the issue(s), if possible.

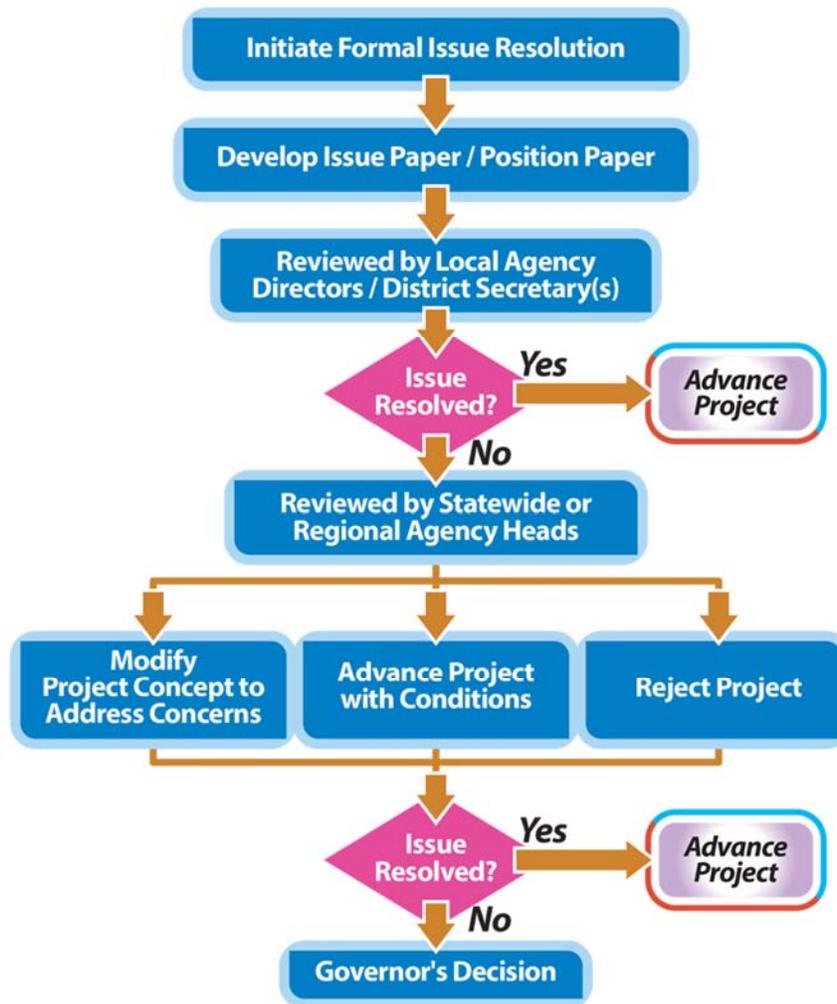


Figure 0-7: Formal Issue Resolution Process

If they are not able to do this, the issue moves to the statewide or regional agency heads (or governing board, as applicable), who will make the final decision on how to address unresolved issues. The course of action may include:

1. Resolving the issue through consultation and documenting the resolution
2. Recommending FDOT to complete an environmental or technical study for ETAT review

3. Advancing the project with conditions
4. Rejecting the project

Should a federal agency disagree with the decision, the Federal Dispute Resolution process may be initiated. If there are unresolved issues for FHWA projects undergoing **NEPA** review, then the “issue resolution” process set out in **23 U.S.C. § 139, as amended**, will be applicable. The process in **23 U.S.C. § 139** establishes a series of forums for issues to be resolved, and if not resolved, to which the issues would then advance, including potential financial penalties for unexcused delays by participating agencies.

Nothing in this Issue 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 ETDM Issue Resolution process seeks to fulfill all statutory obligations in seeking solutions to complex issues among agencies.

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2.9 HISTORY

03/2006 Original publication

07/2013 Updated to reflect current legal requirements and practices

12/2015 Updated to reflect current legal requirements and practices

CHAPTER 3

PLANNING SCREEN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | |
|---------|--|------|
| 3.1 | OVERVIEW | 3-1 |
| 3.2 | PLANNING SCREEN PROCESS..... | 3-2 |
| 3.3 | PLANNING SCREEN PROJECTS | 3-4 |
| 3.3.1 | Identify Qualifying Projects | 3-5 |
| 3.3.2 | Project Screening Release Schedule | 3-6 |
| 3.3.3 | Non-Qualifying Projects | 3-6 |
| 3.4 | PREPARE PROJECT FOR SCREENING | 3-6 |
| 3.4.1 | Enter or Update Project Information | 3-6 |
| 3.4.2 | Review Standardized GIS Analyses and Project Data..... | 3-8 |
| 3.4.3 | Develop Preliminary Environmental Discussion..... | 3-9 |
| 3.5 | PLANNING SCREEN REVIEW | 3-10 |
| 3.5.1 | Distribution of Planning Screen Notification | 3-10 |
| 3.5.2 | Review Time Frame..... | 3-10 |
| 3.5.3 | Planning Screen Review..... | 3-11 |
| 3.5.3.1 | ETAT Review Tasks | 3-12 |
| 3.5.3.2 | ETDM Resource Issues..... | 3-14 |
| 3.5.4 | Assigning a Degree of Effect | 3-15 |
| 3.5.5 | ETAT Coordination | 3-17 |
| 3.5.6 | Publish Planning Screen Summary Report..... | 3-17 |

| | | |
|-------|---|------|
| 3.6 | ALTERNATIVE CORRIDOR EVALUATION (ACE) PROCESS..... | 3-18 |
| 3.6.1 | Identify the Need to Complete the ACE Process | 3-22 |
| 3.6.2 | Define Initial Alternative Corridors | 3-22 |
| 3.6.3 | Conduct Standard EST Planning Screen Review | 3-22 |
| 3.6.4 | Methodology Memorandum Review | 3-22 |
| 3.6.5 | Refine or Eliminate Corridor Alternatives | 3-24 |
| 3.6.6 | Publish Final Planning Screen Summary Report | 3-24 |
| 3.6.7 | Advancing the Project to Programming Screen | 3-24 |
| 3.7 | POTENTIAL ISSUE RESOLUTION PROCESS | 3-24 |
| 3.8 | PLANNING SCREEN ACTIVITIES..... | 3-25 |
| 3.8.1 | Planning Screen Preparation | 3-25 |
| 3.8.2 | Planning Screen Reviews | 3-26 |
| 3.8.3 | ETAT Coordination | 3-26 |
| 3.8.4 | Planning Screen Summary Report | 3-27 |
| 3.9 | REFERENCES..... | 3-28 |
| 3.10 | HISTORY | 3-28 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | |
|---|------|
| Table 3-1: Potential Project Effects Degree of Effect Guidance – Planning Screen... | 3-16 |
|---|------|

LIST OF FIGURES

| | |
|--|------|
| Figure 3-1: Planning Screen..... | 3-3 |
| Figure 3-2: Planning Screen Process Flow | 3-4 |
| Figure 3-3: Planning Screen Review Tasks | 3-11 |

Figure 3-4: ACE Process when Initiated during the Planning Screen 3-21

CHAPTER 3

PLANNING SCREEN

3.1 OVERVIEW

This chapter details the process for completing the Planning Screen of the Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) process. The chapter also provides instructions for conducting the Alternative Corridor Evaluation (ACE) process during the Planning Screen, when applicable. The chapter describes the process for identifying environmental considerations to assist in the development of the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) Cost Feasible Plan, the Metropolitan Planning Organization/Transportation Planning Organization (MPO/TPO) Long Range Transportation Plans (LRTPs), and further into the MPO/TPO Cost Feasible Plans. It also describes tools and techniques for interacting with the Environmental Technical Advisory Team (ETAT) and members of the public during the Planning Screen review. The ETAT includes representatives from MPOs/TPOs, federal and state agencies, and participating Native American tribes.

The Planning Screen incorporates federal guidance on environmental streamlining and links the transportation Planning phase to the Project Development and Environment (PD&E) phase by giving early consideration to natural, physical, cultural, and community resources. Accomplishing this involves frequent communication and coordination among ETAT members. These reviews help to consider the feasibility of proposed projects; focus the issues to be addressed during the Programming Screen; and allow for early identification of potential avoidance, minimization, and mitigation opportunities. Potential direct and indirect effects on communities are also identified through information gathering, analysis, and consideration of sociocultural effects. The Planning Screen generates documentation and support information which may be carried forward into subsequent project phases.

For federal projects, the Planning Screen provides the project sponsor [i.e., Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District, Florida's Turnpike Enterprise (Turnpike), or MPO/TPO] with the opportunity to begin addressing consistency with local plans pursuant to **23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 450**. FDOT and the MPOs/TPOs can begin identifying modifications to the project concept or amendments to the plans that may be needed in future phases to ensure consistency. For more information about consistency requirements, refer to the [**MPO Program Management Handbook**](#).

The Planning Screening applies only to qualifying projects (refer to **Chapter 2, Section 2.3.1** and **Table 2.2** of this *Manual* for a complete list of qualifying projects types). Projects selected for the Planning Screen originate from FDOT, MPOs/TPOs, or local government planning efforts intended to guide future transportation improvements. These efforts reflect community goals and visions, addressing subjects like transportation, conservation, and development. Transportation plans are prepared based on these goals and objectives and

supported by detailed transportation analyses, public outreach, and other planning considerations, and then carried out by FDOT, MPOs/TPOs, and local governments.

ETAT members use the Environmental Screening Tool (EST) to review project information, identify potential project effects, and submit comments to FDOT during the transportation planning process. This web-based Geographic Information System (GIS) database and mapping tool provides access to project information and data about natural, physical, cultural, and community resources in the project area. The ETAT members provide input about potential project effects on the natural, physical, cultural, and community resources specific to their area of expertise. They may also provide cumulative effect considerations during the screening. The early identification of potential issues may influence project priority and the feasibility of an alternative alignment and design. Input received during the Planning Screen helps transportation planners to prioritize transportation investment strategies and improve project cost estimates, in support of the development of a Cost Feasible Plan. Planning Screen information may also be used to inform subsequent steps in consideration and analysis of the proposed transportation project. The results of the Planning Screen are documented in a **Planning Screen Summary Report**, which is accessible to ETAT members through the EST (<https://www.fl-etat.org/est>) and the public through the ETDM Public Access Site (<https://etdmpub.fl-etat.org>).

3.2 PLANNING SCREEN PROCESS

The Planning Screen occurs when considering projects for inclusion or prioritization within the cost feasible element of an LRTP. **Figure 3-1** illustrates how the Planning Screen fits within the context of the transportation planning process.

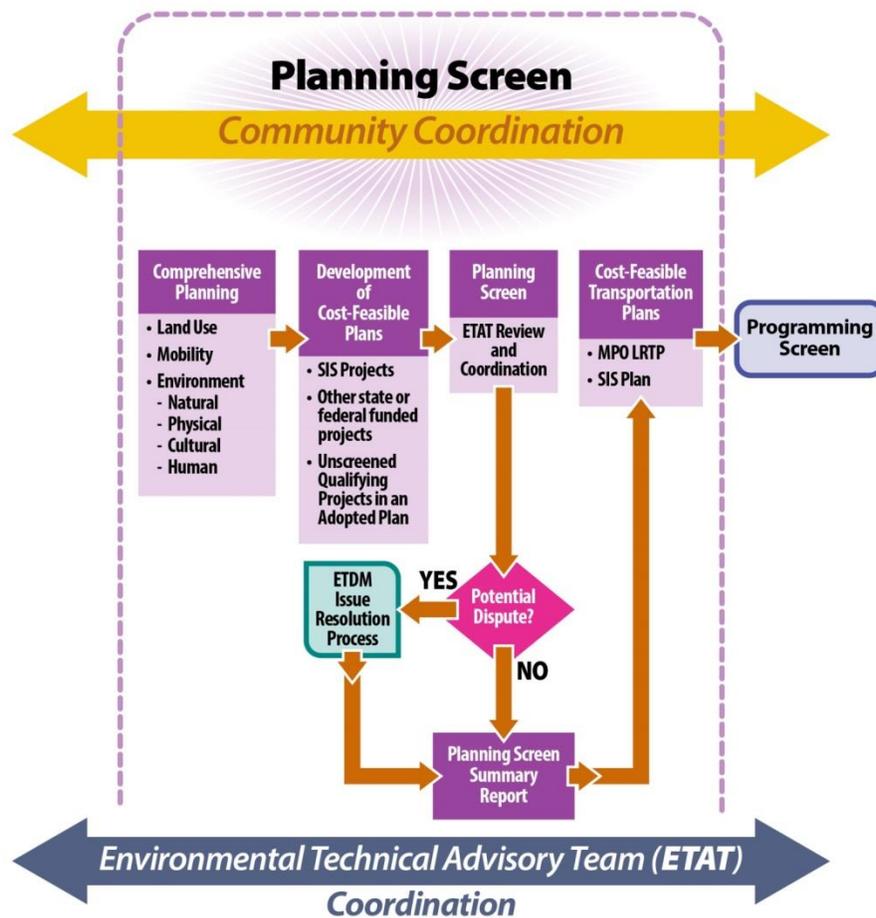


Figure 3-1: Planning Screen

The Planning Screen includes steps for preparing a project for review, conducting the review, responding to comments, and preparing a **Planning Screen Summary Report**. These steps are shown in **Figure 3-2**, and further described in **Sections 3.3** through **3.5**.

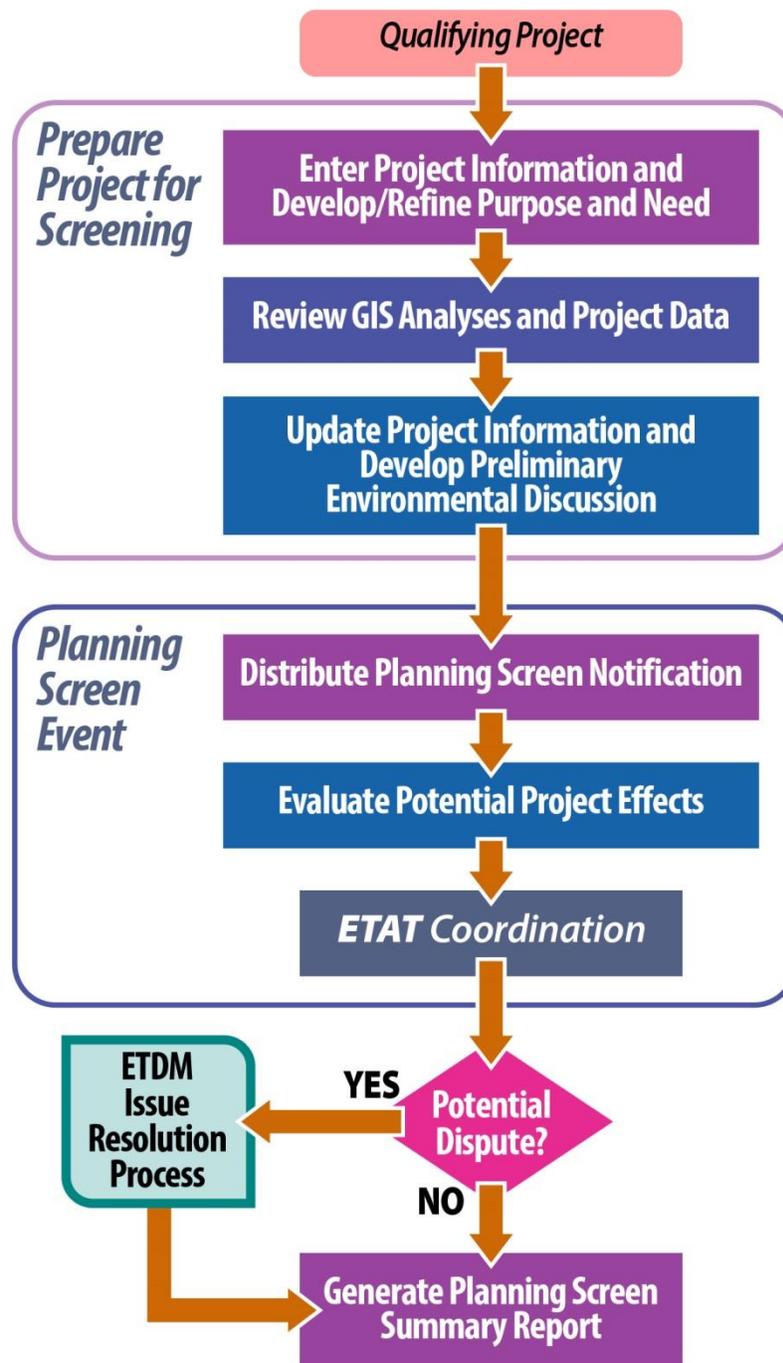


Figure 3-2: Planning Screen Process Flow

3.3 PLANNING SCREEN PROJECTS

In preparation of adopting Cost Feasible Plans, MPOs/TPOs and FDOT personnel identify qualifying projects and schedule the Planning Screen reviews. They may also use the EST to support planning activities related to other, non-qualifying, projects.

3.3.1 Identify Qualifying Projects

MPO/TPO Liaisons, FDOT Planning Managers, and ETDM Coordinators work with other MPOs/TPOs, FDOT, and local government staff to identify qualifying projects to screen. Projects may originate from a variety of FDOT, MPO/TPO, or local government programs and plans, such as:

- SIS Plan
- MPO/TPO LRTPs
- Transportation Needs Plans
- Master Plans
- Action Plans
- Corridor Plans
- Local Government Comprehensive Plans

They select transportation projects based on criteria including:

- Project type
- Transportation system designation
- Potential funding source (federal, state, or local)
- Responsible agency

In this context, “transportation system designations” refers to whether a proposed project is part of the SIS or State Highway System (SHS), also called on-system. “Responsible agency” refers to the agency required to meet federal, state, and other applicable requirements. See **Chapter 2, Section 2.3.1**, and **Table 2-2** of this **Manual** for specific examples of qualifying projects and guidance on how to apply the selection criteria.

Not all qualifying projects require a Planning Screen. 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 formation of a Needs Plan and be completed before final approval of a Cost Feasible Plan, with highest priority projects being screened first.

The standardized EST GIS analyses can be performed on batch uploads of imported Needs Plan projects. This can assist MPOs/TPOs (and, as appropriate, local governments) to understand the relative potential project effects to environmental resources when prioritizing projects for Planning Screens or for inclusion in the cost feasible LRTP.

After selecting a project for review, the ETDM Coordinator begins the Planning Screen by updating the project record in the EST. Refer to the [Environmental Screening Tool Handbook](#) for instructions on preparing projects for review in the EST.

3.3.2 Project Screening Release Schedule

Based on the list of qualifying projects, FDOT ETDM Coordinators and Project Managers (if assigned) work with appropriate staff to develop or update a 12-month project release schedule as described in **Chapter 2, Section 2.3.2**, of this *Manual*.

When releasing projects for review, ETDM Coordinators should ensure the ETAT members have enough time to review and provide comments. Therefore, when scheduling a Planning Screen review, 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. ETDM Coordinators should make every effort to discuss ETAT review schedules with other Districts to coordinate ETAT work efforts. In addition, four months should be allowed per project to provide time for reviews, public involvement activities, possible review extensions, and preparation of the **Planning Screen Summary Report**.

3.3.3 Non-Qualifying Projects

FDOT and MPOs/TPOs (and local governments as needed) can also use the EST to support issue identification of non-qualifying projects (such as Type 1 CEs) and/or an entire plan. These projects are not intended to be released to the ETAT for formal review. Instead, they are entered into the EST using the Area of Interest Tool with only enough information to generate the standardized EST GIS analyses (refer to the [Environmental Screening Tool Handbook](#) for details).

3.4 PREPARE PROJECT FOR SCREENING

The transportation, environmental, and community data presented in the EST provide a foundation for project reviews. **Chapter 6** of this *Manual* describes data collection, preparation, and maintenance of these datasets. In preparation for a Planning Screen review, FDOT and the MPOs/TPOs enter information about the project into the EST, while the Community Liaison Coordinators (CLCs) gather and enter community data. In addition, the ETAT representatives provide new and updated GIS data to the Florida Geographic Data Library (FGDL) for use within the EST, as available.

3.4.1 Enter or Update Project Information

In MPO/TPO areas, the MPO/TPO ETDM Coordinator enters project data in the EST, unless the project is on the SIS/SHS. If the project is on the SIS/SHS or not in a MPO/TPO area, the FDOT ETDM Coordinator enters the project data. Whenever possible, ETDM Coordinators should work with FDOT and MPO/TPO planners to obtain information from previous planning and community involvement activities in order to maintain a comprehensive project record and better link the Planning and PD&E phases.

To prepare a project for a Planning Screen review:

- Develop or refine the purpose and need for each qualifying project to be screened in accordance with the [*PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 4, Project Description and Purpose and Need*](#). Transportation planning data developed for long-range plans are the primary source of information used to assist in establishing the purpose and need. These data are drawn from corridor plans, subarea plans, regional models, and other sources that help identify corridors and facilities where transportation improvements are needed. This information is summarized in MPO/TPO LRTPs, the FDOT SIS Plan, MPO/TPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Staff preparing the purpose and need for projects undergoing a Planning Screen should coordinate with the MPO/TPO liaison or other appropriate planning staff to develop the initial purpose and need, if it does not already appear in the transportation plan. The initial purpose and need developed during the Planning phase may change as the project advances since new information or public input may be identified. Only describe the appropriate purpose and need categories that are applicable to the project. The District's SWAT Team should be consulted to identify projects to be screened and to contribute to information to be provided by the FDOT in the screening event prior to and following ETAT review.
 - Develop a project description, which includes:
 - Project name;
 - Name of the city(ies) and county(ies) where the project is located;
 - Name of the planning organization responsible for the project;
 - Limits of the proposed project, such as its logical termini and length;
 - Description of the existing or general characterization of a new facility; and
 - Description of planned improvements. Provide as much information as available, such as the facility type, number of lanes, type of median, major structures, and potential right-of-way requirements (for example, a description of a road widening could indicate if the project intends to use existing right of way).
- Refer to [*PD&E Manual Part 2, Chapter 4, Project Description and Purpose and Need*](#) for further guidance and an example.
- Indicate whether the project is being developed under the Local Agency Program (LAP). To be considered a qualifying LAP project, funding must already be programmed in the Five Year Work Program and be listed in FDOT's federally mandated STIP.

- Indicate whether the project is being developed through the ACE process.
- Indicate whether the project is anticipated to use federal funds or require a federal action.
- Enter information showing the location of each project alternative using the EST Map Editor or by uploading a GIS file. The alternative features at this point generally represent planning-level corridors rather than detailed alignments. For ACE process projects, delineate the study area surrounding potential alternatives or general alternative corridors. Preliminary alternatives should offer potential solutions to the transportation problem identified in the purpose and need. The range of alternatives depends on the nature and scope of the project, as well as the context and intensity of potential impacts.
- Describe the study area and preliminary alternative(s), if available. For each alternative, include information about the mode(s) served by the project, type of alternative (widening, new alignment, etc.), termini location, and length. Include the estimated cost and the basis for the cost estimate, if available. When known, enter information about roadway functional classification, existing and predicted Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT), and presence within an Urban Service Area or if it's designated as a SIS facility.
- Provide project plan consistency status information currently known or anticipated and the steps toward achieving consistency, as appropriate. 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.
- Designate exempted agencies (if applicable). Exempted agencies are notified about the Planning Screen review but not expected to submit comments or act on the purpose and need. When making the decision to exempt an agency, consider the nature of a project. For instance, the United States Coast Guard (USCG) is exempt from reviewing any projects that do not impact navigable waterways. Additionally, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is exempt from reviewing Planning Screen projects. Other agencies that may be exempt from a review include United States Forest Service, National Park Service, and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).
- Contact the Work Program Office to establish an ETDM Identifier (refer to [Work Program Instructions Part III, Chapter 23](#)).

3.4.2 Review Standardized GIS Analyses and Project Data

Standardized EST GIS analyses identify natural, physical, cultural, and community resources within a specified buffer distance of the proposed project alternatives to help identify potential project effects. These analyses are performed automatically in the EST prior to a project being released for review. The analyses provide counts or summaries of

resources (for example, wetland acreage and demographic statistics) found in proximity to a transportation project. The EST includes analyses that have been requested by the ETAT, FDOT, or MPO/TPO representatives to help in their review of potentially affected resources. The results are organized within the EST by resource issue (see **Section 2.6 of this Manual** for a description of each) and reported along with issue-specific maps displaying project location and selected environmental resources.

Prior to initiating the Planning Screen review, the project team studies the results of the GIS analyses to gain additional understanding of the project area and to make any necessary refinements to the project. For projects on the SIS, the SIS Coordinators in the Systems Planning Office review the project for consistency with the SIS Plan. Once all data preparation steps are complete, the project status is updated in the EST to indicate that the project information is ready for final quality review. The PD&E Project Manager (if assigned), environmental specialists, other District SWAT team members as appropriate and ETDM Coordinator perform quality reviews to verify the accuracy and completeness of all project information.

The mapped project features should be consistent with the location described on the EST in the **Project Description** report. Confirm, for example, that:

- The beginning and ending locations of linear alternatives recorded on the EST in the **Project Description** report match the mapped termini;
- Project features follow an existing facility, such as a highway or rail line, if intended; and
- The project linework is digitized accurately in relation to other mapped features (e.g., if you intend for the project to go around a resource, verify the digitized linework shows that).

Specific data quality review procedures will depend on project context and scope. Refer to **Chapter 6, Section 6.4**, of this **Manual** for further guidance.

3.4.3 Develop Preliminary Environmental Discussion

After reviewing the standardized EST GIS analyses and considering information supplied by local knowledge, planning studies, internal FDOT coordination, and other evaluations in the project area, FDOT prepares a Preliminary Environmental Discussion (PED). FDOT completes the PED prior to a Planning Screen review to convey FDOT's knowledge of a project area and the potential level of involvement to address certain issues/resources to the ETAT and other agencies, as appropriate. The PED outlines FDOT's initial understanding of the natural, physical, cultural, and community issues/resources in a project study area. The PED also discusses the process FDOT plans to use to address or evaluate issues and resources as the project advances through future phases of project development. The PED is based on local knowledge, planning studies, and any other evaluations relevant to the

project area. The PED provides the ETAT with context and may help the ETAT provide focused and actionable comments.

The PED is required for projects undergoing a Planning Screen review. The PED can be submitted per issue and alternative to highlight unique or known conditions. For MPO/TPO projects, FDOT coordinates the assessment with the MPO/TPO ETDM Coordinator.

For instructions on completing a PED, refer to [**PD&E Manual, Part 1, Chapter 3, Preliminary Environmental Discussion and Advance Notification.**](#)

3.5 PLANNING SCREEN REVIEW

Before a Planning Screen review, the ETDM Coordinator should consider holding an online meeting or webinar to introduce the project before submitting it to the ETAT. The meeting allows the ETDM Coordinator or PD&E Project Manager to present project details, highlight issues, and communicate specific expectations to help the ETAT provide quality comments. For assistance with setting up these meetings, contact the ETDM Help Desk by emailing help@fla-etat.org.

3.5.1 Distribution of Planning Screen Notification

The ETDM Coordinator or PD&E Project Manager uses the EST to notify the ETAT about the start of a project review. The CLC also receives a copy of the email notification to begin the Sociocultural Effects (SCE) evaluation. The CLC or Project Manager can forward the notice to other stakeholders so they may review project information, provide input about potential effects to resources, or share information from previous planning activities (see the [**FDOT Public Involvement Handbook**](#) for strategies to provide public involvement opportunities during the Planning Screen). Non-ETAT members and the public are referred to the ETDM Public Access Site at <https://etdmpub.fl-a-etat.org>.

3.5.2 Review Time Frame

As established in the ETDM agency agreements (AAs), reviews occur within 45 calendar days of email notification. If additional review time is required, an ETAT member may request a 15-day extension. When needed, the ETAT member must submit a written request to the ETDM Coordinator within the initial 45-day comment period. Should a shorter extension period be necessary, it may be negotiated with the ETAT members; contact the State Environmental Management Office (SEMO) for more information. When an extension is granted, it applies to all reviewers and is announced via email.

ETAT members may submit and edit comments at any time during the review period using the EST. After the review period ends, the ETAT can no longer submit comments on the EST or edit submitted comments. If an ETAT member needs to revise comments, the member should contact the ETDM Coordinator.

3.5.3 Planning Screen Review

Upon receipt of the Planning Screen notice, ETAT members review the purpose and need and provide comments about potential project effects to the natural, physical, cultural, and community resources related to their regulatory authority.

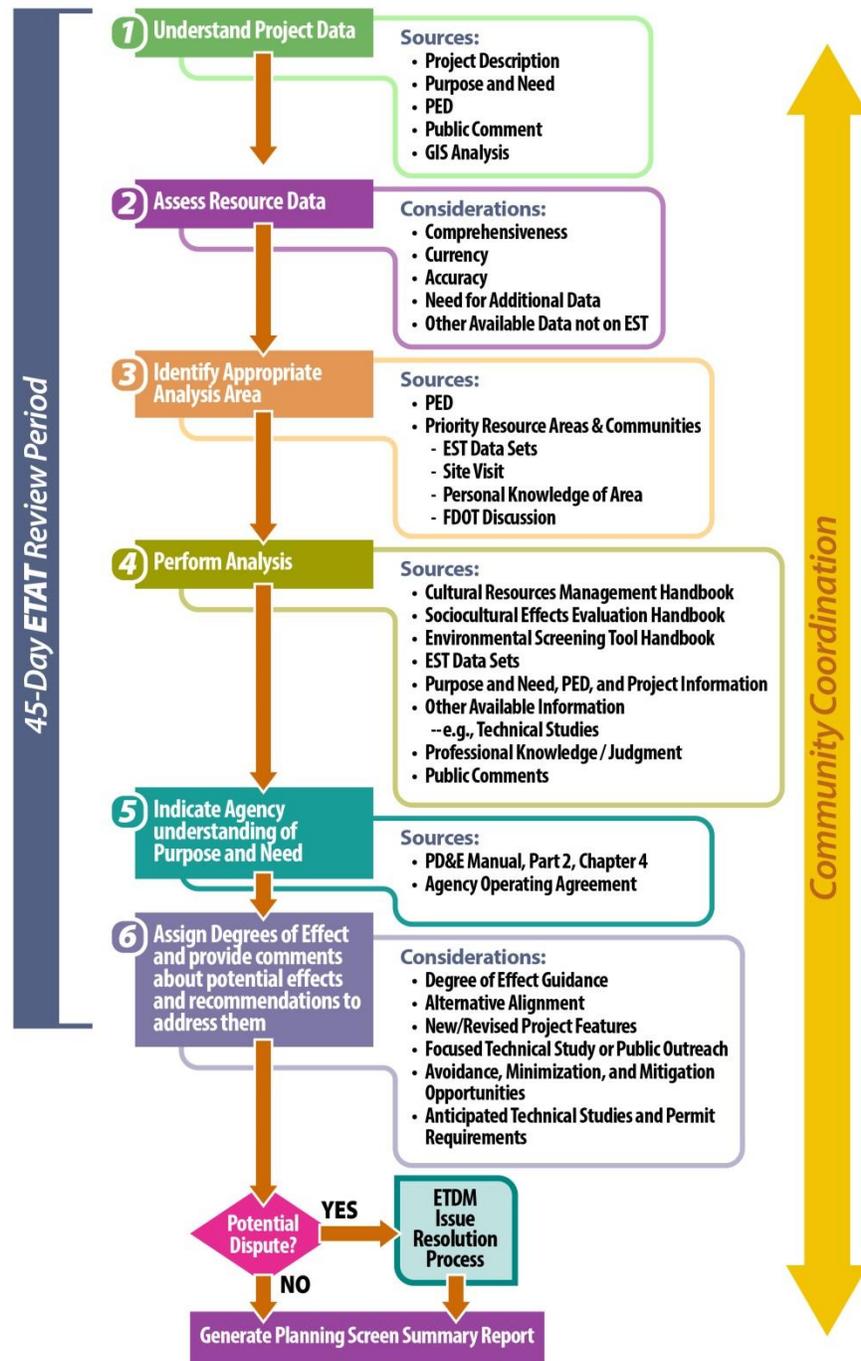


Figure 3-3: Planning Screen Review Tasks

3.5.3.1 ETAT Review Tasks

Steps one through six in *Figure 3-3* show the process ETAT members follow when reviewing projects during the Planning Screen. These tasks are described in detail below:

1. **Develop Understanding of Project** – Develop an understanding of the proposed transportation project by reviewing the project description, purpose and need, PED, EST GIS analyses, project and resource maps, any project attachments, and comments from previous planning activities.
2. **Assess Resource Data** – Verify that the information available in the EST is the best available; refer to *Chapter 6, Section 6.4.5.2* of this *Manual*, for data review considerations. Identify information gaps or data needed to support further evaluation. ETAT members are expected to supplement the information in the EST with additional sources and personal knowledge, such as data gathered from site visits. If the ETAT members have relevant knowledge or information not already contained in the EST, provide and discuss such information.
3. **Identify Appropriate Analysis Area** – Typically, the analysis area for a project is influenced by the nature of the ETAT member's resources of interest, the project's context, and the potential for resource effects. The buffers used in the EST range from 100 feet to 5,280 feet [one (1) mile] in width. These areas represent typical distances used by the ETAT to evaluate a variety of resources in different contexts, although the size of any individual study area depends on the nature of the project.
4. **Perform Analysis** – Review projects for existing conditions and potential direct and indirect effects to jurisdictional resources. Assess the need for potential agency coordination in subsequent project phases. Each ETAT member performs analyses consistent with the criteria and methodologies that they established for each specific resource.
5. **Indicate Understanding of Purpose and Need** – Review the project's purpose and need and acknowledge understanding or ask for clarification from the District ETDM Coordinator.
6. **Provide Comments about Potential Effects and Recommendations to Avoid or Address Effects** – Comment on project concepts and alternatives based on analysis in Step 4. Be as specific as possible. Submit comments in the EST for each screened alternative for the issues identified in the AOA. Comments should focus on fatal flaws and not just list resources found within the standard EST buffer areas. For example:
 - If potential direct and indirect effects exist, comment on the type, quality, and sensitivity of the resources involved in relation to their location to the proposed project and related activities. If the project does not impact resources of interest, or a detailed evaluation is not necessary during the PD&E phase, indicate this as well.

- ETAT members are not expected to evaluate nor assign Degrees of Effect (DOEs) for cumulative effects during the Planning and Programming Screens. If there is a concern for cumulative effects, provide considerations to help the Lead Agency decide on the level of evaluation needed in the environmental document (see **Section 2.5** of this Manual for an explanation about the Lead Agency role). Cumulative effects can be both positive and negative. See the [**FDOT Cumulative Effects Evaluation Handbook**](#) for more information.
- Provide information about agency plans, studies, regulatory information, or other data that may affect the project or are affected by the project. Fill in data gaps and validate data, as needed.
- Provide specific recommendations to address resource concerns which may arise during permitting, such as potential avoidance, minimization, or mitigation opportunities based on statutes and regulations.
- Specifically identify differences in potential jurisdictional resource impacts among alternatives.
- Identify specific activities FDOT or other ETAT member(s) could complete between Planning and Programming Screens to answer questions, address concerns, or fill in data gaps (e.g., seasonal studies, preliminary site inspections, or studies to support the permitting process).
- Indicate a DOE for each issue and alternative being reviewed. A DOE reflects the magnitude of both potential direct and indirect effects caused by a particular alternative to a resource. **Section 3.5.4** provides guidance for assigning a DOE,

To help carry forward information produced during the Planning phase to the environmental documents prepared during the PD&E phase, the ETDM process uses definitions consistent with **NEPA** as stated in **40 CFR § 1508.7 and § 1508.8:**

Direct effects... are caused by the action and occur at the same time and place as the action.

Indirect effects... are caused by the action and are later in time or farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable.

Cumulative effect is the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (federal or non-federal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time.

The terms “effects” and “impacts” are synonymous in CEQ regulations (**40 CFR § 1508.8**) and are used interchangeably in this **Manual**.

but more specific evaluation criteria should be used by each ETAT member for the resources under the member's jurisdiction. Include the rationale for selecting a DOE. During a Planning Screen, this is a preliminary assessment based on existing information. This early consideration helps to assess the feasibility of project alternatives. It can help better develop cost estimates by identifying flaws and other difficulties that may lead to unnecessary delays and expenses as the project moves into future phases.

- Indicate the need for future involvement (e.g., coordination/consultation, permits and technical studies).

3.5.3.2 ETDM Resource Issues

ETAT members comment on the potential project effects to one or more of the following ETDM issues as defined by their respective AOAs and/or in accordance with their regulatory authority:

Social and Economic

- Aesthetic Effects
- Economic
- Farmlands
- Land Use Changes
- Mobility
- Relocation Potential
- Social

Cultural

- Historic and Archaeological Sites
- Recreation Areas
- Section 4(f) Potential

Natural

- Coastal and Marine
- Floodplains

- Water Quality and Quantity
- Wetlands and Surface Waters
- Wildlife and Habitat

Physical

- Air Quality
- Contamination
- Infrastructure
- Navigation
- Noise

Special Designations

Within the EST, ETAT members use the *Special Designations* issue to identify involvement with any of the following:

- Outstanding Florida Waters
- Aquatic Preserves
- Scenic Highways
- Wild and Scenic Rivers

Refer to **Chapter 2, Section 2.6**, of this *Manual* for additional explanation and guidance regarding each ETDM issue.

3.5.4 Assigning a Degree of Effect

ETAT members should use available information to evaluate and comment on the potential direct and indirect effects of a project. This includes using the data layers in the EST, historical documentation, previous studies, site visits, talking to other agency experts and FDOT staff, as well as personal knowledge of the project area. These potential effects drive the DOE selection, which reflects the potential magnitude of project effects on a resource, not the level of coordination involved in addressing the effect. The level of coordination with the ETAT during future project phases reflects the issues that need to be addressed, regardless of the DOE. The ETDM Coordinator, PD&E Project Manager, and Lead Agency use DOEs and comments to help identify potentially critical issues and determine how to address them. The ETAT DOEs and supporting comments help the ETDM Coordinator or

PD&E Project Manager assign a Summary Degree of Effect (SDOE) and assist the Lead Agency to identify potential issues.

Table 3-1 provides guidance on assigning a DOE. ETAT members are encouraged to develop a specific matrix to further clarify their own understanding of DOE levels and coordinate it with FDOT for mutual understanding and partnering. This promotes consistency when ETAT members assign a DOE.

Table 3-1: Potential Project Effects Degree of Effect Guidance – Planning Screen

| Degree of Effect | Guidance | |
|-------------------------------|--|---|
| | ETAT Resources | Sociocultural Resources |
| Not Applicable/No Involvement | The issue/resource in question is not a part of, in any way involved with, or affected by the proposed alternative. | |
| Enhanced | The proposed alternative has a positive effect on the resource or can reverse a previous adverse effect leading to environmental improvement. | The proposed alternative has a positive effect. The affected public supports the proposed alternative. |
| None | Resources exist, but there is no potential impact by the proposed alternative. | The proposed alternative has been evaluated for sociocultural effects. Resources exist, but the proposed alternative has no potential for effect and there is no concern about the alternative. |
| Minimal | The proposed alternative has little potential for negative effects on the resources. | The proposed alternative has little potential for negative effects. Initial outreach reveals little or no concern about the alternative. |
| Moderate | Resources are potentially affected by the proposed alternative, but avoidance, minimization, or mitigation options are available and can be addressed during the PD&E phase. | Resources are potentially affected by the proposed alternative, but avoidance, minimization, or mitigation options are available. |
| Substantial | The proposed alternative potentially affects unique or sensitive resources. Avoidance, minimization, or mitigation options may be difficult to identify. | Potential effects on the resources are anticipated, and/or are likely to be highly controversial. |
| Potential Dispute | Potential effects are anticipated to the degree that the proposed alternative may need to be modified or eliminated. Dispute resolution may be required. | |

Note: The DOE reflects the potential magnitude of both direct and indirect project impacts.

The responsibility for performing SCE evaluations and assigning a DOE to the six SCE issues (Social, Economic, Land Use Changes, Mobility, Aesthetic Effects, and Relocation Potential) rests with the MPOs/TPOs and FDOT. Public involvement activities assist in identifying concerns and desired project features. The FDOT and MPO/TPO CLCs should take a collaborative team approach during these evaluations. Much of the data preparation and initial analysis involved with SCE evaluations can be conducted prior to a Planning Screen review and made available to the ETAT as part of the PED. The [PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 9, Sociocultural Effects Evaluation](#), the [FDOT Public Involvement](#)

[Handbook](#), and the [FDOT Sociocultural Effects Evaluation web page](#) provide guidance on identifying SCE issues and techniques for gathering public input.

For further guidance on how to evaluate cultural and historical resources, refer to [PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 12, Archaeological and Historical Resources](#) and the FDOT [Cultural Resources Management Handbook](#). For guidance on potential **Section 4(f)** issues, refer to [PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 13, Section 4\(f\) Evaluations](#).

3.5.5 ETAT Coordination

During the Planning Screen review, the ETDM Coordinator should monitor preliminary ETAT responses and conduct personal communication to clarify issues or respond to questions. Specifically, they should review relevant ETAT commentary to identify actions necessary to advance the project. Actionable ETAT commentary should be transmitted to the appropriate staff as the project advances. Following the screening event, the ETDM Coordinator, CLCs, PD&E Project Managers, and other MPO/TPO or District staff assesses ETAT commentary in order to assign SDOEs and prepare the **Planning Screen Summary Report**. The ETDM Coordinator works with the ETAT to gain a better understanding of identified concerns, clarify any instances where DOEs for an issue may differ between ETAT members, and address commentary that raised additional questions or the need for additional information. When differences in DOE assignments occur between agencies for an issue, more weight should be given to the ETAT member with jurisdictional authority over the resource of concern.

3.5.6 Publish Planning Screen Summary Report

The **Planning Screen Summary Report** summarizes key recommendations and results from the review. If the project is an ACE process project, there is both a **Preliminary** and **Final Planning Screen Summary Report** (refer to **Section 3.6** of this **Manual**).

The ETDM Coordinator develops and publishes the **Planning Screen Summary Report** within 60 days from the end of the 45-day review period. In MPO areas, the District and MPO ETDM Coordinators work jointly, as appropriate, to review comments, coordinate with the ETAT, and assign SDOEs to all issues and alternatives based on ETAT DOEs and comments received from the ETAT or other stakeholders. The ETDM Coordinator should consult with appropriate project team or SWAT team members to assure complete and accurate response as needed.

The SDOE represents the position of FDOT (or the MPO/TPO for projects occurring within MPO/TPO areas) and is based on known information about the project area, including ETAT member and public comments and other technical resources. There is no requirement to select the highest DOE assigned by an ETAT member. However, when assigning a SDOE lower than an ETAT member's assigned DOE, the ETDM Coordinator or PD&E Project Manager must include a rationale for the decision, which could be based on input from an agency with jurisdiction over the resource. Coordination with an agency is expected when

selecting a lower SDOE than an ETAT's assigned DOE and should be documented in the EST during the development of the SDOE. The ETDM Coordinator or PD&E Project Manager should coordinate with the FDOT team to discuss the issue and reach consensus on the proposed SDOE before publishing the summary report.

If an ETAT member indicates a Potential Dispute DOE, the ETDM Coordinator or PD&E Project Manager begins coordination with the agency to seek a mutually agreeable avoidance and minimization option. If they cannot identify a mutually agreeable option, the ETDM Coordinator may initiate the Potential Issue Resolution process. An unresolved dispute during the Planning Screen does not prohibit a project from advancing to the Programming Screen but signifies that the project has potential conflicts or issues that may require continued issue resolution activities. See **Chapter 2, Section 2.7**, of this **Manual** for more information about the Potential Issue Resolution process.

In the event that no reviews are received on a specific ETDM issue and that issue is assigned to an ETAT member through an executed AOA, the ETDM Coordinator or PD&E Project Manager should contact the respective ETAT member(s) and ask for the member's comments. If the member does not have comments or concerns regarding the issue, the member should indicate this in the EST. The outcome of those efforts and FDOT's knowledge regarding the issue should be the basis for determining the SDOE. If agency coordination attempts fail, the ETDM Coordinator seeks assistance from FDOT staff to help with issue assessment and to provide the basis for the SDOE determination; documentation of a non-responsive member should be provided in the EST to support the project record.

During the development of the **Planning Screen Summary Report**, it may be determined, when multiple alternatives are screened, that a particular alternative should be eliminated from further consideration. For instance, an alternative that does not adequately meet the purpose and need of the project or is found to be unreasonable can be eliminated with justification, documentation, and concurrence by the Lead Agency.

When the ETDM Coordinator publishes a **Planning Screen Summary Report**, ETAT members, relevant MPO/TPO and local government staff, and interested public (<https://etdmpub.fl-a-etat.org>) are notified by email that the report is available. ETAT members review the Planning Screen Summary Report and provide comments, if applicable, within 30 calendar days of notification.

3.6 ALTERNATIVE CORRIDOR EVALUATION (ACE) PROCESS

FDOT uses the ACE process to provide a consistent, coordinated, and documented method for corridor identification and evaluation on qualifying projects. Qualifying projects include new alignments, major realignments, major bypasses, and others based on consultation with the Lead Agency. For example, a project with the potential to be an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) generally requires a corridor evaluation to identify reasonable alternatives for **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)** analysis from a possible range of alternatives. Reasonable corridor alternatives can be identified that largely avoid sensitive environmental areas and still satisfy the identified transportation need. Many transportation

projects have existing corridor alternatives from completed action or master plans that should be incorporated into the Planning Screen review.

With approval from the Lead Agency, FDOT can use stakeholder comments to refine or eliminate alternatives (FHWA, April 2011). **Figure 3-4** illustrates the ACE process when initiated during the Planning Screen.

The ACE process and ETDM screenings may produce the following planning products identified in **Federal Highway Administration Guidance on Using Corridor and Subarea Planning to Inform NEPA**:

1. Purpose and need or goals and objective statements;
2. General travel corridor and/or general mode(s) definition (e.g., highway, transit, or highway/transit combination);
3. Preliminary screening of alternatives and elimination of unreasonable alternatives;
4. Basic description of the environmental setting; and/or
5. Preliminary identification of environmental impacts and environmental mitigation

23 U.S.C. § 168 provides planning decisions that may be adopted for use in the **NEPA** process. The ACE process provides the framework for advancing planning products into the **NEPA**/PD&E process. The following is the list of planning products that may be advanced to **NEPA** pursuant to **23 U.S.C. § 168(2)**:

- (A) Whether tolling, private financial assistance, or other special financial measures are necessary to implement the project;
- (B) A decision with respect to modal choice, including a decision to implement corridor or subarea study recommendations to advance different modal solutions as separate projects with independent utility;
- (C) A basic description of the environmental setting; and
- (D) A decision with respect to methodologies for analysis.

In accordance with **23 U.S.C. § 168(d)**, the following conditions must be met for adoption and use of these planning products:

- (1) The planning product was developed through a planning process conducted pursuant to applicable federal law.
- (2) The planning product was developed by engaging in active consultation with appropriate federal and state resource agencies and Indian tribes.

- (3) The planning process included broad multidisciplinary consideration of systems-level or corridor-wide transportation needs and potential effects, including effects on the human and natural environment.
- (4) During the planning process, notice was provided through publication or other means to federal, state, local and tribal governments that might have an interest in the proposed project, and to members of the general public, of the planning products that the planning process might produce and that might be relied on during any subsequent environmental review process. These entities should have been provided an opportunity to participate in the planning process leading to the planning product.
- (5) After initiation of the environmental review process, but prior to determining whether to rely on and use the planning product, the Lead Federal Agency has made documentation relating to the planning product available to federal, state, local, and tribal governments that may have an interest in the proposed action, and to members of the general public, and has considered any resulting comments.
- (6) There is no significant new information or new circumstance that has a reasonable likelihood of affecting the continued validity or appropriateness of the planning product.
- (7) The planning product has a rational basis and is based on reliable and reasonably current data and reasonable and scientifically acceptable methodologies.
- (8) The planning product is documented in sufficient detail to support the decision or the results of the analysis and to meet requirements for use of the information in the environmental review process.
- (9) The planning product is appropriate for adoption and use in the environmental review process for the project.
- (10) The planning product was approved not later than five years prior to the date on which the information is adopted pursuant to **23 U.S.C. § 168**.

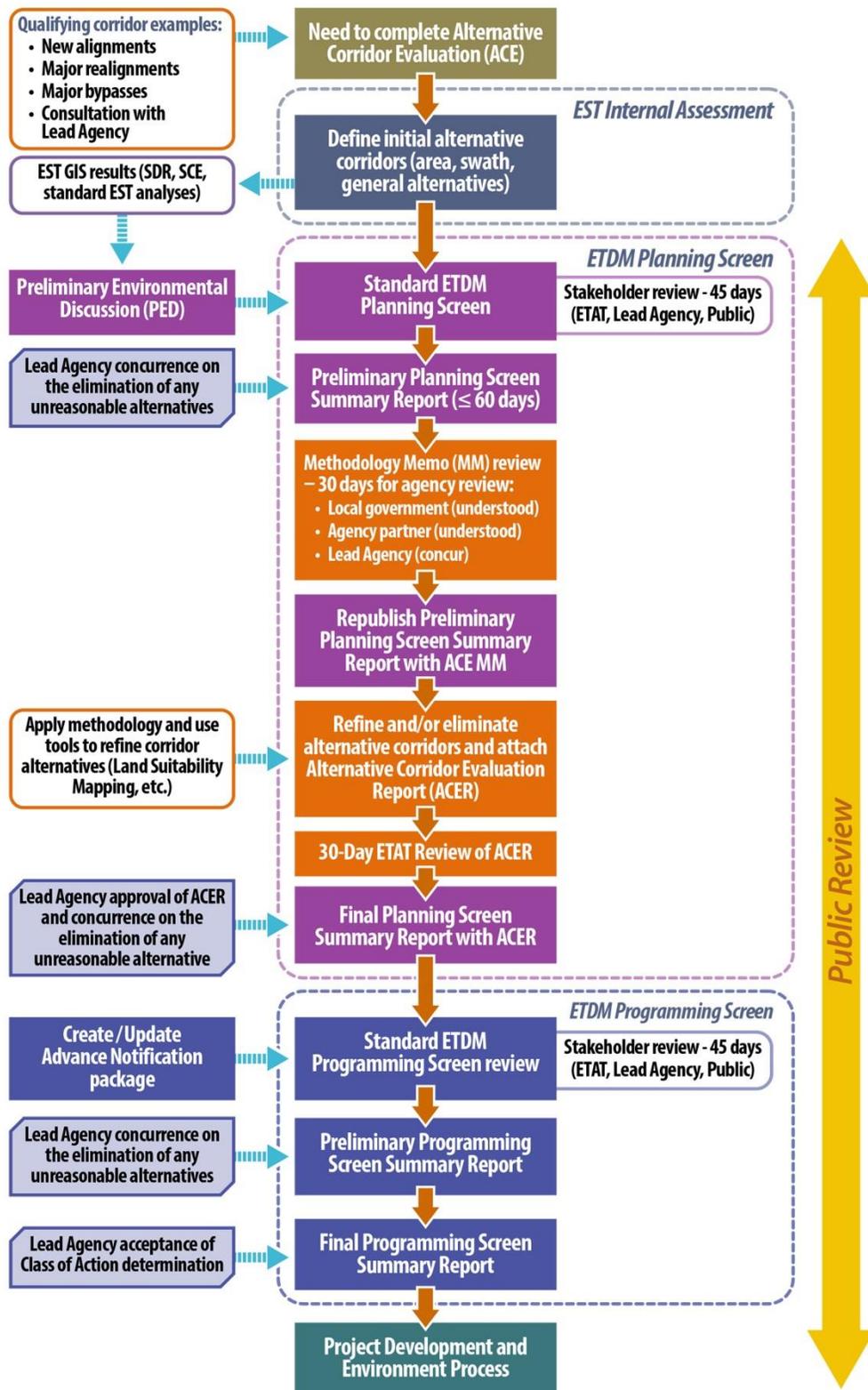


Figure 3-4: ACE Process when Initiated during the Planning Screen

3.6.1 Identify the Need to Complete the ACE Process

As illustrated in **Figure 3-4**, the first step of the ACE process is to determine whether the project involves a corridor improvement on an applicable project such as a new alignment, major realignment, or major bypass. Generally, MPO/TPO LRTPs, Rural County Master Plans, and the FDOT SIS Plan identify corridor improvement needs. Other local agencies and the public influence these assessments. Based on project characteristics, including the level of potential public controversy, the planning organization determines, in consultation with the potential Lead Agency, whether a corridor evaluation would support decisions about advancing a project to a Cost Feasible Plan or adopted Priority List. This determination will either facilitate the ACE process when the project is entered into the EST or the activities of non-ACE process Planning Screen reviews.

3.6.2 Define Initial Alternative Corridors

Appropriate FDOT managers, planners, engineers and other SWAT team members coordinate internally to identify a reasonable range of candidate alternative corridors. At this point in the process, there may only be a single study area based upon the ability to meet purpose and need or more specific corridor alternatives from earlier Planning phase studies. Both types of corridor alternatives (i.e., a study area or specific corridor alternatives) can help identify sensitive resources and other fatal flaws that should be avoided.

The project team enters the corridor alternatives into the EST, runs the standard GIS Analysis, and then develops the PED. See the [Environmental Screening Tool Handbook](#) for instructions regarding data entry in the EST for study areas, as well as standard corridor alternatives. Refer to **Section 3.4** of this *Manual* for information about preparing project data and [Part 1, Chapter 3 Preliminary Environmental Discussion and Advance Notification of the PD&E Manual](#) for information about developing the PED.

3.6.3 Conduct Standard EST Planning Screen Review

Next, the Planning Screen review proceeds as described above in **Section 3.5** of this *Manual*. For ACE process reviews, the ETDM Coordinator assigns SDOEs following ETAT review and then publishes a **Preliminary Planning Screen Summary Report** (see **Section 3.5.6** of this *Manual*).

3.6.4 Methodology Memorandum Review

Following the Planning Screen review, the project team develops and documents the analysis methodology they will use to either replace the reviewed study area with more refined corridor alternatives or eliminate the already refined corridor alternatives in order to avoid and minimize potential impacts. The **Methodology Memorandum (MM)** provides guidance on how to integrate local land use plans, public involvement and ETAT member commentary, and Planning phase analyses. It also highlights specific data, tools [e.g., Land Suitability Mapping (LSM) and Corridor Analysis Tool (CAT)], and timelines to govern corridor refinements. The following outline should be used when creating the MM:

1. Background

- a. Contact personnel
- b. Basic project information
 - i. Include any previous planning studies or relevant information
 - ii. Include any known issues of concern
- c. Brief project description
- d. Brief Purpose and Need of the project

2. Describe the goals and objectives of the ACE

- a. Provide the status in project delivery
- b. Define the intent of the study
- c. Identify the decision points/milestones

3. Describe the methods that will be used to analyze the alternatives and make decisions

- a. Describe alternative corridors
- b. Describe screening criteria
- c. Briefly describe the data and analyses that will be used and how it will support the decision making process going forward
- d. Describe the rationale that will be used to eliminate alternatives
- e. Describe the data tools that will be used in the analysis [i.e., EST, Land Suitability Mapping (LSM), Quantum, etc.]

4. A brief description of stakeholder involvement

The ETAT members have 30 days to acknowledge their understanding of the **MM** and submit comments within the EST. Their commentary may necessitate updates to the **MM** before it is sent to the Lead Agency for review and concurrence. Depending on the nature of the ETAT comments, the Lead Agency may recommend that the ETAT review the revised **MM**. Once the Lead Agency concurs with the **MM**, the ETDM Coordinator begins the process of applying the methodology to refine or eliminate corridor alternatives. Following Lead Agency concurrence of the **MM**, the ETDM Coordinator also republishes the **Preliminary Planning Screen Summary Report**.

3.6.5 Refine or Eliminate Corridor Alternatives

The team documents the application of the *MM* in the ***Alternative Corridor Evaluation Report (ACER)***. The *ACER* should be a stand-alone document providing support material and justification for replacing a study area with more refined corridor alternatives or for eliminating already existing corridor alternatives (refer to the [PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 6, Alternatives](#)). When completed, the *ACER* is uploaded to the EST as a project attachment. The ETAT members have 30 days to acknowledge their understanding of the *ACER* and submit comments in the EST. After ETAT review, the *ACER* is submitted to the Lead Agency for acceptance along with the request for concurrence to eliminate unreasonable alternatives not satisfying the approved criteria in the *MM*.

3.6.6 Publish Final Planning Screen Summary Report

Corridor alternatives can only be eliminated with Lead Agency concurrence. Study areas replaced by more refined corridor alternatives do not require Lead Agency concurrence but still must be accompanied by an *ACER* detailing the outcomes from applying the evaluation methodologies agreed upon in the *MM*. The ETDM Coordinator publishes a ***Final Planning Screen Summary Report*** after:

- Uploading the *ACER* and replacing the study area with more refined corridor alternatives; or
- Uploading the *ACER* and receiving Lead Agency concurrence on any corridor alternatives recommended for elimination.

3.6.7 Advancing the Project to Programming Screen

The corridor alternatives resulting from the actions described in **Section 3.6.5** of this *Manual* move into the Programming Screen. The Programming Screen provides another opportunity to further refine alternatives prior to detailed analysis in the PD&E phase. At the end of the Programming Screen, the Lead Agency determines the Class of Action (COA) and issues a concurrence determination for any new corridor alternatives recommended for elimination. During the PD&E phase, the environmental document summarizes and references the *ACER* which is made available for public review.

For more details about the Programming Screen, see **Chapter 4** of this *Manual*. For procedures used during the PD&E phase, refer to the [PD&E Manual](#).

3.7 POTENTIAL ISSUE RESOLUTION PROCESS

ETAT commentary regarding potential project effects during the Planning Screen review offers the first opportunity to identify potential project issues that will need to be resolved. The ETDM Coordinator reviews the commentary, coordinates with the ETAT member who provided the comments, and when applicable, assigns a Potential Dispute Resolution SDOE to initiate the ETDM Issue Resolution process in the Planning Screen. A strong commitment

exists among the ETAT to resolve disputes at the local level, prior to elevating them to higher level management. Refer to **Chapter 2, Section 2.7**, of this **Manual** for guidance on the ETDM Issue Resolution process.

3.8 PLANNING SCREEN ACTIVITIES

The ETDM process involves participants from a wide range of professions. As detailed throughout this chapter, ETDM process participants are engaged in a variety of activities to accomplish the Planning Screen. The list below provides a quick reference, summarizing the activities during the Planning Screen. For details, refer to the preceding sections of this chapter and **Chapter 2, Section 2.5, ETDM Coordination** of this **Manual**.

3.8.1 Planning Screen Preparation

ETDM Project Information (FDOT or MPO/TPO)

- Facilitate timely information flow among FDOT, MPOs/TPOs, local governments (as applicable), and Districts.
- Identify and develop review schedule of qualifying transportation projects.
- Develop project description and purpose and need.
- Document planning consistency information.
- Map the location of each project.
- Identify previous studies and documents that can be included with project reviews.
- Prepare the PED
- Enter information into the EST or coordinate with the GeoPlan Center to upload batch files of project data.
- Perform quality assurance checks of project data and mappings (including project geometry and termini).
- For SIS projects, work with the SIS Central Office to ensure candidate projects are consistent with Florida transportation goals and objectives.

ETAT Member Resource Data (ETAT members and GeoPlan Center)

- Identify new or updated environmental resource information and coordinate with the GeoPlan Center to upload or secure these GIS files.

- Perform quality assurance check of information provided to the GeoPlan Center after it has been made available through the EST.

Community Information (FDOT or MPO/TPO)

- Identify activities to gather community information to support the SCE Evaluation.
- Gather or identify community characteristics data required for SCE Evaluation.
- Enter community characteristics data into the EST or coordinate with the GeoPlan Center to upload or secure GIS files.
- Perform quality assurance check of community characteristics data and mappings (including project geometry and termini).

3.8.2 Planning Screen Reviews

ETAT members perform the following tasks for their resources; the CLC performs the tasks for the six SCE issues:

- Conduct project reviews of potential direct and indirect effects using the EST.
- Recommend cumulative effects considerations, as appropriate.
- Recommend potential avoidance, minimization, and mitigation opportunities.
- Conduct purpose and need reviews.
- Electronically submit comments within the 45-day review period.
- Review and comment on MMs and ACERs within 30 days, when requested.

Lead agencies perform these additional tasks during the Planning Screen reviews:

- Review, comment, and approve the MM, within 30 calendar days when requested.
- Approve elimination of unreasonable alternatives not meeting the purpose and need or criteria established in the approved methodology MM and documented in the ACER.

3.8.3 ETAT Coordination

The ETDM Coordinator, Project Manager, or designee performs the following tasks during the Planning Screen:

- Initiate Planning Screen.

- Promote awareness of the proposed project, including the purpose and need and the project description, and how the public can provide input.
- Coordinate with ETAT members to ensure timely reviews of direct and indirect effects.
- Monitor relevant ETAT commentary to identify actions necessary to advance the project.
- Identify actionable commentary from the ETAT and transmit it to the appropriate staff as the project advances.
- Communicate responses about transportation issues to the community during the Planning Screen.
- For ACE process projects, coordinate reviews and Lead Agency concurrence for **MM** and **ACER**.
- Participate in discussions regarding potential project effects or clarification of comments, as needed.
- Conduct or participate in ETAT meetings and webinars.
- Participate in issue resolution activities, if needed.
- Initiate technical studies to support consultation process, if needed.
- Convey to the ETAT members information about how project plans or concepts have been adapted to address their concerns, or communicate the rationale for not incorporating their input.

3.8.4 Planning Screen Summary Report

The ETDM Coordinator, Project Manager, or designee, performs the following tasks related to developing and publishing the Planning Screen Summary Report:

- Review and respond to commentary received during the Planning Screen review.
- Assign an SDOE to each ETDM resource issue.
- Summarize public comments received during the Planning Screen review.
- Publish the **Planning Screen Summary Report** (including Preliminary and Final, if applicable).
- Provide **Planning Screen Summary Report** to MPOs/TPOs and local governments for planning purposes, if applicable.

3.9 REFERENCES

23 CFR Part 450. Planning Assistance and Standards.

40 CFR §§1500-1508. Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act.

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3.10 HISTORY

03/2006: Original publication

07/2013: Updated to reflect current requirements and practices

12/2015: Updated to reflect current requirements and practices

CHAPTER 4

PROGRAMMING SCREEN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | |
|---------|---|------|
| 4.1 | OVERVIEW | 4-1 |
| 4.2 | PROGRAMMING SCREEN PROCESS | 4-4 |
| 4.3 | PROGRAMMING SCREEN PROJECTS..... | 4-6 |
| 4.3.1 | Identify Qualifying Projects | 4-6 |
| 4.3.2 | Project Review Release Schedule..... | 4-7 |
| 4.3.3 | Non-Qualifying Projects | 4-7 |
| 4.4 | PREPARE PROJECT FOR SCREENING | 4-7 |
| 4.4.1 | Identify Timeframe for Delivering the Advance Notification..... | 4-7 |
| 4.4.2 | Enter or Update Project Information | 4-8 |
| 4.4.3 | Designate Agency Roles..... | 4-11 |
| 4.4.4 | Review Standardized EST GIS Analyses and Project Data..... | 4-12 |
| 4.4.5 | Develop the Preliminary Environmental Discussion..... | 4-13 |
| 4.4.6 | Prepare Advance Notification Package..... | 4-14 |
| 4.4.6.1 | Federal Consistency Review | 4-16 |
| 4.4.6.2 | Other Interested Parties..... | 4-16 |
| 4.5 | PROGRAMMING SCREEN AND ADVANCE NOTIFICATION REVIEWS | 4-16 |
| 4.5.1 | Distribution of Notifications | 4-17 |
| 4.5.2 | Review Time Frame..... | 4-18 |
| 4.5.3 | Programming Screen Review | 4-18 |

| | | |
|---------|--|------|
| 4.5.3.1 | ETAT Review Tasks | 4-20 |
| 4.5.3.2 | ETDM Resource Issues | 4-22 |
| 4.5.3.3 | Assigning a Degree of Effect | 4-23 |
| 4.5.4 | Advance Notification Review | 4-25 |
| 4.5.5 | ETAT Coordination | 4-25 |
| 4.5.6 | Publish Preliminary Programming Screen Summary Report | 4-26 |
| 4.6 | ALTERNATIVE CORRIDOR EVALUATION (ACE) PROCESS | 4-27 |
| 4.6.1 | Identify the Need to Complete the ACE Process during Programming Screen | 4-32 |
| 4.6.2 | Define Initial Corridor Alternatives | 4-32 |
| 4.6.3 | Conduct Standard EST Programming Screen | 4-33 |
| 4.6.4 | Methodology Memorandum (MM) Review | 4-33 |
| 4.6.5 | Refine or Eliminate Corridor Alternatives | 4-34 |
| 4.6.6 | Publish Preliminary Programming Screen Summary Report | 4-35 |
| 4.7 | ADVANCING THE PROJECT TO PD&E | 4-35 |
| 4.8 | BEGIN DEVELOPING PD&E SCOPE OF WORK | 4-36 |
| 4.9 | DETERMINE CLASS OF ACTION | 4-36 |
| 4.10 | PUBLISH FINAL PROGRAMMING SCREEN SUMMARY REPORT | 4-37 |
| 4.11 | ISSUE RESOLUTION PROCESS | 4-37 |
| 4.12 | PROGRAMMING SCREEN ACTIVITIES | 4-38 |
| 4.12.1 | Programming Screen Preparation | 4-38 |
| 4.12.2 | Programming Screen Reviews | 4-39 |
| 4.12.3 | ETAT Coordination | 4-40 |

| | |
|--|------|
| 4.12.4 Programming Screen Summary Report | 4-41 |
| 4.13 REFERENCES | 4-41 |
| 4.14 HISTORY | 4-43 |

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4-1: Potential Project Effects Degree of Effect Guidance –

| | |
|--------------------------|------|
| Programming Screen | 4-24 |
|--------------------------|------|

LIST OF FIGURES

| | |
|---|------|
| Figure 4-1: Programming Screen | 4-3 |
| Figure 4-2: Programming Screen Process Flow..... | 4-5 |
| Figure 4-3: ETDM Advance Notification Process | 4-15 |
| Figure 4-4: ETAT Review Tasks | 4-19 |
| Figure 4-5: ACE Process During the Programming Screen | 4-31 |

CHAPTER 4

PROGRAMMING SCREEN

4.1 OVERVIEW

This chapter details the process for completing the Programming Screen of the Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) process. The Programming Screen aids the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) in the development of the FDOT Five Year Work Program by identifying environmental considerations. Required by **Chapters 338 and 339, Florida Statutes (F.S.)**, the Five Year Work Program lists the schedule of specific projects and services planned by FDOT. It includes projects from the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)/Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP), and Priority Lists of non-MPO/TPO areas.

As described in **Chapter 2, Section 2.3.1** of this *Manual*, a Programming Screen is required for all qualifying projects that will be included, or are already included in the Five Year Work Program but have not started the Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study. This does not imply that the PD&E Study can only be placed in the fifth year. It may be possible to complete relevant technical studies prior to initiating the PD&E Study to aid in addressing issues identified through the project screening events and to focus the PD&E Study scope of services. Refer to [FDOT Work Program Instructions, Part III, Chapter 23, Planning](#), for details. The scope of a project and its priority ultimately dictates how and in what year the project is programmed.

Importantly, the Programming Screen supports the project development process by concurrently addressing the following requirements:

1. Providing for early involvement of federal, state, and local agencies, as well as federally recognized Native American Tribes and the public, under **23 United States Code (U.S.C.) § 139, as amended**.
2. Assisting with scope of services development for preparation of the PD&E phase environmental evaluation and documentation, and identifying studies that can be advanced prior to the PD&E phase.
3. Distributing the Advance Notification (AN) package when applicable. FDOT uses the AN process 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 **23 U.S.C. § 139**, the **President's Executive Order 12372 (Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs)**, and the **Governor's Executive Order 95-359 (Florida State Clearinghouse)**. The AN process may be initiated with the Programming Screen

review or later, prior to beginning the PD&E Study. In addition, the AN may also provide notice of FDOT's intent to apply for Federal-aid on a project, in which case the AN process includes the Federal Consistency Review as required by **15 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 930**. See Section 4.4.6.1 for more information about Federal Consistency Reviews.

During the Programming Screen, interaction with MPOs/TPOs, federal and state agencies, and participating Native American tribes occurs through the Environmental Technical Advisory Teams (ETATs). ETAT members use the Environmental Screening Tool (EST) to review project information, identify potential project effects, and submit comments to FDOT during the transportation planning process. This web-based Geographic Information System (GIS) database and mapping tool provides access to project information and data about natural, physical, cultural, and community resources in the project area. The ETAT members provide input about potential project effects on the natural, physical, cultural, and community resources specific to their area of expertise. These project effects include potential direct and indirect effects. The ETAT members may also provide cumulative effect considerations during the screening.

Figure 4-1 provides an overview of the Programming Screen process. In many cases, projects entering the Programming Screen have been previously reviewed during the Planning Screen, as described in **Chapter 3** of this **Manual**. The **Planning Screen Summary Report** documents the results of the earlier review and is available through the EST.

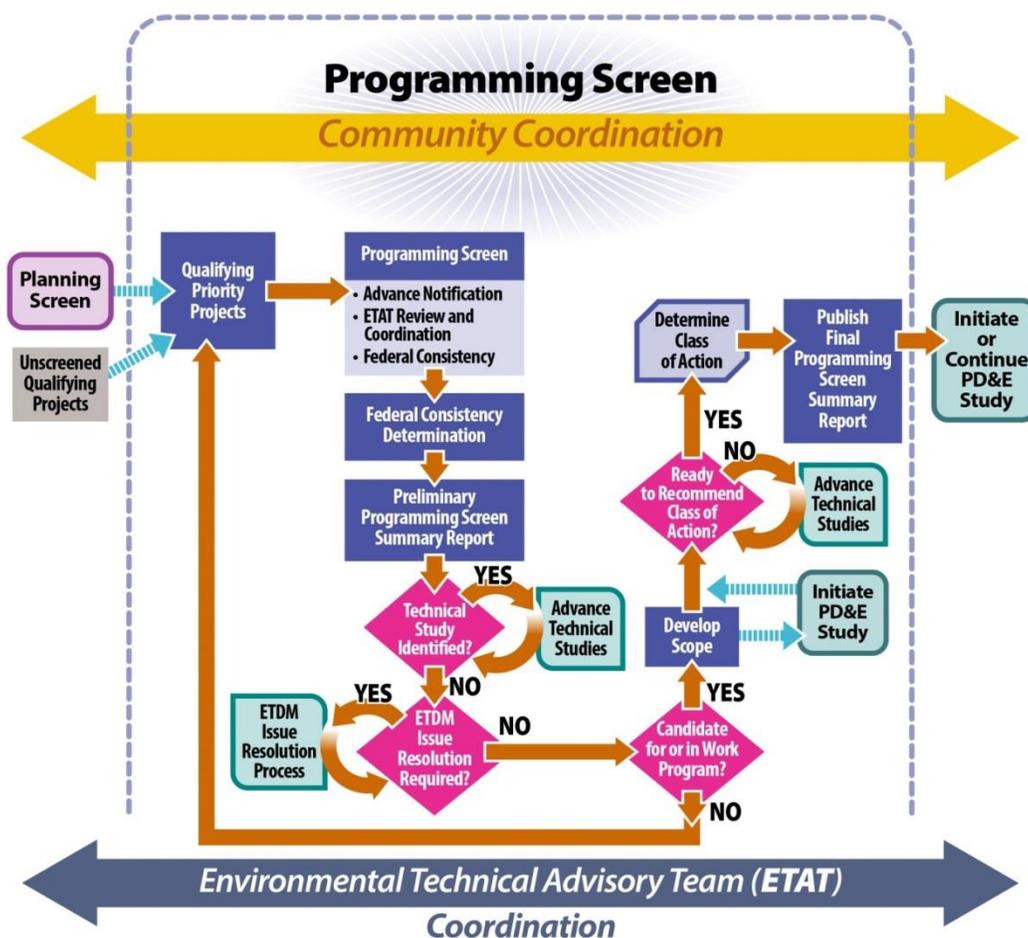


Figure 4-1: Programming Screen

At the beginning of the Programming Screen review, the respective FDOT District enters project information into the EST. Once internally coordinated and ready, the FDOT ETDM Coordinator or PD&E Project Manager (if assigned) uses the EST to notify ETAT members to proceed with their Programming Screen review and inform interested parties through the ETDM Public Access Site. When the Programming Screen review is scheduled at the same time as the AN review, the email notification will initiate both processes.

The ETDM Public Access website (<https://etdmpub.flas-etat.org/est/>) provides an opportunity for the public to view project information and maps. The public can submit project comments to the contact person listed on the website for the project or through other public involvement activities coordinated by FDOT.

The **Preliminary Programming Screen Summary Report** documents the results of the review. For federal projects, FDOT, in conjunction with the Lead Federal Agency (see **Section 2.5.10** of this **Manual**), reviews Programming Screen results to:

- Refine project alternatives (where applicable),
- Develop the PD&E Study scope of services, and
- Determine a Class of Action (COA).

The COA determination establishes the level of environmental documentation [e.g., Type 2 Categorical Exclusion (Type 2 CE) Environmental Assessment (EA), Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)] needed during the PD&E phase to satisfy the requirements of the ***National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)*** and all other applicable federal and state laws and regulations. For projects using only state funds, the District determines whether the proposed project is a State Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) or Non-Major State Action (NMSA). SEIRs are screened through the EST. If the project is a Non-Major State Action, it is not screened and a checklist for non-major transportation projects will be required. Local projects may be screened and processed as a Project Environmental Impact Report (PEIR). For more information about COA determinations, see [***PD&E Manual, Part 1, Chapter 2: Environmental Class of Action Determination.***](#)

Publication of a ***Final Programming Screen Summary Report*** follows, and documents the Lead Agency approval of the COA. The final report also supports development of a project's scope of work based on ETAT reviews, considerations, and recommendations received from the agencies.

4.2 PROGRAMMING SCREEN PROCESS

During the Programming Screen, FDOT provides opportunities for ETAT members and the public to comment on qualifying priority projects being considered for inclusion in the Five Year Work Program, or prior to being advanced to the PD&E phase. ETAT member comments assist with project scoping; identify opportunities for avoidance, minimization, and mitigation; and highlight potential "fatal flaws." Ideally, before projects are selected for the Five Year Work Program, FDOT and the respective MPOs/TPOs should set sufficient time horizons into project schedules, because all qualifying projects must complete a Programming Screen.

ETDM Programming Screen reviews may or may not include the simultaneous delivery of the AN package. This optional timing helps to prevent duplicate reviews, additional work associated with reprocessing the AN packages, while also providing up-to-date information throughout the entire project delivery process.

The following sections detail the steps of the Programming Screen, as shown in ***Figure 4-2.***

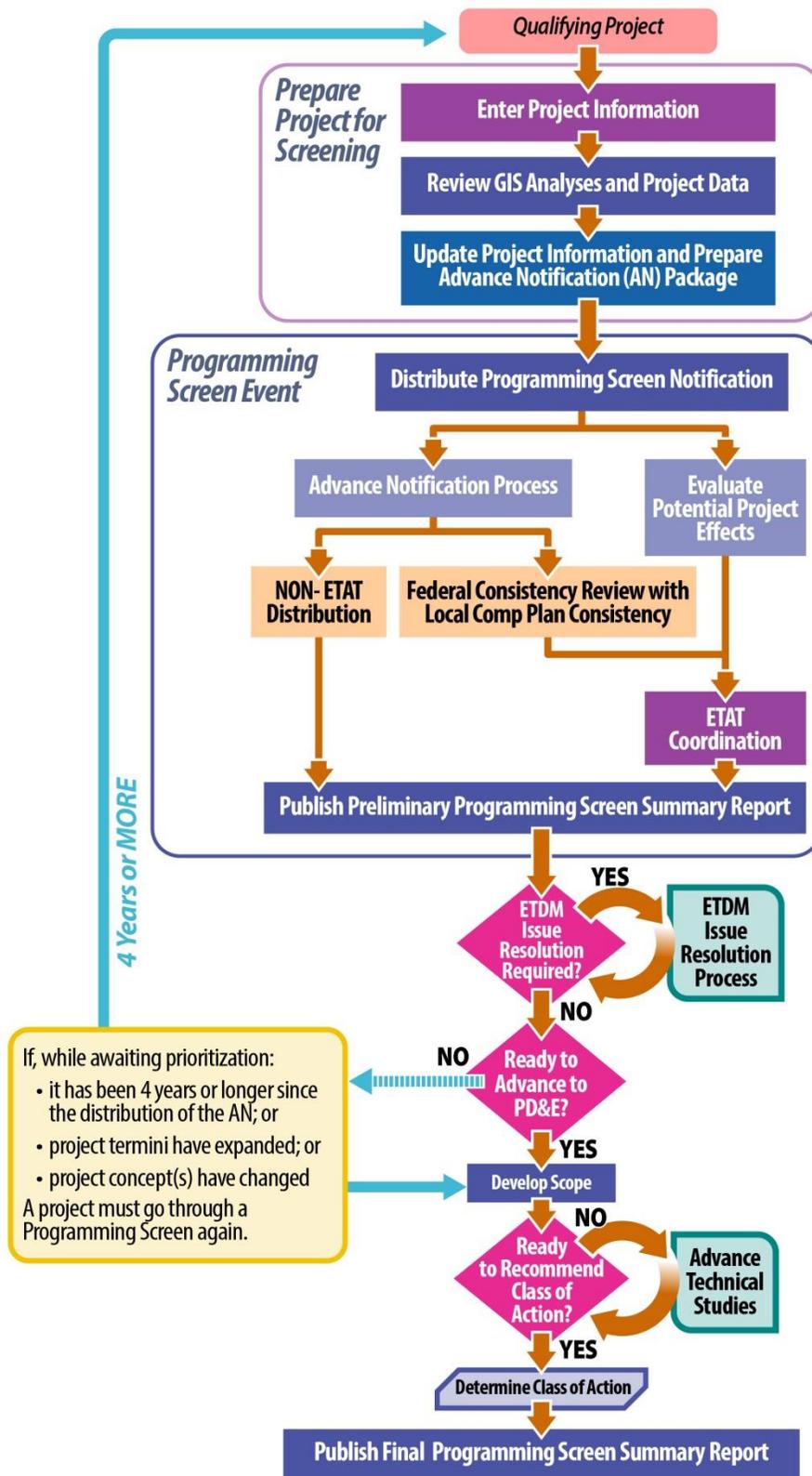


Figure 4-2: Programming Screen Process Flow

4.3 PROGRAMMING SCREEN PROJECTS

The Programming Screen is required prior to initiating the PD&E Study for qualifying state and federal transportation projects that are candidates for inclusion in the Five Year Work Program.

4.3.1 Identify Qualifying Projects

Qualifying projects come from a variety of plans, for example:

- FDOT STIP
- FDOT Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) Plan
- FDOT Statewide Deficient Bridge List
- MPO/TPO Long Range Transportation Plans (LRTPs)
- MPO/TPO TIPs and Project Priority Lists
- Rural County Project Priority Lists

Annually, MPOs/TPOs develop a list of priority projects (TIP Priority List) derived from their LRTPs and other sources for consideration of inclusion in the Five Year Work Program (refer to the FDOT Office of Policy Planning's [Metropolitan Planning Organization Program Management Handbook](#) for additional guidance on selecting MPO/TPO projects for inclusion in the Five Year Work Program). Concurrently, FDOT selects priority projects from other plans and programs, including the SIS Plan and Statewide Deficient Bridge List, and also works with local governments in non-MPO/TPO areas to identify priority projects for inclusion in the Work Program.

FDOT ETDM Coordinators work with planners, FDOT MPO/TPO and Rural County Liaisons, managers, environmental staff and the District SWAT team to identify transportation projects based on criteria such as project type, transportation system designation, potential funding source (federal, state, or local), and responsible agency. In this context, "transportation system designation" refers to whether a proposed project is part of the SIS or State Highway System (SHS), also called on-system. "Responsible agency" refers to the agency required to meet federal, state, and other applicable requirements. See **Chapter 2, Section 2.3.1**, and **Table 2.2** of this **Manual** for specific examples of qualifying projects and guidance on how to apply the selection criteria.

Unlike a Planning Screen, a FDOT ETDM Coordinator (or Project Manager) initiates and manages all Programming Screen reviews in the EST regardless of the project's location and system; therefore, in some cases the planning organization designation transitions from the purview of an MPO/TPO to that of FDOT. Refer to the [Environmental Screening Tool Handbook](#) for instructions on screening projects in the EST.

4.3.2 Project Review Release Schedule

Based on the list of qualifying projects, FDOT ETDM Coordinators and PD&E Project Managers work with appropriate staff to develop/update a 12-month release schedule as described in **Chapter 2 Section 2.3.2** of this *Manual*. Programming Screens should ideally occur one fiscal year prior to a project moving into the Five Year Work Program. If a project is placed in the Five Year Work Program before it completes a Programming Screen review, the project is still required to undergo Programming Screen prior to the PD&E Study being initiated. The schedule should be made available to the ETAT on the EST ETDM Calendar and updated as needed. FDOT Districts are also encouraged to hold periodic ETAT meetings (or webinars) to discuss projects included in their release schedule.

It is important to ensure that the ETAT has enough time to review and provide comments. Therefore, when scheduling a Programming Screen review, 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 **Programming Screen Summary Report**.

4.3.3 Non-Qualifying Projects

FDOT and MPOs/TPOs can also use the EST to assist in identifying issues and prioritizing non-qualifying transportation projects. These projects are not intended to be released to the ETAT for a formal review. Instead, they are entered into the EST using the Area of Interest Tool with only enough information to generate the standardized EST GIS analyses (refer to the [Environmental Screening Tool Handbook](#) for details). Moreover, the EST may be used at the local option for any case highlighted in the ETDM Review Matrix shown in **Chapter 2, Table 2-2**, of this *Manual* where a formal screening is not applicable.

4.4 PREPARE PROJECT FOR SCREENING

In preparation for an ETAT review, FDOT enters transportation project information into the EST and runs the standardized GIS analyses while MPOs/TPOs and FDOT Community Liaison Coordinators (CLCs) gather and enter community data. For MPO/TPO projects, the FDOT project team works closely with the MPO/TPO to transition project sponsorship to FDOT. In addition, the ETAT representatives provide new and updated GIS data to the Florida Geographic Data Library (FGDL) for use within the EST, as available.

4.4.1 Identify Timeframe for Delivering the Advance Notification

The specific project and expected timeframe when the corresponding environmental study is slated to begin will be the determining factor as to whether the Programming Screen and AN will be reviewed together or separately.

When the environmental study is scheduled to occur within two years of the Programming Screen review, the Programming Screen notification includes the AN package.

When the environmental study is not expected to begin within the two years of the Programming Screen review, the AN package is distributed separately. In that scenario, the FDOT Project Team distributes the AN package separately right before the environmental study is scheduled to begin. This removes the need to process the same document multiple times (as there is a requirement to reprocess the AN if too much time has elapsed since it was originally distributed). It also provides an opportunity to communicate any new information that may have surfaced since the Programming Screen was completed.

For Federal-aid projects, the AN also begins the Federal Consistency Review process (see **Section 4.4.6.1**).

4.4.2 Enter or Update Project Information

FDOT ETDM Coordinators work with FDOT and MPO planners to enter or update project information in the EST and capture previous planning and public involvement activities as part of a general effort to link the Planning and PD&E phases. Information for projects not typically screened during the Planning Screen, such as bridge replacement projects or projects that result from amendments to adopted transportation plans is also entered.

To prepare a project for a Programming Screen review:

- Develop or refine the purpose and need for each qualifying project to be screened in accordance with the [PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 4, Project Description and Purpose and Need](#). Transportation planning data are used to assist in establishing the purpose and need. These data are drawn from LRTPs, MPO/TPO TIPs, corridor plans, subarea plans, analyses of travel and safety conditions, public sentiment, and other sources that help identify corridors and facilities where transportation improvements are needed. This information may be available from the MPO/TPO and other regional and local agencies. Staff preparing the purpose and need for the Planning Screen should coordinate with the MPO/TPO liaison or other appropriate planning staff to identify the proposed project purpose and need as they appear in the transportation plan. The initial purpose and need developed during the Planning phase may change as the project advances since new information or public input may be identified, supporting an updated purpose and need. Only describe the appropriate purpose and need categories that are applicable to the project.
- Develop a project description, which includes:
 - Project name;

- Name of the city(ies) and county(ies) where the project is located;
- Name of the planning organization responsible for the project;
- Limits of the proposed project, such as its logical termini and length;
- Description of the existing or general characterization of a new facility; and
- Description of planned improvements. Provide as much information as available, such as the facility type, number of lanes, type of median, major structures, and potential right-of-way requirements (for example, a description of a road widening could indicate if the project intends to use existing right-of-way).

If this replaces, supersedes, or includes a portion of a previously screened project, provide the ETDM number of the previous project(s).

Refer to [**PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 4, Project Description and Purpose and Need**](#) and [**Chapter 3**](#) of this **Manual** for additional guidance on project descriptions.

- Enter information showing the location of each project alternative using the EST Map Editor or by uploading a GIS file. For Alternative Corridor Evaluation (ACE) process projects, delineate or refine general corridor alternatives. Preliminary alternatives should offer potential solutions to the transportation problem identified in the purpose and need. The range of alternatives depends on the nature and scope of the project, as well as the context and intensity of potential impacts.
- Describe the project alternative(s). Refer to [**PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 6, Alternatives**](#), for further guidance. For each alternative, include information about the mode(s) served by the project, type of alternative (widening, new alignment, etc.), termini location, and length. Include the estimated cost of and the basis for the cost estimate, if available. When known, enter information about roadway functional classification, existing and predicted Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT), and presence within an Urban Service Area or on a SIS facility. In addition, highlight information from the Preliminary Environmental Discussion (PED), such as the potential for Section 4(f) involvement (for federal projects), number of relocations, relationship to any special, unique or significant features, community needs that will be impacted, and right-of-way involvement.
- Provide project plan consistency status information known to date and the steps toward achieving consistency, as appropriate. Consistency with the approved LRTP should be identified for projects in MPO/TPO areas. Also identify whether the project is included in the STIP and MPO/TPO TIP. For projects in non-MPO areas, identify consistency with the STIP. The requested information reflects the **Planning Requirements for Environmental**

Document Approvals form that must be submitted with federal draft and final environmental documents (refer to the form found in the [**PD&E Manual, Part 1, Chapter 4, Project Development Process and Engineering Considerations**](#)). 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. Additional guidance is available on the FDOT Office of Policy Planning web page at:

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

- Indicate whether the project is being developed under the Local Agency Program (LAP) (requires federal funds already allocated in the adopted Five Year Work Program).
- Identify whether or not federal funds have been allocated for the project in the Five Year Work Program. Add Financial Project Identification number(s), if known.
- Indicate whether the project is being developed through the ACE process.
- For federal projects, identify the Lead Federal Agency and any Cooperating or Participating agencies, as appropriate.
- Designate exempted agencies (if applicable). Exempted agencies are notified about the Programming Screen review but not expected to submit comments or act on the purpose and need. When making the decision to exempt an agency, consider the nature of a project. For instance, a landlocked project may not require a review from the United States Coast Guard (USCG). Additionally, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has requested exemption from reviewing Planning Screen projects and Programming Screening projects without a transit component. Other agencies that may be exempt from a review include United States Forest Service, National Park Service, Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).
- Contact the Work Program Office to establish an ETDM identifier if not previously done for a Planning Screen (refer to [**Work Program Instructions Part III, Chapter 23**](#)).
- Identify whether the AN package will be distributed with the Programming Screen review notification or separately.

4.4.3 Designate Agency Roles

During the Programming Screen, agencies may request, or be invited, to serve as Participating or Cooperating Agency on a project. For federal projects, three important roles must be designated prior to the COA determination:

1. **Lead Agency** – The agency having primary responsibility for the environmental document, determining the preferred alternative in the PD&E phase, and inviting Cooperating and Participating Agencies. FDOT is the Lead Agency for non-federal projects; otherwise, a federal agency will be the Lead Agency and under **Title 23 U.S.C.**, 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.
2. **Cooperating Agency** – Federal, state, or local agencies (other than the Lead Federal Agency) that have jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved in a proposed project or project alternative (**40 CFR § 1508.5**). When effects are on lands of tribal interest, a Native American Tribe may become a Cooperating Agency. Cooperating Agencies have a higher degree of authority, responsibility, and involvement in the environmental review process and participate in developing the environmental document. They may, upon request by the Lead Federal Agency, assume responsibility for developing information and preparing environmental analyses, including portions of the environmental document (**40 CFR § 1501.6**). They may also review pre-draft environmental documents. Note that the USCG should automatically be designated as a Cooperating Agency for all ETDM projects involving a bridge permit when the FHWA is designated as the Lead Federal Agency due to a programmatic approach agreed to by the FHWA and the USCG (Shapley, 2007).
3. **Participating Agency** – Other agencies with an interest in the project that are invited by the Lead Federal Agency (pursuant to **23 U.S.C. § 139, as amended**) to respond to requests for technical assistance, attend scoping and coordination meetings, attend joint field reviews, provide substantive and early input on issues of concern, scope agreements for issues and required technical studies, review Lead Federal Agency-approved draft/final environmental documents. Designation as a Participating Agency does not indicate project support and does not provide an agency with increased oversight or approval authority above its statutory limits. It is not necessary to invite agencies as Participating Agencies that have only a tangential, speculative, or remote interest in the project.

Please note that while ETDM Master Agreements designate ETAT members as Participating Agencies, this is not analogous to the federal designation made by the Lead Federal Agency pursuant to **23 U.S.C § 139, as amended** (refer to [PD&E Manual, Part 1, Chapter 3, Preliminary Environmental Discussion and Advance](#)

Notification for additional guidance on Cooperating and Participating Agency roles and responsibilities).

Prior to the Programming Screen review, the FDOT ETDM Coordinator or PD&E Project Manager identifies a potential Lead Agency. Alternatively, a federal agency may also request the Lead Federal Agency designation. The selection should be made based upon project type and funding source and in coordination with the federal agency. FDOT must designate a potential Lead Federal Agency prior to identifying potential Cooperating and Participating Agencies, as well as initiating an ACE process **Methodology Memorandum (MM)** review (when applicable). In cases where a project may fall under multiple agency jurisdictions (for example, a project has both transit and highway components), the FDOT ETDM Coordinator works with the applicable agencies to identify one as the Lead Federal Agency and one as a Cooperating Agency. The potential Lead Federal Agency becomes the official Lead Federal Agency once the COA determination is made.

When needed, FDOT can recommend Participating and Cooperating Agencies, and discuss such designations with the Lead Federal Agency. Invitations to Participating and Cooperating Agencies must be processed before submitting a proposed COA determination. The recommendations include requests received by FDOT from ETAT members to serve in one of these capacities during the review period. As appropriate, the Lead Federal Agency accepts or declines the recommendations; the Lead Federal Agency may also invite other ETAT members or non-ETAT agencies to serve in these roles. The Lead Federal Agency has 30 days to accept or decline the recommendations and send official invitations using the Manage Participating/Cooperating Invitations page in the EST. ETAT members have 30 days to respond to an invitation from the Lead Federal Agency.

4.4.4 Review Standardized EST GIS Analyses and Project Data

Standardized EST GIS analyses identify natural, physical, cultural, and community resources within a specified buffer distance of the proposed project alternatives to help identify potential project effects. These analyses are performed automatically in the EST prior to a project being released for review. The analyses quantify and summarize the amount of resources (for example, wetlands acreage and demographic statistics) found within proximity to a transportation project. The EST includes analyses that have been requested by the ETAT, FDOT, or MPO/TPO representatives to help in their review of potentially affected resources. The results of the buffer analyses are organized within the EST by resource issue (see **Section 2.6 of this Manual** for a description of each) and reported along with issue-specific maps displaying the project location and selected environmental resources.

Prior to initiating the Programming Screen review, the FDOT project team studies the results of the EST GIS analyses, along with site visits, local knowledge, and any other available information sources, to gain an understanding of the project area and to support the development of the PED (refer to **[PD&E Manual, Part 1, Chapter 3, Preliminary Environmental Discussion and Advance Notification](#)**, for more

information about PED). For projects on the SIS, the SIS Coordinators from the Systems Planning Office review the project for consistency with the SIS Plan. Once all data preparation steps are complete, the project status is updated in the EST to indicate that the project information is ready for final quality review. The PD&E Project Manager (if assigned), environmental specialists, and ETDM Coordinator perform quality reviews to verify the accuracy and completeness of all project information.

The mapped features should be consistent with the location described in the EST **Project Description** report. Confirm, for example, that:

1. The logical termini of linear alternatives recorded in the EST **Project Description** report match the beginning and ending locations on the map.
2. Project features follow an existing facility, such as a highway or rail line, if intended.
3. The project linework is digitized accurately in relation to other mapped features (e.g., if you intend for the project to go around a resource, verify the digitized linework shows that intent).

Specific data quality review procedures depend on project context and scope; refer to **Section 6.4** of this **Manual** for further guidance.

4.4.5 Develop the Preliminary Environmental Discussion

After reviewing the standardized EST GIS analyses and considering information supplied by local knowledge, planning studies, internal FDOT coordination, and other evaluations in the project area, FDOT prepares a Preliminary Environmental Discussion (PED). The PED conveys FDOT's knowledge of a project area and potential potentially affected resources prior to the Programming Screen review. This involves a multi-disciplinary approach based on local knowledge, FDOT analysis, and may include a field review of the project for potential involvement.

FDOT uses the PED to inform the ETAT members and other agencies, as appropriate, of FDOT's initial assessment of a project's potential effects on the environment and how FDOT intends to address or evaluate these effects as the project advances. The PED provides reviewers with context to aid them in providing actionable comments. FDOT bases the PED on local knowledge, planning studies, previous screening information, and any other evaluations relevant to the project area. The PED may be provided at both the project and alternative level. If applicable, the FDOT District can view their Summary Degrees of Effect (SDOEs) from previous screens as a starting point when developing the PED.

For additional instructions on completing a PED, refer to [**PD&E Manual, Part 1, Chapter 3, Preliminary Environmental Discussion and Advance Notification.**](#)

4.4.6 Prepare Advance Notification Package

The AN process may be initiated with the Programming Screen review or later, prior to initiating the PD&E Study. For Federal-aid projects, the AN also begins the Federal Consistency Review process. **Figure 4-3** provides an overview of the AN process. Refer to **Section 2.3.4** of this *Manual* and [PD&E Manual, Part 1, Chapter 3, Preliminary Environmental Discussion and Advance Notification](#), for more information about the AN process.

Prior to distributing the AN (either with the Programming Screen review or later), the FDOT ETDM Coordinator, Project Manager, or a member of the project team creates the AN package. The AN package consists of a cover letter, transmittal list, Application for Federal Assistance (if appropriate)¹, location maps, and a Fact Sheet. The AN Fact Sheet includes the project description, purpose and need, and PED (refer to [PD&E Manual, Part 1, Chapter 3, Preliminary Environmental Discussion and Advance Notification](#) for additional guidance). The AN package is created using the EST (with the exception of the cover letter). Information entered for the Fact Sheet that corresponds to other reports in the EST (e.g., project description) is reflected in those reports. Any other reports or supporting materials used to develop the AN package should be uploaded to the EST for reference.

A transmittal list is a record of the recipients of the AN, and must be provided in the AN package. Recipients of the AN include: ETAT members, Consistency Reviewers, elected officials, federally-recognized tribes, and other local, state, and federal agencies that need, or have requested, to be notified. The State Environmental Management Office (SEMO) maintains contact information on the EST for mandatory state and federal agencies and federally-recognized Native American Tribes receiving AN packages. The responsibility for adding local or project-specific contacts falls to the FDOT project team.

The AN package is available as a draft document for internal review. Once distributed and published through the EST, all users of the EST can view and download the AN package. The public may also view the AN package on the ETDM Public Access Site (<https://etdmpub.florida-etat.org/est/>). This makes it possible to distribute it upon request to non-ETAT members. Whenever possible, the AN package should be sent electronically after coordinating with the recipient. However, all federally-recognized Native American Tribes affiliated with Florida should be sent a hardcopy of the AN package. More information about distributing the AN package through the EST is included below in **Section 4.5.1**. Also refer to [PD&E Manual, Part 1, Chapter 3 Preliminary Environmental Determination and Advance Notification](#) for additional guidance on distributing the AN package.

¹ The SF-424 form is only required in the AN package if there are federal funds or the desire to maintain federal funding eligibility.

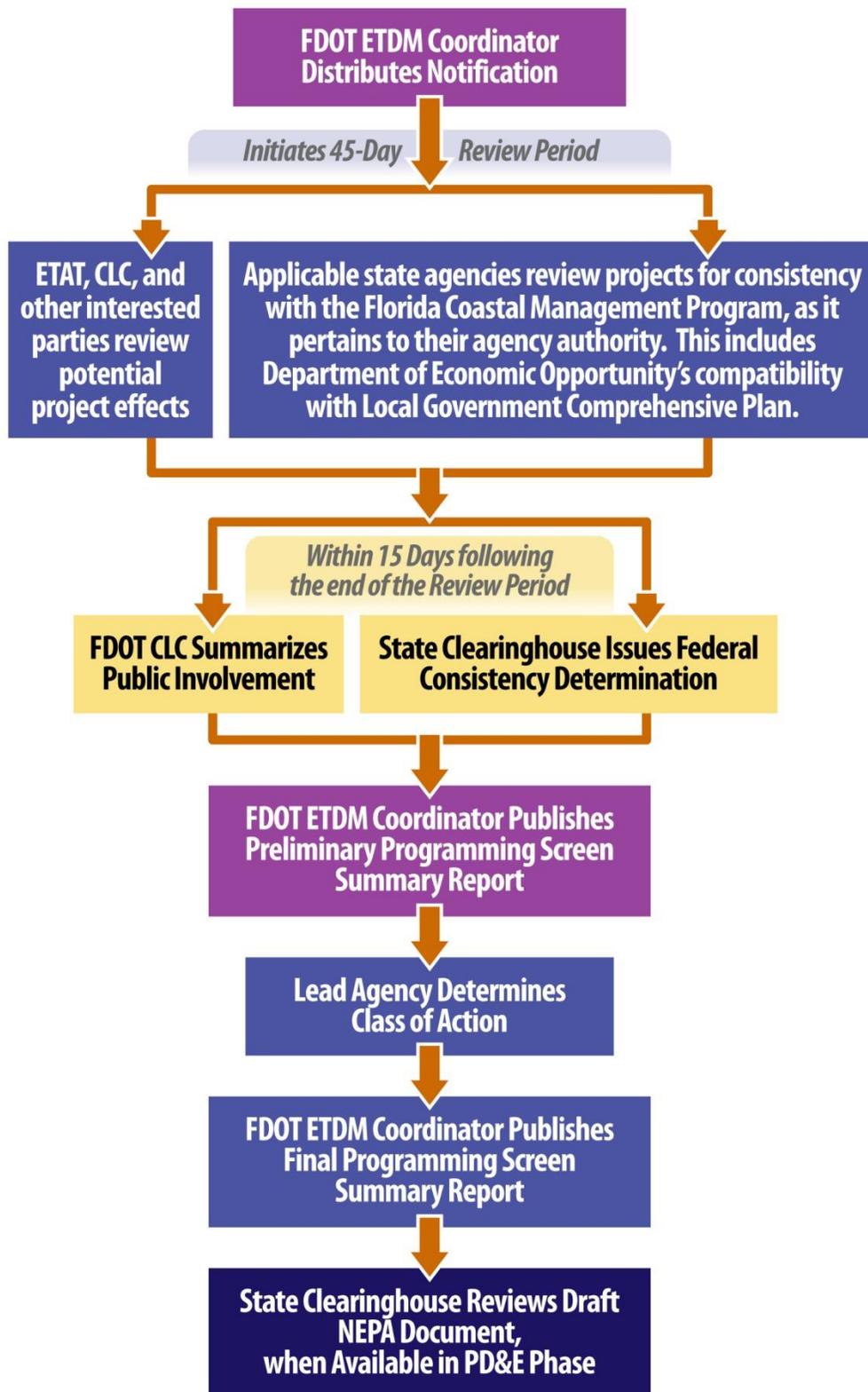


Figure 4-3: ETDM Advance Notification Process

4.4.6.1 Federal Consistency Review

Federal Consistency Review refers to the authority given to Florida under the ***Coastal Zone Management Act*** to review certain federal activities for consistency with the adopted Florida Coastal Management Program (FCMP). Federal consistency reviewers assess project consistency based on the laws under their jurisdiction and issue their findings and recommendations to the Florida State Clearinghouse (SCH) managed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), which issues the Federal Consistency Review determination on behalf of Florida. The FCMP addresses the requirements of 24 Florida Statutes administered by nine state agencies and the five water management districts.

Projects requiring federal funding or the desire to maintain federal funding eligibility, or involving a federal action need a Federal Consistency Review determination. A state-funded project involving a federal action, such as a connection to an Interstate, or a federal permit, also requires a Federal Consistency Review determination. When a federal permit is involved, consistency is verified and finalized during permitting.

Upon receipt of the Advance Notification, the Consistency Reviewers have 45 days to indicate a project's consistency with jurisdictional statutes and requirements as outlined under the FCMP. Inconsistency findings must cite the relevant statute's section under the agency's authority with which the project is inconsistent, and must identify actions that can be taken to resolve the conflict. Prior to issuing an inconsistency finding, the reviewing agency should immediately notify the SCH of identified problems.

At the end of the 45-day comment period, the SCH has another 15 days to review the Consistency Reviewers' comments in the EST. The SCH then submits a Federal Consistency Review determination with the FCMP. The SCH also issues a notice of inconsistency (when applicable).

Additional information about the Federal Consistency Review process may be found in [***PD&E Manual, Part 1, Chapter 3, Preliminary Environmental Discussion and Advance Notification***](#) and [***PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 25, Coastal Zone Consistency***](#).

4.4.6.2 Other Interested Parties

Local or project-specific recipients of the AN package have the same 45-day review period to comment on the AN package. They send their responses to the project contact indicated on the cover letter.

4.5 PROGRAMMING SCREEN AND ADVANCE NOTIFICATION REVIEWS

Before a Programming Screen review, the ETDM Coordinator should consider holding an online meeting or webinar to introduce the project before submitting it to the ETAT. The meeting allows the ETDM Coordinator or PD&E Project Manager to present project

details, highlight issues, and communicate specific expectations to help the ETAT provide quality comments. For assistance with setting up these meetings, contact the ETDM Help Desk by emailing help@fla-etat.org.

During the Programming Screen review and the AN commenting period, the public, ETAT members, and Federal Consistency Reviewers (when applicable) have an opportunity to provide comments to FDOT about potential project effects, recommended technical studies and permits, and the need for further ETAT member involvement. The FDOT ETDM Coordinator also begins to work with FDOT CLC and, as appropriate, MPO/TPO ETDM Coordinators and CLCs to evaluate sociocultural effects.

4.5.1 Distribution of Notifications

After performing a final quality review of project data, the FDOT ETDM Coordinator or PD&E Project Manager uses the EST to notify project stakeholders to proceed with their review. An email notification is automatically customized according to the type of review the recipient conducts and may be tailored further to include project-specific review instructions. When applicable, the email includes a link to the AN package. The email is sent to the following recipients:

- ETAT members
- FDOT CLC
- Interested parties who may set up notification preferences through the ETDM Public Access website
- Advance Notification recipients (when applicable):
- SCH
- Agencies on the SCH contact list when the Consistency Reviewer of the agency is not the same as the ETAT reviewer (if the project requires a Federal Consistency Review)
- Other AN transmittal list recipients not included in the above, such as regional planning council and local government officials

Certain agencies may be exempt from performing a project review based on the type of project being screened and their jurisdiction. For example, a completely landlocked project may not require a review from the USCG. In these instances, the agency will still receive the Programming Screen review start notification and AN package but will be designated as exempt in the Fact Sheet and ***Preliminary Programming Screen Summary Report***.

4.5.2 Review Time Frame

As established in the ETDM Agency Operating Agreements (AOAs), reviews occur for 45 calendar days following the distribution of the email notification from the EST. If additional review time is required, an ETAT member may request a 15-day extension. When needed, the ETAT member must submit a written request to the ETDM Coordinator within the initial 45-day comment period. Should a shorter extension period be necessary, it may be negotiated with the ETAT members; contact SEMO for more information. An extension applies to all reviewers and is announced via email.

ETAT members may submit and edit comments at any time during the review period using the EST. After the review period ends, the ETAT can no longer submit comments on the EST or edit submitted comments. If an ETAT member needs to revise comments, the member should contact the ETDM Coordinator.

For projects involving a Federal Consistency Review determination, the SCH has 15 days following the end of the 45-day review period to complete their consistency review. An inconsistency finding by any review agency requires a discussion with the SCH and possibly initiation of the Issue Resolution process.

4.5.3 Programming Screen Review

Upon receipt of the Programming Screen notice, ETAT members review the purpose and need and provide comments about potential project effects to the natural, physical, cultural, and community resources related to their regulatory authority. Project effects include direct, indirect, and (when appropriate) cumulative.

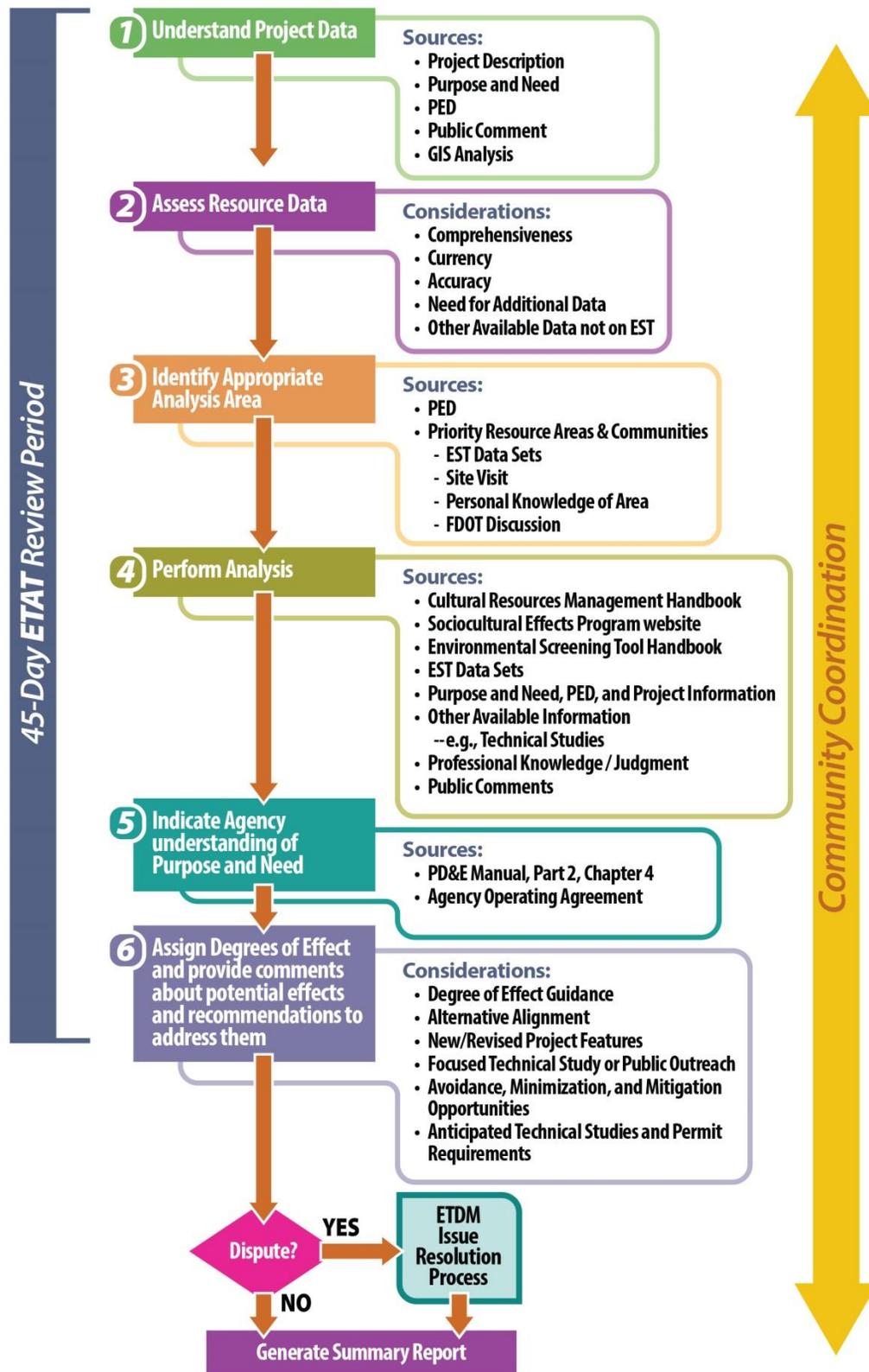


Figure 4-4: ETAT Review Tasks

4.5.3.1 ETAT Review Tasks

ETAT members perform the following tasks when evaluating a project (refer to **Figure 4-4** for a summary flow chart):

1. **Develop Understand of Project** – Develop an understanding of the proposed transportation project by reviewing the project description, purpose and need, PED, EST GIS analyses and locational information, and comments from previous activities.
2. **Assess Resource Data** – Verify the information available in the EST is the best available; refer to **Chapter 6, Section 6.4.5.2** of this **Manual**, for data review considerations. Identify information gaps or data needed to support further evaluation. ETAT members are expected to supplement the information in the EST with additional sources and personal knowledge, such as data gathered from site visits. If the ETAT members have relevant knowledge or information not already contained in the EST, provide and discuss such information.
3. **Identify Appropriate Analysis Area** – Typically, the analysis area for a project is influenced by the nature of the ETAT member's resources of interest, the project's context, and the potential for resource effects. The buffers used in the EST, range from 100 feet to one mile (5,280 feet) in width. These areas represent typical distances used by the ETAT to evaluate a variety of resources in different contexts, although the size of any individual study area depends on the nature of the project.

To help carry forward information produced during the Planning phase to the environmental documents prepared during the PD&E phase, the ETDM process uses definitions consistent with **NEPA** as stated in **40 CFR 1508.7 and 1508.8**:

Direct effects... are caused by the action and occur at the same time and place as the action.

Indirect effects... are caused by the action and are later in time or farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable.

Cumulative effect is the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (federal or non-federal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time.

The terms "effects" and "impacts" are synonymous in CEQ regulations (**40 CFR §1508.8**) and are used interchangeably in this

4. **Perform Analysis** – Review projects for existing conditions and potential direct and indirect effects to jurisdictional resources. Assess the need for potential agency coordination in subsequent project phases. Each ETAT member performs analyses consistent with the criteria and methodologies established by the member’s organization for each specific resource.
5. **Indicate Understanding of Purpose and Need** – Review the project’s purpose and need and acknowledge understanding or ask for clarification from the District ETDM Coordinator. During the Programming Screen review, the Lead Federal Agency (if applicable) indicates acceptance of the purpose and need. In the event the Lead Federal Agency does not accept the purpose and need, the Lead Federal Agency provides guidance with the objective of leading to its acceptance. Before determining a COA, the Lead Federal Agency must accept the purpose and need. Federal Consistency Reviewers enter their Federal Consistency Review determinations, as well.
6. **Provide Comments about Potential Effects and Recommendations to Avoid or Address Effects** – Comment on project concepts and alternatives based on analysis in Task 4. Be as specific as possible. Submit comments in the EST for each screened alternative for the issues identified in the AOA. Comments should not only list resources found within the standard EST buffer areas but reflect historical documentation, previous studies, site visits, and personal knowledge of the project area. For example:
 - a) If potential direct and indirect effects could exist, comment on the type, quality, and sensitivity of the resources involved in relation to the resources’ location to the proposed project and related activities. If the project does not impact resources of interest or a detailed evaluation is not necessary during the PD&E phase, indicate this as well.
 - b) If there is a concern about potential cumulative effects, provide considerations to help the Lead Agency decide on the level of evaluation needed in the environmental document (see **Section 2.5** of this **Manual** for an explanation about the Lead Agency role). ETAT members are not expected to evaluate cumulative effects during the Planning and Programming Screen reviews nor assign Degrees of Effect (DOEs). Cumulative effects can be both positive and negative. See the [**FDOT Cumulative Effects Evaluation Handbook**](#) for more information.
 - c) Provide information about agency plans, studies, or other data and regulatory information that may affect the project or are affected by the project. Fill in data gaps and validate data, as needed.
 - d) Provide specific recommendations to address resource concerns which may arise during permitting, such as potential avoidance, minimization, or mitigation opportunities; be specific.

- e) Specifically identify differences in potential jurisdictional resource impacts among alternatives.
- f) Identify specific activities FDOT or other ETAT members can complete between the Programming Screen and the PD&E phase to answer questions, address concerns, or fill in data gaps (e.g., seasonal studies, site inspections, and advancing technical studies). Identify required permits or technical studies along with sufficient detail to document any unique conditions.
- g) Indicate a DOE for each alternative and issue being reviewed. A DOE reflects the magnitude of both potential direct and indirect effects caused by a particular alternative to a resource. **Table 4-1** provides guidance for assigning a DOE. Include the rationale for selecting a DOE. More specific evaluation criteria should be used by each ETAT member for the resources under the member's jurisdiction.
- h) Indicate the need for future coordination (e.g., permits and technical studies). Request Participating or Cooperating Agency status per the directives in **Section 4.4.2** of this **Manual** for consideration by the Lead Federal Agency.
- i) Identify technical studies, permits, authorizations, or approvals which may be required, and any potential concerns, or available mitigation opportunities.

4.5.3.2 ETDM Resource Issues

ETAT members comment on the potential project effects to one or more of the following ETDM issues as defined by their respective AOA's and/or in accordance with their regulatory authority:

Social and Economic

- Aesthetic Effects
- Economic
- Farmlands
- Land Use Changes
- Mobility
- Relocation Potential
- Social

Cultural

- Historic and Archaeological Sites

- Recreation Areas
- Section 4(f) Potential

Natural

- Coastal and Marine
- Floodplains
- Water Quality and Quantity
- Wetlands and Surface Waters
- Wildlife and Habitat

Physical

- Air Quality
- Contamination
- Infrastructure
- Navigation
- Noise

Special Designations

Within the EST, ETAT members use the *Special Designations* issue to identify involvement with any of the following:

- Outstanding Florida Waters
- Aquatic Preserves
- Scenic Highways
- Wild and Scenic Rivers

Refer to **Chapter 2, Section 2.6**, of this **Manual** for additional explanation and guidance regarding each ETDM issue.

4.5.3.3 Assigning a Degree of Effect

ETAT representatives should use available information to evaluate and comment on the potential direct and indirect effects of a project. This includes using the data layers in

the EST, historical documentation, previous studies, site visits, communication with agency experts and FDOT District staff, as well as personal knowledge of the project area. The potential effects inform the DOE selection, which reflects the potential magnitude of project effects on a resource, not the level of coordination involved in addressing the effect. The level of coordination with the ETAT during future project phases reflects the issues that need to be addressed, regardless of the DOE. The FDOT ETDM Coordinator, PD&E Project Manager, the District SWAT team and Lead Agency use DOEs and comments to help identify potentially critical issues and determine how to address them. The ETAT DOE selections and supporting comments help the FDOT ETDM Coordinator and PD&E Project Manager assign a SDOE and assist the Lead Federal Agency in determining an appropriate COA at the conclusion of the Programming Screen.

Table 4-1 provides guidance on assigning a DOE. ETAT members are encouraged to develop specific guidance describing their organizations' DOE selection criteria and coordinate it with FDOT for mutual understanding and partnering. This promotes consistency when ETAT members from the same organization assign a DOE.

Table 4-1: Potential Project Effects Degree of Effect Guidance – Programming Screen

| Degree of Effect | Guidance | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| | ETAT Resources | Sociocultural Resources |
| Not Applicable/ No Involvement | The issue/resource in question is not a part of, in any way involved with, or affected by the proposed alternative. | |
| Enhanced | The proposed alternative has a positive effect on the resource or can reverse a previous adverse effect leading to environmental improvement. | The proposed alternative has a positive effect. The affected public supports the proposed alternative. |
| None | Resources exist, but there is no potential impact by the proposed alternative. | The proposed alternative has been evaluated for sociocultural effects. Resources exist, but the proposed alternative has no potential for effects and there is no concern about the alternative. |
| Minimal | The proposed alternative has little potential for negative effects on the resources. | The proposed alternative has little potential for negative effects. Initial outreach reveals little or no concern about the alternative. |
| Moderate | Resources are potentially affected by the proposed alternative, but avoidance, minimization, or mitigation options are available and can be addressed during the PD&E phase. | Resources are potentially affected by the proposed alternative, but avoidance, minimization, or mitigation options are available. |
| Substantial | The proposed alternative potentially affects unique or sensitive resources. Avoidance, minimization, or mitigation options may be difficult to identify. | Potential effects on the resources are anticipated and/or are likely to be highly controversial. |
| Dispute Resolution | Potential effects are anticipated to the degree that the proposed alternative may need to be modified or eliminated. Issue Resolution is required before the project proceeds to final design. | |

Note: The DOE reflects the potential magnitude of both direct and indirect project impacts.

The responsibility for performing Sociocultural Effects (SCE) evaluations and assigning a DOE to the six SCE issues (Social, Economic, Land Use Changes, Mobility, Aesthetic Effects, and Relocation Potential) rests with the MPOs/TPOs and FDOT. Public involvement activities assist in identifying concerns and desired project features. The FDOT and MPO/TPO CLCs should take a collaborative team approach during these evaluations. Much of the data preparation and initial analysis involved with SCE evaluations can be conducted prior to a Programming Screen review and made available to the ETAT as part of the PED. [PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 9, Sociocultural Effects Evaluation](#), the *FDOT Public Involvement Handbook*, and the [FDOT Sociocultural Effects Evaluation](#) web page provide guidance on identifying SCE issues and techniques for gathering public input.

For further guidance on how to evaluate cultural and historical resources, refer to [PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 12, Archaeological and Historical Resources](#) and the [FDOT Cultural Resources Management Handbook](#). For guidance on potential **Section 4(f)** issues, refer to [PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 13, Section 4\(f\) Evaluations](#).

4.5.4 Advance Notification Review

Recipients of the AN package may provide input to FDOT about the AN package. ETAT members and Consistency Reviewers submit comments through the secure EST site. All other recipients email or mail comments to the contact provided on the AN cover letter or listed on the ETDM Public Access Site (<https://etdmpub.flas-etat.org>).

The FDOT ETDM Coordinator and the PD&E Project Manager review all provided comments to determine if any unresolved or conflicting issues exist. Reviewers failing to respond by the end of the review period, but having jurisdiction by law or anticipated to have an interest in the proposed action may be contacted directly (verbal, electronic, or written form) for input.

4.5.5 ETAT Coordination

During the Programming Screen review, the ETDM Coordinator should monitor preliminary ETAT responses and conduct personal communication to clarify issues or respond to questions. Specifically, they should review relevant ETAT commentary to identify actions necessary to advance the project. Actionable ETAT commentary should be transmitted to the appropriate staff as the project advances. Following the screening event, the FDOT ETDM Coordinator, CLC, and PD&E Project Manager assess ETAT commentary to assign a SDOE for each issue and prepare the **Preliminary Programming Screen Summary Report**. The FDOT ETDM Coordinator works with the ETAT to gain a better understanding of identified concerns, clarify any instances where DOEs for an issue differed between ETAT members, and address commentary that raised additional questions or need for additional information. When differences in DOE assignment occur between agencies for an issue, greater consideration should be given to the ETAT member with jurisdictional authority over the resource of concern.

Additionally, after the Programming Screen review, the ETAT member may be asked to:

1. Participate in identifying solutions to project concerns
2. Provide technical assistance during the PD&E phase and subsequent project phases
3. Serve as a Participating or Cooperating Agency
4. Review and approve the COA determination (if Lead Agency)
5. Provide feedback to FDOT regarding the ***Preliminary and Final Programming Screen Summary Reports***.

4.5.6 Publish Preliminary Programming Screen Summary Report

The ***Preliminary Programming Screen Summary Report*** documents key recommendations and results from the review, including the assigned SDOE for each issue, the Federal Consistency Review determination, and comments received about the AN package (when available).

The FDOT ETDM Coordinator and PD&E Project Manager generate and publish the ***Preliminary Programming Screen Summary Report*** within 60 days from the end of the 45-day review period. The FDOT project team reviews comments, coordinates with the ETAT, and assigns a SDOE to all issues and alternatives based on project comments and ETAT DOE selections.

The SDOE represents the position of FDOT and is based on all known information about the project area, including ETAT member and public comments and other technical resources. There is no requirement to select the highest DOE assigned by an ETAT member. However, when assigning an SDOE lower than an ETAT member's assigned DOE the ETDM Coordinator or PD&E Project Manager should include a rationale for the decision. Coordination with an agency is expected when selecting a lower SDOE than an ETAT member's assigned DOE and should be documented in the EST during the development of the SDOE; email exchanges can be uploaded to the EST as a project attachment. The ETDM Coordinator or PD&E Project Manager should coordinate with the FDOT team to discuss the issue and reach consensus on the proposed SDOE before publishing the summary report.

If an ETAT member indicates a Dispute Resolution DOE, the FDOT ETDM Coordinator or PD&E Project Manager begins coordination with the ETAT member to seek a mutually agreeable avoidance and minimization option. If they cannot identify a mutually agreeable option, the ETDM Coordinator, in consultation with the Lead Agency, assigns Dispute Resolution as the SDOE and initiates the ETDM Issue Resolution process. See ***Chapter 2, Section 2.7***, of this ***Manual*** for more information about the ETDM Issue Resolution process.

In the event that no reviews are received on a specific ETDM issue assigned to an ETAT member through an executed AOA and there appears to be involvement with a resource under their jurisdiction, the FDOT ETDM Coordinator or PD&E Project Manager should contact the respective ETAT member(s) and ask for comments. If the member does not have comments or concerns regarding the issue, the member should indicate this in the EST. The outcome of those efforts and the FDOT's knowledge regarding the issue should be the basis for determining the SDOE. If coordination attempts fail, the FDOT ETDM Coordinator should seek assistance from FDOT staff (particularly the PD&E Project Manager) to help with issue assessment and to provide the basis for the SDOE determination; documentation of a non-responsive member should be provided in the EST to support the project record.

During the development of the ***Preliminary Programming Screen Summary Report***, it may be determined, when multiple alternatives are screened, that a particular alternative should be eliminated from further consideration. For instance, an alternative that does not adequately meet the purpose and need of the project or is found to be unreasonable can be eliminated with justification, documentation, and concurrence by the Lead Agency.

When the AN process is completed after the Programming Screen review and before the COA determination, the FDOT project team responds to AN comments in the EST and then re-publishes the ***Preliminary Programming Screen Summary Report***. The project phase cannot be changed in the EST from Programming Screen to Project Development until the summary report is re-published.

When the FDOT ETDM Coordinator publishes a ***Preliminary Programming Screen Summary Report***, ETAT members, Consistency Reviewers, relevant MPO/TPO and local government staff, and interested public (<https://etdmpub.flas-etat.org>) are notified that the report is available.

4.6 ALTERNATIVE CORRIDOR EVALUATION (ACE) PROCESS

FDOT uses the ACE process to provide a consistent, coordinated, and documented method for corridor identification and evaluation. Projects with the potential to require the preparation of an EIS generally need a corridor evaluation to identify reasonable alternatives for ***NEPA*** analysis from a possible range of alternatives. FDOT may perform ACE as part of the Planning Screen and/or the Programming Screen; and, in some cases, ACE may be part of the PD&E Study.

During the ACE process, the District develops a ***MM*** based on stakeholder comments and other information and then uses it to refine or eliminate alternative corridors in order to avoid potential environmental effects (***Section 4.6.4***). The Lead Federal Agency must approve the elimination of unreasonable alternatives (***FHWA Guidance on Using Corridor and Subarea Planning to Inform NEPA, April 5, 2011, and 23 U.S.C. § 168***).

Different corridors are often considered when a new route is needed between two locations and may include multimodal options. Corridors can be identified that largely avoid sensitive environmental areas and still satisfy the identified transportation need. Projects that typically require the ACE process include the following:

- New alignments – new roadways; new roadway connections or extensions; new transit and rail lines
- Major realignments
- Major bypasses – truck bypasses; city/town bypasses; rail lines
- Other types of projects based on consultation with FHWA, FTA, or FRA

Many transportation projects may already have existing corridor options from completed action or master plans, for example, projects located on the existing SIS. These analyses should be evaluated and considered prior to advancing into the ACE process. Decisions made in these action or master plans should be included in the project documentation, and during the PD&E Phase, should become part of the **NEPA** project record (e.g., project file, Environmental Document, etc.). All planning products incorporated into the **NEPA** process must follow the conditions of **23 U.S.C. § 168** as discussed below.

The ACE process and ETDM screenings may produce the following planning products identified in ***Federal Highway Administration Guidance on Using Corridor and Subarea Planning to Inform NEPA***:

1. Purpose and need or goals and objective statements
2. General travel corridor and/or general mode(s) definition (e.g., highway, transit, or highway/transit combination)
3. Preliminary screening of alternatives and elimination of unreasonable alternatives
4. Basic description of the environmental setting and/or
5. Preliminary identification of environmental impacts and environmental mitigation

23 U.S.C § 168 provides planning decisions that may be adopted for use in the **NEPA** process. The ACE process provides the framework for advancing planning products into the **NEPA**/PD&E process. The following is the list of planning products that may be advanced to **NEPA** pursuant to **23 U.S.C. § 168**:

- (A) Whether tolling, private financial assistance, or other special financial measures are necessary to implement the project

- (B) A decision with respect to modal choice, including a decision to implement corridor or subarea study recommendations to advance different modal solutions as separate projects with independent utility
- (C) A basic description of the environmental setting and
- (D) A decision with respect to methodologies for analysis

In accordance with **23 U.S.C. § 168**, the following conditions must be met for adoption and use of these planning products:

- (1) The planning product was developed through a planning process conducted pursuant to applicable federal law.
- (2) The planning product was developed by engaging in active consultation with appropriate federal and state resource agencies and Indian tribes.
- (3) The planning process included broad multidisciplinary consideration of systems-level or corridor-wide transportation needs and potential effects, including effects on the human and natural environment.
- (4) During the planning process, notice was provided through publication or other means to federal, state, local, and tribal governments that might have an interest in the proposed project, and to members of the general public, of the planning products that the planning process might produce and that might be relied on during any subsequent environmental review process. These entities should have been provided an opportunity to participate in the planning process leading to the planning product.
- (5) After initiation of the environmental review process, but prior to determining whether to rely on and use the planning product, the Lead Federal Agency has made planning document/product available to federal, state, local, and tribal governments that may have an interest in the proposed action, and to members of the general public, and has considered any resulting comments.
- (6) There is no significant new information or new circumstance that has a reasonable likelihood of affecting the continued validity or appropriateness of the planning product.
- (7) The planning product has a rational basis and is based on reliable and reasonably current data and reasonable and scientifically acceptable methodologies.
- (8) The planning product is documented in sufficient detail to support the decision or the results of the analysis and to meet requirements for use of the information in the environmental review process.

- (9) The planning product is appropriate for adoption and use in the environmental review process for the project.
- (10) The planning product was approved not later than five years prior to date on which the information is adopted pursuant to this section.

Figure 4-4 outlines the ACE process when conducted during the Programming Screen. **Sections 4.6.1** through **4.6.6** of this **Manual** further describe the ACE process when conducted during the Programming Screen. For details about ACE during the Planning Screen, see **Chapter 3** of this **Manual**. For information about the ACE process during the PD&E phase, refer to [PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 6, Alternatives.](#)

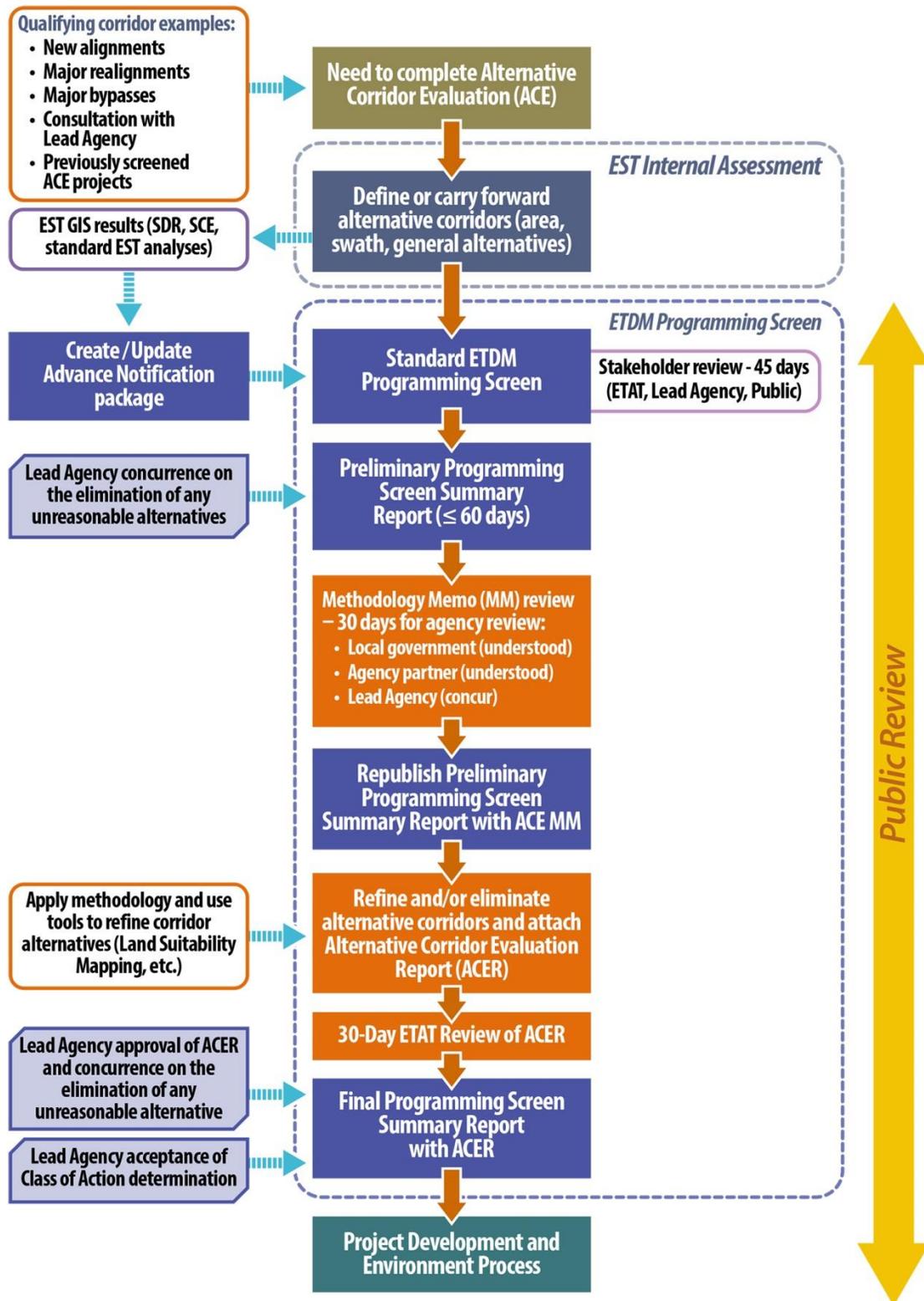


Figure 4-5: ACE Process During the Programming Screen

4.6.1 Identify the Need to Complete the ACE Process during Programming Screen

The ACE process may begin or continue during the Programming Screen. FDOT makes the determination of designating a project to go through the ACE process in coordination with the Lead Federal Agency. Projects with the potential to be EISs are typically recommended. The Districts can use ACE for non-federal projects at their discretion.

The District internally considers the involvement and potential impacts to environmental issues/resources and the presence of any fatal flaws to decide if the project should be advanced. Consideration should be given to GIS data, what is known of the area, early stakeholder involvement, etc. The District should ensure that the level of detail of the analysis is appropriate to the range of alternatives being considered. Once the decision has been made to advance the project, the goals of using the ACE process (e.g., performing an action plan level corridor analysis or determining reasonable alternatives for **NEPA** analysis) are defined.

4.6.2 Define Initial Corridor Alternatives

Regardless of when the District begins the ACE process, the next step is to define corridors. If a previous planning study identified corridors, these are used as a starting point for the ACE process. Others can be added by the District at their discretion. There is also the possibility that as stakeholders (such as the ETAT) become involved, additional corridors could be identified. The ability to meet the purpose and need must serve as a baseline to identify and delineate corridors. Depending on the phase of development of the project, the District identifies a study area, swaths, or narrower alignments as corridor(s). The ACE process varies depending on whether it is started in the Planning Screen, Programming Screen, or PD&E phase. It is important that the naming of each corridor or alternative remain consistent throughout ACE and be carried through the PD&E phase.

When continuing the ACE process from the Planning Screen, FDOT uploads the resulting corridor alternatives to the EST prior to the beginning of the Programming Screen. These reflect the changes presented in the **Alternative Corridor Evaluation Report (ACER)**, which can be found on the EST as an attachment to the **Project Description** report. If the project began as a study area analysis, by the time it reaches the Programming Screen, more refined corridor alternatives replace the study area.

When the ACE process begins in the Programming Screen, the project team defines corridor alternatives. While these corridor alternatives are still rather conceptual, they provide enough detail to allow analysis. Standard GIS analyses are run against this geometry (see **Section 4.4** of this **Manual, Prepare Project for Screening**, for more information) and the project team develops the AN package (see **Section 4.4.4, Prepare the Advance Notification Package** of this **Manual**).

4.6.3 Conduct Standard EST Programming Screen

Next, the Programming Screen review proceeds as described in **Section 4.5**. For ACE process reviews, the ETDM Coordinator assigns SDOEs following ETAT review and then publishes a ***Preliminary Programming Screen Summary Report*** (see **Section 4.5.5** of this **Manual**).

4.6.4 Methodology Memorandum (MM) Review

Using the Programming Screen results, the District develops or refines the **MM** detailing the goals of the evaluation, the alternatives analysis methodology, how coordination with stakeholders will occur, and the basis for decision-making. The **MM** integrates local land use plans, public involvement and ETAT member commentary, and Planning phase analyses, as well as highlights specific data, tools (e.g., Land Suitability Mapping and Corridor Analysis Tool), and timelines to govern corridor refinements. The **MM** includes:

1. Background

- a. Contact personnel
- b. Basic project information
 - i. Include any previous planning studies or relevant information
 - ii. Include any known issues of concern
- c. Brief project description
- d. Brief Purpose and Need of the project

2. Describe the goals and objectives of the ACE

- a. Provide the status in project delivery
- b. Define the intent of the study
- c. Identify the decision points/milestones

3. Describe the methods that will be used to analyze the alternatives and make decisions

- a. Describe alternative corridors
- b. Describe screening criteria
- c. Briefly describe the data that will be used and how it will support the decision making process going forward

- d. Describe the rationale that will be used to eliminate alternatives
- e. Describe the data tools that will be used in the analysis [i.e., EST, Land Suitability Mapping (LSM), Quantum, etc.]

4. A brief description of stakeholder involvement

In certain situations, the **MM** may need to be reviewed by project stakeholders more than once. This may take place when one or more of the following apply:

1. There is a change in project termini (expanded).
2. There is a change in purpose and need.
3. There is a change in project concept(s) (e.g., number of lanes, adding interchanges, etc.).
4. There is a change in supporting data that may affect the methodology and any resulting decisions made from it (e.g., population changes, economic changes, land use changes, etc.).
5. When stakeholder input results in significant revisions to the methodology.

When the ACE process is conducted as part of the Programming Screen, the District submits the **MM** to the ETAT for review through the EST. The ETAT members have 30 days to provide comments and indicate if the **MM** is understood. The District then revises the **MM**, as necessary, to address any comments received before sending the document for Lead Federal Agency review. Depending on the nature of the ETAT comments, the Lead Federal Agency may recommend that the ETAT review the revised **MM**. Subsequently, the Lead Federal Agency is expected to provide acceptance (within 30 days), as appropriate. This review process is consistent with the requirements of **23 U.S.C. § 168**.

After the Lead Federal Agency accepts the **MM**, the FDOT ETDM Coordinator republishes the **Preliminary Programming Screen Summary Report** with the approved **MM** to document concurrence.

4.6.5 Refine or Eliminate Corridor Alternatives

The District applies the approved **MM** to refine the alternatives and documents these activities in the **ACER**. This report summarizes the refinements made in consideration of ETAT and/or stakeholder assessments, project purpose and need, public involvement commentary, analytical methodology, and evaluation criteria. It also identifies the alternatives that should move forward for **NEPA** analysis, and provides supporting justifications for eliminating alternatives. When completed, the **ACER** is uploaded to the EST for review. The ETAT members have 30 days to acknowledge their understanding of the **ACER** and submit comments in the EST. After ETAT review, the **ACER** is submitted to the Lead Agency for approval with a request to eliminate

unreasonable alternatives not satisfying the approved criteria in the **MM**. The Lead Federal Agency approves the eliminated alternatives and identifies the alternatives to be advanced for **NEPA** analysis. Documentation regarding the elimination of alternatives and the **ACER** becomes a part of the project's Administrative Record (refer to **PD&E Manual, Part 1 Chapter 6, Alternatives**).

4.6.6 Publish Preliminary Programming Screen Summary Report

The Lead Federal Agency must concur with any eliminated corridor alternatives not advancing into the PD&E phase. For alternatives eliminated due to environmental impacts, the **ACER** must describe the nature of the impacts and show that they cannot be avoided. The ETDM Coordinator publishes a **Preliminary Programming Screen Summary Report** after uploading the **ACER** and receiving Lead Federal Agency concurrence on any corridor alternatives recommended for elimination.

During the PD&E phase, the environmental document summarizes and references the **ACER** (see [PD&E Manual, Part 2 Chapter 6, Alternatives](#)).

4.7 ADVANCING THE PROJECT TO PD&E

Based on the results of the **Preliminary Programming Screen Summary Report** and any ACE process activities, the FDOT ETDM Coordinator and PD&E Project Manager work with FDOT management (and MPO/TPO management if the project is in an MPO/TPO area) to determine whether to advance the project to the PD&E phase. Should FDOT decide to delay moving the project forward, a COA determination and subsequent publishing of the **Final Programming Screen Summary Report** is not required until the project advances. Delays typically occur as a result of project reprioritization, funding availability, or when uncertainty exists regarding the appropriate COA.

When advancing a project to PD&E, it must be included in a long range plan (e.g., LRTP in an MPO area) or priority list (if in a non-MPO area) and be in the TIP/STIP. The PD&E phase must be in the adopted Five Year Work Program in the year the PD&E Study is scheduled to begin. The project must use the ETDM identifier as described in the [Work Program Instructions Part III Chapter 23, Planning](#). Additionally, prior to requesting **NEPA** approval, at a minimum, the next phase of the entire project must be fully funded in the TIP or STIP; or if the project has multiple segments, at least one segment must be fully funded all the way through construction.

If a project does not move forward within four years of the distribution of the Programming Screen Review notification, the Programming Screen must be re-initiated when the project is ready to advance. Similarly, an expansion in project termini or changes in project concept prior to COA determination necessitate a new review unless the PD&E phase has been initiated. A project may advance if less than four years have elapsed since the project was reviewed and no changes have occurred regarding the project's concept or termini. See **Chapter 2, Section 2.3.7** of this **Manual** for more information about rescreening projects See [PD&E Manual, Chapter 3, Preliminary](#)

[Environmental Discussion and Advance Notification](#) for information about reprocessing the AN.

4.8 BEGIN DEVELOPING PD&E SCOPE OF WORK

At the end of the Programming Screen, the FDOT project team and District SWAT team members begin to develop the scope of work for the PD&E phase. The scope of work reflects the activities necessary to complete the PD&E Study and focuses on addressing the issues raised and technical studies identified by the ETAT during the review. It is important when writing the scope of services for an EA not to assume that the decision will be a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), but rather that the result could be either a FONSI or the need to prepare an EIS. The **Programming Screen Summary Report** lists project recommendations and anticipated permits and technical studies. **Chapter 5** of this **Manual** provides additional guidance for transitioning to the PD&E phase

4.9 DETERMINE CLASS OF ACTION

Transportation projects involving a federal action must comply with **NEPA** and require a COA determination. The process for identifying the appropriate COA generally occurs after the publication of the **Preliminary Programming Screen Summary Report**. There may be instances when it is prudent to delay the COA in order to perform additional studies or coordination prior to or during the PD&E Study to better inform the COA determination. The FDOT ETDM Coordinator and PD&E Project Manager and others as appropriate consult with the Lead Federal Agency to determine the COA. This is a critical decision to the advancement of a project and should be fully considered prior to COA proposal in the EST. The three COA determination categories as defined in **23 CFR 771** are Categorical Exclusions (CEs), EAs, and EISs. The environmental document for FDOT non-federal projects reviewed through the EST is a State Environmental Impact Report (SEIR). The environmental document for local projects screened through the EST is a PEIR. These five documents and procedures for determining the appropriate COA are described in detail in [PD&E Manual, Part 1, Chapter 2, Environmental Class of Action Determination](#) or [PD&E Manual, Part 1, Chapter 10, State, Local, or Privately Funded Project Delivery](#).

The FDOT ETDM Coordinator uses the COA determination form in the EST to propose a COA to the Lead Agency for approval. The Lead Federal Agency receives recommendations to approve the COA for federal projects. Proposals to complete SEIRs are approved by the District Environmental Administrator, or designee. Proposals to complete PEIRs are approved by the local agency. Once the Lead Agency approves the proposed COA, it becomes part of the project record and is published in the **Final Programming Screen Summary Report**.

The COA can be modified as needed. However, all modifications require concurrence from the Lead Agency.

4.10 PUBLISH FINAL PROGRAMMING SCREEN SUMMARY REPORT

FDOT publishes the *Final Programming Screen Summary Report* following the COA determination by the Lead Agency and the updating of the scope of work outline. For ACE process projects, the *Final Programming Screen Summary Report* is renamed to *Final Programming Screen Summary Report with Alternative Corridor Evaluation Report* and also contains Lead Federal Agency concurrence on the *MM* and agreed upon eliminated alternatives. The *Final Programming Screen Summary Report* contains any updates to information previously published in the *Preliminary Programming Screen Summary Report*. If the AN process is completed after the COA determination, the FDOT project team re-publishes the *Final Programming Screen Summary Report* to document the comments and responses.

Upon publication, an email to access the *Final Programming Screen Summary Report* is automatically submitted to original project notification email recipients. The email identifies changes made since the previous publication. The report is available for public review on the ETDM Public Access Site (<https://etdmpub.fl-a-etat.org/est/>). ETAT members review the report and provide comments, if applicable, within 30 days of notification.

4.11 ISSUE RESOLUTION PROCESS

ETAT commentary regarding potential project effects during the Programming Screen offers an opportunity to find solutions to complex issues among agencies by identifying mutually agreeable activities or conditions that will address a resource of concern while meeting transportation needs.

A strong commitment exists among the participants in the ETDM process to make every reasonable attempt resolve issues within the ETAT, prior to elevating them to higher level management. To facilitate meeting this commitment, potential 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 commencement or continuation of the ETDM issue resolution process.

The informal issue resolution process begins when the ETDM Coordinator in consultation with the Lead Agency assigns an "Issue Resolution Process Required" 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 "Issue Resolution Process Required" (see **Table 4-1**) and in conjunction with the disputing agency's regulatory authority. Initially, the FDOT ETDM Coordinator works with the appropriate ETAT representative(s) to informally resolve the disputed issue(s) at the agency staff level before elevating the discussion to the Formal Issue Resolution process. Refer to **Chapter 2, Section 2.7**, of this *Manual* for issue resolution procedures.

4.12 PROGRAMMING SCREEN ACTIVITIES

The ETDM process involves participants from a wide range of professions. As detailed throughout this chapter, ETDM process participants are engaged in a variety of activities to accomplish a Programming Screen. The list below provides a quick reference, summarizing the activities of these participants during a Programming Screen. For details, refer to the preceding sections of this chapter, and **Chapter 2, Section 2.5, ETDM Coordination** of this *Manual*.

4.12.1 Programming Screen Preparation

ETDM Project Information (FDOT)

- Facilitate timely information flow between FDOT and MPOs/TPOs and local governments (as applicable).
- Identify priority projects for inclusion in the Five Year Work Program.
- Identify and develop review schedule of qualifying transportation projects.
- Develop or update project descriptions and purpose and need for candidate projects.
- Document planning consistency information in coordination with FDOT District MPO/TPO or Rural County Liaison.
- Map the location of each project.
- Identify previous studies and documents that can be included with project reviews.
- Prepare PEDs and ANs.
- Enter information into the EST or coordinate with the GeoPlan Center to upload batch files of project data.
- Perform quality assurance check of project data and mappings (including project geometry and termini).
- For SIS projects, work with the SIS Central Office to ensure candidate projects are consistent with Florida transportation goals and objectives.

ETAT Member Resource Data (ETAT members and GeoPlan Center)

- Identify new or updated environmental resource information and coordinate with the GeoPlan Center to upload or secure these GIS files.

- Perform quality assurance check of information provided to the GeoPlan Center after it has been made available through the EST.

Sociocultural Data (FDOT or MPO/TPO)

- Identify activities to gather information to support the SCE Evaluation.
- Gather or identify sociocultural data required for SCE Evaluation.
- Enter sociocultural data into the EST or coordinate with the GeoPlan Center to upload or secure GIS files.
- Perform quality assurance checks of sociocultural data and mappings (including project geometry and termini).

4.12.2 Programming Screen Reviews

ETAT members perform the following tasks for their resources; the FDOT CLC performs the tasks for the six SCE issues:

- Conduct project reviews of potential direct and indirect effects using the EST.
- Recommend cumulative effects considerations as appropriate.
- Conduct purpose and need reviews.
- Recommend potential avoidance, minimization, and mitigation opportunities.
- Identify required technical studies and permits.
- Electronically submit comments within the 45-day review period.
- Review and comment on **MMs** and **ACERs** within 30 days, when requested.

Lead agencies perform these additional tasks during the Programming Screen reviews:

- Review provided project planning consistency information i.e., LRTP, State Transportation Improve Program (STIP), and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
- When applicable, review and comment on AN package and assist with scoping activities.
- Review, comment, and approve the **MM**, within 30 calendar days when requested.

- Approve elimination of unreasonable alternatives not meeting the purpose and need or evaluated through application of the approved methodology **MM** and documented in the **ACER**.
- Invite Participating and/or Cooperating Agencies, as appropriate.
- Review and approve the Class of Action (COA) for the environmental document development in the **NEPA** study.
- Review and adopt planning products for use during **NEPA**.

4.12.3 ETAT Coordination

The FDOT ETDM Coordinator, Project Manager, or designee performs the following tasks during the Programming Screen:

- Initiate Programming Screen and send AN packages.
- Promote awareness of the proposed project, including the purpose and need and the project description, and how the public can provide input.
- Coordinate with ETAT members to ensure timely reviews of direct and indirect effects.
- Monitor relevant ETAT commentary to identify actions necessary to advance the project.
- Identify actionable commentary from the ETAT and transmit it to the appropriate staff as the project advances.
- Communicate responses about transportation issues to the community during the Planning and Programming Screens.
- For ACE process projects, coordinate reviews and Lead Federal Agency concurrence for **MM** and **ACER**.
- Participate in discussions regarding potential project effects or clarification of comments, as needed.
- Conduct or participate in ETAT meetings and webinars.
- Participate in issue resolution activities, if needed.
- Initiate technical studies to support consultation process, if needed.

- Convey to the ETAT members about how project plans or concepts have been adapted to address their concerns, or communicate to them the rationale for not incorporating their input.

4.12.4 Programming Screen Summary Report

The FDOT ETDM Coordinator, Project Manager, or designee, performs the following tasks related to developing and publishing the ***Programming Screen Summary Report***.

- Review and respond to commentary received during the Programming Screen review.
- Incorporate the SCH Federal Consistency Review determination.
- Assign an SDOE to each ETDM resource issue.
- Summarize public comments received during the review.
- Develop the Scope of Work for the PD&E phase.
- Publish the Preliminary Programming Screen Summary Report.
- Determine the COA in conjunction with the Lead Federal Agency.
- Coordinate with appropriate FDOT District staff to identify potential candidate projects for the Five Year Work Program.
- Publish the Final Programming Screen Summary Report.
- Provide results of the Programming Screen to the PD&E project team, MPO/TPO and local governments (as applicable), and with the interested public.

4.13 REFERENCES

15 CFR Part 930. Federal Consistency with Approved Coastal Management Programs.

23 CFR Part 771. Environmental Impact and Related Procedures.

23 U.S.C. (as amended). "Highways,"

40 CFR §§ 1500-1508. Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act. 1978.

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Chapter 338, Florida Statutes. Florida Intrastate Highway System and Toll Facilities.

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4.14 HISTORY

03/2006 – Original publication

07/2013 – Updated to reflect current practices

12/2015 – Updated to reflect current requirements and practices

CHAPTER 5

ADVANCING TO PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT (PD&E)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | |
|-----|------------------------------------|-----|
| 5.1 | OVERVIEW | 5-1 |
| 5.2 | SCOPE OF WORK..... | 5-2 |
| 5.3 | ETAT COORDINATION DURING PD&E..... | 5-5 |
| 5.4 | PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT | 5-5 |
| 5.5 | HANDLING UNRESOLVED ISSUES | 5-6 |
| 5.6 | REFERENCES | 5-6 |
| 5.7 | HISTORY | 5-7 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| | | |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Figure 5-1: | ETDM to PD&E Process Diagram..... | 5-3 |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|-----|

CHAPTER 5

5.1 OVERVIEW

During the Project Development and Environment (PD&E) phase, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) performs preliminary engineering, conducts environmental analysis and public involvement activities, and prepares necessary studies and reports. During PD&E, FDOT continues to develop alternatives; evaluates potential impacts to natural, physical, cultural, and community resources; and documents compliance with federal and state environmental laws.

Title 23 United States Code (U.S.C.) provides authority for, and encourages the integration of planning information and products into the **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)** process. Therefore, the results of the Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) 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)
- Provide early input from stakeholders about 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
- Identify advance technical studies, if appropriate
- Identify the anticipated environmental Class of Action (COA)
- Distribution of the Advance Notification (AN)

Recommendations made during the ETDM Planning and Programming Screens are recorded in the Environmental Screening Tool (EST) support development of a focused and appropriate PD&E consultant scope of service, 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](#). At the completion of the PD&E phase, the environmental document is prepared, providing the environmental and engineering recommendations to guide final design.

This chapter describes the transition from the ETDM Programming Screen to the PD&E phase (see **ETDM to PD&E Process Diagram** on next page). **Chapter 4** of this **Manual**

describes procedures for the Programming Screen. FDOT's [PD&E Manual](#) details the process and technical requirements for compliance with federal and state laws during the PD&E phase.

5.2 SCOPE OF WORK

The Programming Screen assists with identifying project issues and the actions needed during the PD&E phase to avoid, minimize, or mitigate potential project impacts and provide the foundation for the development of a project's scope of services. The results of the Programming Screen assist the PD&E Project Manager in developing a focused scope of services for the PD&E Study (consultant projects) or project work plan (in-house projects) including any technical studies required.

During the Programming Screen, the FDOT ETDM Coordinator, the PD&E Project Manager (if assigned), and other staff members review and respond to comments received. They communicate with the Environmental Technical Advisory Team (ETAT) members as needed for more information and clarification regarding comments received. The FDOT ETDM Coordinator or PD&E Project Manager assigns a Summary Degree of Effect (SDOE) to each ETDM issue based on the comments received and other available information. They also begin to identify, refine, or transmit the results of technical studies or other work activities to be completed or advanced to the PD&E Study in support of the anticipated COA. The ETDM Coordinator or Project Manager publishes results of the Programming Screen in a ***Preliminary Programming Screen Summary Report***.

At the end of the Programming Screen, the ETDM Coordinator or PD&E Project Manager recommends the COA to the appropriate approving authority (see **Section 4.9** for more information about the COA determination process). For projects utilizing Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funds, there are three COAs defined in **40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)**, the regulation implementing **NEPA**. The FHWA meets these requirements through **23 CFR § 771.115**, which establishes the level of documentation required in the **NEPA** process for transportation projects with federal involvement: Categorical Exclusions (CEs), Environmental Assessments (EAs), and Environmental Impact Statements (EISs).¹ The Lead Agency, [the organization primarily responsible for the environmental document and, for projects with federal involvement, providing Location and Design Concept Acceptance (LCDA)] determines the COA. For FDOT projects identified as not using FHWA funds for any phase, a State Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) is prepared as a result of the PD&E Study. For more information about the environmental documents and procedures to establish a COA, see [PD&E Manual Part 1, Chapter 2, Environmental Class of Action Determination](#), or [PD&E Manual Part 1, Chapter 10, State, Local, Or Privately Funded Project Delivery](#).

¹ Qualifying projects screened through the Environmental Screening Tool (EST) that will not use federal funds and do not require a federal action are processed as a State Environmental Impact Report (SEIR).

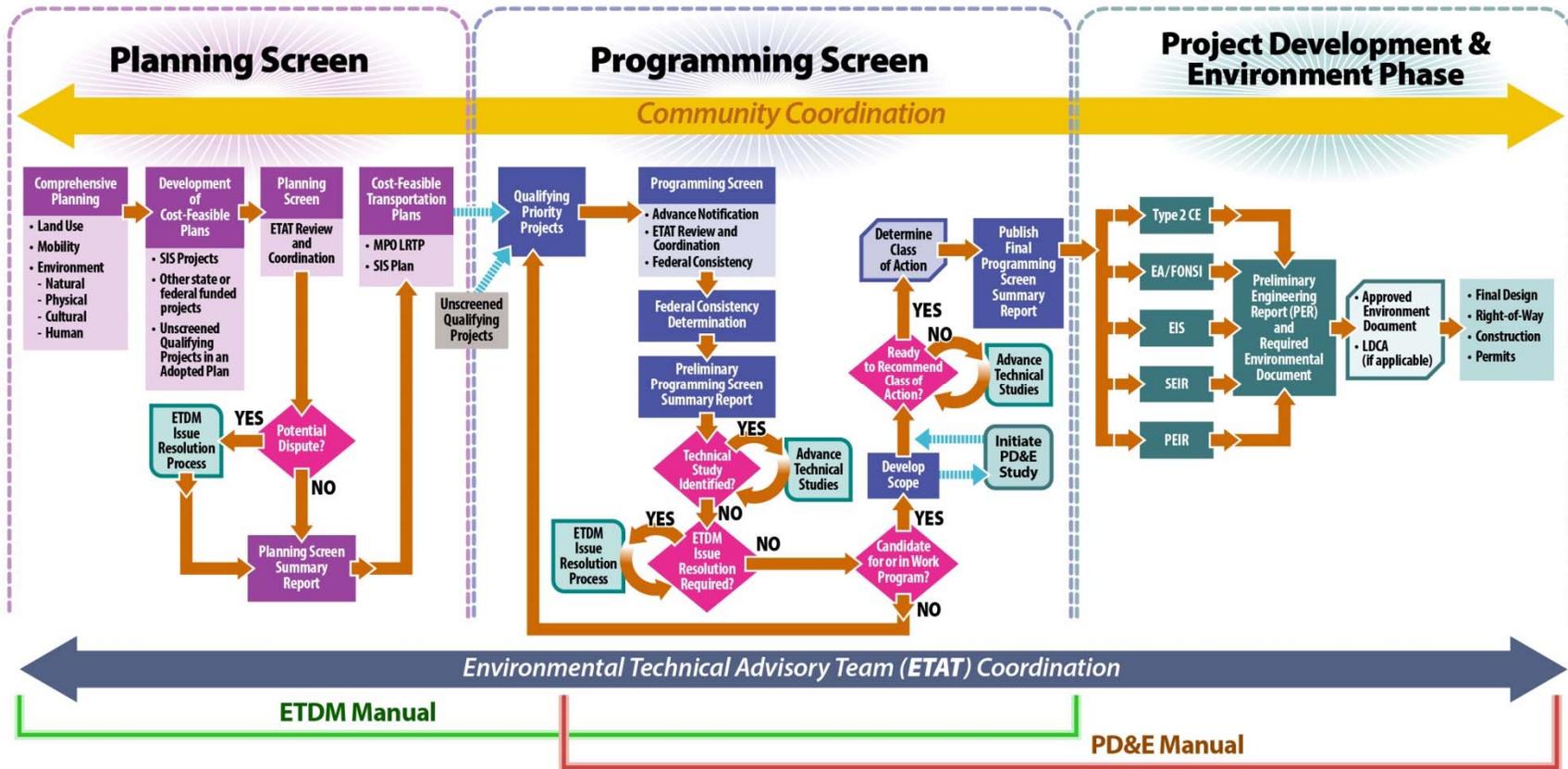


Figure 5-1: ETDM to PD&E Process Diagram

Activities, coordination requirements or additional analysis may be necessary to support selection of an appropriate environmental COA. FDOT has the flexibility to identify funds and advance these activities before the COA is selected and the PD&E Study is initiated. For detailed instructions, see [**FDOT Work Program Instructions, Part III, Chapter 23, Planning, Section A.4, Efficient Transportation Decision Making \(ETDM\).**](#)

COA determinations are based upon information known when the COA recommendation is made to the approving authority. A COA determination is not mandatory prior to advancing a project to PD&E. There may be times when the COA is uncertain or in question after the **Preliminary Programming Screen Summary Report** has been published. A District may choose to complete additional studies or coordination prior to making the COA determination and submitting it to the Lead Agency for approval. After COA approval, the **Final Programming Screen Summary Report** is published.

The **Final Programming Screen Summary Report** documents the results of agency reviews and serves as a reference for PD&E Project Manager(s) as the project advances. The amount of time between the publication of the **Preliminary Programming Screen Summary Report** and the **Final Programming Screen Summary Report** can vary as the FDOT District works to identify the appropriate COA.

The results of the Programming Screen assist the PD&E Project Manager in developing a focused scope of services for the PD&E Study (consultant projects) or project work plan (in-house projects). After reviewing the Degrees of Effect (DOEs), SDOEs, and issue comments documented in the Preliminary Programming Screen Summary Report, the PD&E Project Manager works with the FDOT ETDM Coordinator, the Environmental Administrator, Project Development Engineer, and other appropriate engineering and environmental staff to determine the technical studies needed during the PD&E phase and permitting activities that could be advanced during the PD&E phase. In addition to ETAT comments and FDOT responses, the **Final Programming Screen Summary Report** provides information to assist with the transition to the PD&E phase, including the following:

1. Purpose and Need acceptance by the Lead Agency
2. COA acceptance by the Lead Agency
3. Identification of cooperating [under **40 CFR §§ 1500-1508**] and Participating Agencies under **Title 23 U.S.C.** as amended
4. Identification, and perhaps refinement of, alternatives, if more than one exists
5. Development of a Preliminary Environmental Discussion (PED)
6. Lead Agency concurrence on unreasonable alternatives eliminated from the need for detailed **NEPA** analysis
7. Identification of anticipated technical studies, if applicable

8. Summary of public comments, development of sociocultural effects evaluation, and identification of community desired features
9. Identification of future coordination activities
10. Recommendations for subsequent project phases
11. Results of planning studies that may have useful information to support the PD&E Study

Project recommendations made in the Programming Screen advance to all future phases and are reviewed during each reevaluation (see [PD&E Manual, Part 1, Chapter 13, Reevaluations](#)). Refer to **Chapter 4** of this *Manual*.

5.3 ETAT COORDINATION DURING PD&E

Coordination between the PD&E Project Manager, FDOT environmental staff, and the ETAT members continues throughout the PD&E phase. As issues are encountered or technical studies are developed, the PD&E Project Manager and FDOT environmental staff coordinate with the ETAT members to resolve concerns, review products, discuss preliminary findings, or identify mitigation opportunities. This coordination keeps the ETAT members informed of a project's progress and the consideration of their comments into the project's development. The PD&E Project Manager, in coordination with the FDOT ETDM Coordinator, may upload completed technical studies to the EST for a 30-day ETAT review and comment period; relevant ETAT members are notified by email of a document's availability.

While the ETAT members generally stay informed about projects through the above mechanisms, all ETAT organizations assign a specific individual to act as the liaison between FDOT and the respective organization on transportation projects, regardless of phase. The assigned ETAT member can be a resource for initiating contact and identifying methods to resolve project issues.

In instances where there are designated Cooperating and/or Participating Agencies, there are higher levels of responsibility and involvement in the environmental review process (refer to the [PD&E Manual, Part 1, Chapter 3, Preliminary Environmental Discussion and Advance Notification, Section 3-2.4.1 Agency Roles](#)).

Regardless of the role or designation, ETAT representatives coordinate with other staff and resources within their agency to review products and assist in resolving project issues.

5.4 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The PD&E Project Manager is responsible for the development and implementation of a Public Involvement Plan to comply with federal and state law and FDOT procedures. Knowledge gained from evaluating sociocultural effects of project alternatives during the Planning and Programming Screens can be used to help develop the PD&E Public

Involvement Program. For more information, refer to the [PD&E Manual Part 1, Chapter 11, Public Involvement](#) and [Part 2, Chapter 9, Sociocultural Effects Evaluation](#) and [FDOT Public Involvement Handbook](#).

5.5 HANDLING UNRESOLVED ISSUES

Any agreements, understandings, and/or recommendations resulting from the ETDM Issue Resolution process in the Planning or Programming Screens are documented and accompany the project as it advances into PD&E. Advancing and coordinating a recommended project technical study during or prior to the PD&E phase is one of the options to clarify and resolve a resource concern in the ETDM Issue Resolution process. When selected, the PD&E Project Manager and/or FDOT environmental staff, as appropriate, coordinate with the ETAT member that raised the potential dispute. The PD&E Project Manager involves the FDOT ETDM Coordinator and ETAT member throughout the development of the technical study. The PD&E Project Manager, FDOT Environmental Administrator, and other environmental staff work with the agency to develop the scope and methodology of the study, as well as gather input and receive technical assistance. Upon completion of the technical study, the ETAT member reviews and comments on the document, addressing recommended solutions to handle the issue.

If there are unresolved issues for FHWA projects undergoing **NEPA** review, then the issue resolution process established under **23 U.S.C. § 139** will be applicable. The FHWA process establishes a series of forums for issues to be resolved. If not resolved, issues are advanced to these forums. The process also includes potential financial penalties for unexcused delays by participating agencies. The outcomes of these activities should be recorded in the final PD&E document and communicated to the applicable ETAT member.

5.6 REFERENCES

23 CFR Part 139. Efficient Environmental Reviews for Project Decisionmaking.

23 U.S.C. Highways.

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5.7 HISTORY

03/2006 – Original publication

07/2013 – Updated to reflect current practices

12/2015 – Updated to reflect current requirements and practices

CHAPTER 6

DATA MANAGEMENT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | |
|---------|--|------|
| 6.1 | OVERVIEW | 6-1 |
| 6.2 | DATA COMPONENTS | 6-3 |
| 6.2.1 | Transportation Project Data | 6-3 |
| 6.2.2 | Sociocultural or Community Data | 6-4 |
| 6.2.3 | Environmental Resource Data | 6-6 |
| 6.2.4 | Areas of Interest | 6-6 |
| 6.2.5 | Document Reviews | 6-6 |
| 6.3 | DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGIES | 6-7 |
| 6.3.1 | Transfer of Existing Digital Information | 6-7 |
| 6.3.2 | Online Data Entry | 6-8 |
| 6.3.3 | Field Data Collection..... | 6-8 |
| 6.4 | QUALITY CONTROL/QUALITY ASSURANCE | 6-8 |
| 6.4.1 | Locational Accuracy..... | 6-8 |
| 6.4.2 | Data Currentness and Completeness..... | 6-9 |
| 6.4.3 | Data Documentation Standard..... | 6-9 |
| 6.4.4 | Data Processing Procedures | 6-10 |
| 6.4.5 | Quality Review of Information | 6-11 |
| 6.4.5.1 | Transportation Project Data..... | 6-11 |
| 6.4.5.2 | Environmental Resource and Community Information | 6-12 |

6.5 DATA AVAILABILITY AND RETENTION 6-13

6.6 REFERENCES 6-14

6.7 HISTORY 6-14

LIST OF TABLES

Table 6–1: Data Component Entry/Update Responsibilities..... 6-3

Table 6–2: Sociocultural or Community Data 6-5

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 6–1: Environmental Screening Tool Process and Data Flow Diagram..... 6-2

Figure 6–2: Process for Developing Community Information 6-4

6.1 OVERVIEW

This chapter describes the data management procedures used to provide consistent, high quality information for supporting the Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) process through the Environmental Screening Tool (EST). These procedures define data collection, preparation, and maintenance responsibilities and techniques.

As illustrated in **Figure 6-1**, the flow of information during the ETDM process begins when the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) or Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)/Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) ETDM Coordinator enters project and community information into the EST. While this is occurring, Environmental Technical Advisory Team (ETAT) members are confirming the accuracy and currentness of the resource data they have provided to the Florida Geographic Data Library (FGDL) and updating it as necessary. The University of Florida GeoPlan Center houses both the FGDL and EST and is responsible for system administration and data maintenance.

Once project information is entered into the EST, standard Geographic Information System (GIS) analyses, as prescribed by the ETAT, are automatically performed to identify potential environmental resources within proximity of a project. These analyses identify and quantify various natural, physical, cultural, and community resources within set buffer distances of the project centerline, ranging from 100 feet to 5,280 feet (one mile). Study areas, such as those established for projects undergoing the Alternative Corridor Evaluation (ACE) process, are not buffered. Rather, the analysis results are computed for the entire study area. The EST stores all the results, along with any other project information. The ETAT uses the EST to review the project and environmental information, and to provide comments on resources relative to their jurisdiction and authority. They supplement their review with additional information such as agency studies, site visits, and local area knowledge. The public is able to review project and environmental information through the ETDM Public Access Site.¹ The public provides input directly to the FDOT and MPOs/TPOs through the ETDM Public Access Site or through public involvement activities like workshops and surveys. After a project review period, the project's ETDM Coordinator publishes a summary report, which is available to the public and remains as part of the project record.

Section 6.1 provides an overview of how information flows through the ETDM process, identifying data sources, processing, and output. **Section 6.2** describes the major data components of the EST. **Section 6.3** discusses data collection techniques and **Section 6.4** describes Quality Control/Quality Assurance measures for processing the data. **Section 6.5** describes the data archival standards of the EST. Detailed data specifications and formats are included in the [**Environmental Screening Tool Handbook**](#).

¹ By statute, locations of archaeological sites and threatened and endangered species can remain confidential.

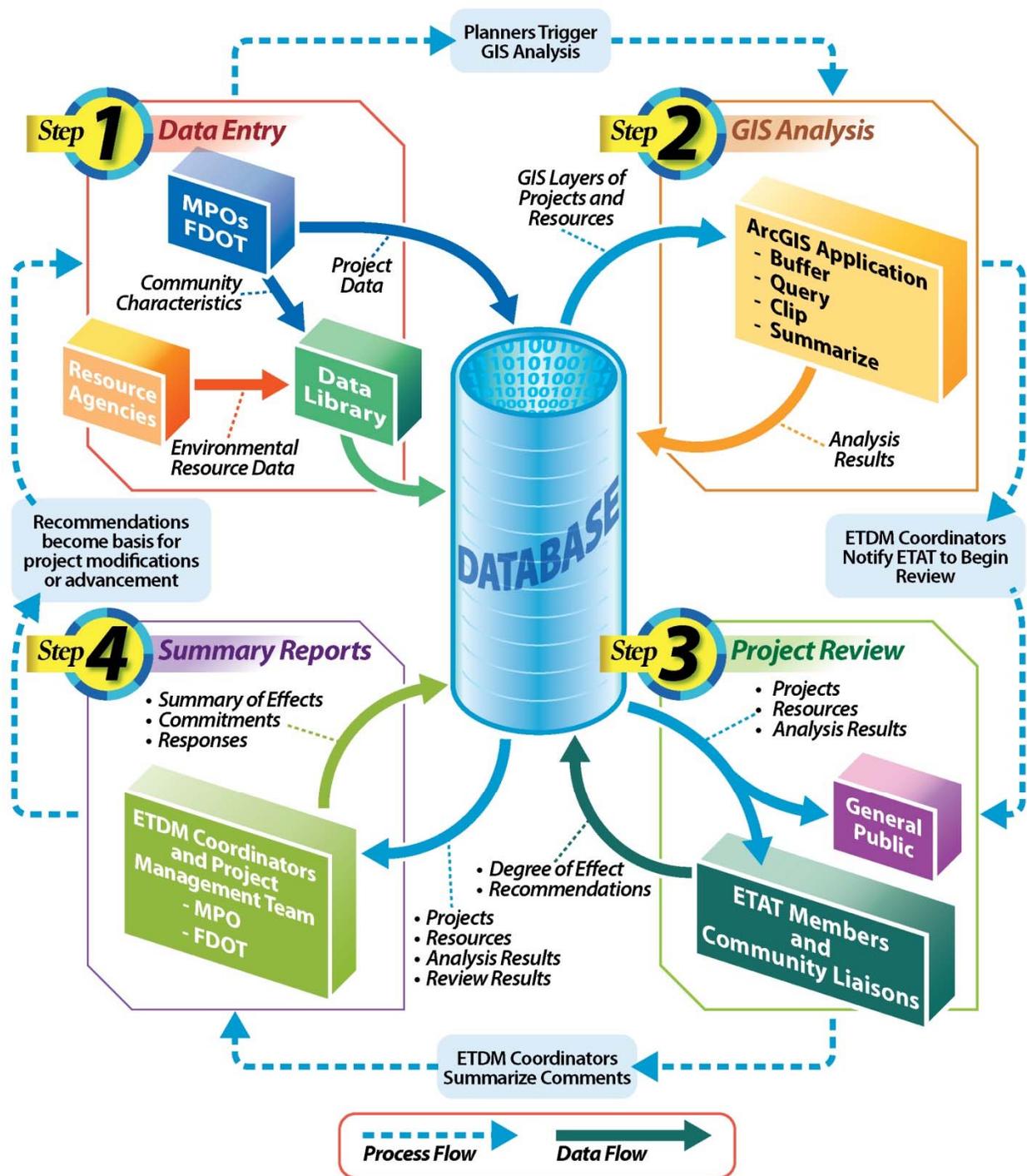


Figure 6-1: Environmental Screening Tool Process and Data Flow Diagram

6.2 DATA COMPONENTS

Prior to each ETDM screening event, FDOT and MPO representatives use the EST to input or update transportation project, environmental resource, and sociocultural or community information. FDOT project team members also use the EST to explore resources in their Areas of Interest. The ETAT members continually review their own resource data in the EST to make sure it reflects the most recent accurate data sets and best available data. **Table 6-1** identifies data component entry/update responsibilities.

Table 6-1: Data Component Entry/Update Responsibilities

| Data Component | Responsible Entity | What | Geographic Responsibility |
|------------------------------|---|--|-------------------------------|
| Transportation Project Data | FDOT ETDM Coordinator & Project Team | Qualifying projects | MPO/TPO and non-MPO/TPO areas |
| | MPO/TPO ETDM Coordinator | Qualifying projects that are candidates for inclusion in the Cost Feasible Plan of the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), excluding State Strategic and Intermodal System (SIS) projects | MPO/TPO areas |
| Sociocultural Community Data | FDOT Community Liaison Coordinator (CLC) & Project Team | Communities surrounding qualifying projects | MPO/TPO and non-MPO/TPO areas |
| | MPO/TPO ETDM Coordinator and CLC | Communities surrounding qualifying projects that are candidates for inclusion in the Cost Feasible Element of the LRTP (excluding SIS projects) | MPO/TPO areas |
| Environmental Resource Data | ETAT Member | New or updated agency data | Agency Jurisdiction |
| Areas of Interest | FDOT project teams | Study areas, usually in the vicinity of transportation projects; not necessarily ETDM projects. | Not applicable |

NOTE: Qualifying projects are defined in **Chapter 2** of this **Manual** and with additional criteria identified in Chapters **3** and **4** of this **Manual**.

6.2.1 Transportation Project Data

FDOT ETDM Coordinators and PD&E Project Managers screen qualifying transportation projects in their jurisdiction. During the Planning Screen, MPO/TPO ETDM Coordinators may screen qualifying projects within their jurisdiction except for projects on the SHS or SIS and Bridge Replacement Program projects, which the respective FDOT District screens. The MPOs/TPOs do not conduct Programming Screens. The Turnpike ETDM Coordinator screens projects on designated Turnpike District screens. Information inputs for qualifying ETDM projects include:

1. Consistency information pursuant to “Planning Requirements for Environmental Document Approvals” and local government comprehensive plans. Refer to [Project](#)

[Development and Environment \(PD&E\) Manual, Part 2, Chapter 4, Project Description and Purpose and Need.](#)

2. Project description with information regarding project mode, termini, project length, estimated cost, and any other known supporting information, including the roadway functional classification and Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) for existing and future conditions, and whether or not the project is within an Urban Service Area. If the project involves widening an existing facility, describe the existing right-of-way considerations and whether the agency responsible for the project intends to widen within the existing right-of-way (if known). All project alternatives should be described. The alternative descriptions should highlight anything unique to the alternative. Detailed descriptions and specifications for these data elements are available in the [Environmental Screening Tool Handbook](#).
3. Purpose and need based on considerations for items such as emergency evacuation, community-expressed needs, and transportation demand. Refer to the [PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 4, Project Description and Purpose and Need](#) for guidance.
4. Visual representation of the project location (project geometry/mapping) for GIS analysis and review.

See **Chapters 3** and **4** of this **Manual** for a more detailed discussion of the required project information.

6.2.2 Sociocultural or Community Data

In addition to transportation project information and environmental resource data, the ETDM process relies on sociocultural or community information to make informed decisions about affected communities. This includes data that define community boundaries; identify community focal points; and document community histories, goals, and values (see **Figure 6-2**). Combined with the information above, the Sociocultural Data Report (SDR) provides results on a number of economic, demographic, and social variables from the three most recent United States Census (Census) events, the American Community Survey (ACS), and Florida county property appraiser data.

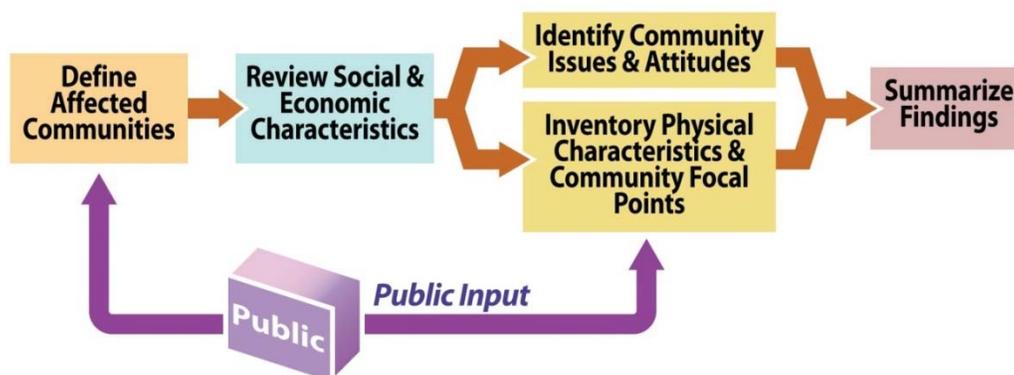


Figure 6-2: Process for Developing Community Information

Table 6-2 shows some of the information automatically calculated within the EST for each SDR or gathered by a FDOT or MPO/TPO CLC. The EST GIS Analysis Report also provides additional sociocultural information.

Table 6–2: Sociocultural or Community Data

| Population and Demographics | Employment Characteristics | Housing Characteristics | Physical Characteristics | Community Focal Points |
|---|---|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population and growth trends • Age distribution • Predominant ethnic/racial composition • Income trends • Special population groups • Automobile ownership • English-speaking proficiency • Education Attainment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployment rates and trends • Employment base and type • Tax base | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age of structures • Type of structures • Condition of structures • Vacancy rates • Percentage of residents five years in home • Type of occupancy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure • Existing land use • Future land use • Planned and approved developments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools • Medical and health facilities • Fire stations • Religious facilities • Intermodal facilities • Cultural centers • Law enforcement agencies • Parks • Community centers • Social service facilities • Civic centers/ Multi-use facilities • Government buildings • Cemeteries • Other miscellaneous facilities |

FDOT and MPO/TPO CLCs define communities through quantitative (data) and qualitative (public input) analyses. The immediate geographic vicinity of a project typically dictates the area of impact; in some cases, however, the potential for sociocultural consequences extends well beyond the immediate area. CLCs should rely on MPO/TPO, local government, and public input to define community boundaries; identify community desires and attitudes; and verify community focal points and data. The [Sociocultural Effects web site](#), located on the FDOT Environmental Management web site, provides methods for identifying and defining SCE study areas, as well as for collecting and organizing the community data.

The [Environmental Screening Tool Handbook](#) contains instructions for defining community boundaries using the edit map features tools in the EST; documenting community histories, goals, and values; and generating a SDR from these efforts.

6.2.3 Environmental Resource Data

ETAT agencies provide digital information about the resource(s) they protect and manage. Each agency coordinates with the University of Florida GeoPlan Center to develop a data submission schedule to ensure that the content, currentness, and completeness of their agency's resource information are the most accurate and pertinent available.

It is the ETAT member's responsibility to identify GIS data within their organization that are available to use in determining the potential effects of transportation projects on agency goals and regulated resources. Examples include datasets developed from environmental studies and established agency plans, programs, and initiatives. This information could include locations and descriptions of the natural, physical, cultural, and community resources that identify priority resources.

The GeoPlan Center also coordinates at least annually with non-ETAT agencies that produce data needed for project evaluations.

The Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) page of the ETDM Public Access Site at <https://etdmpub.flu-etat.org/est/> lists the datasets available in the EST and their sources.

6.2.4 Areas of Interest

FDOT project teams can use the EST to define and analyze an area anywhere in Florida to learn more about people, places, and natural resources at that location. They use the Area of Interest (AOI) function in the map viewer to draw a shape on the map. After the location is entered, the website summarizes environmental and community resource information from the Florida Geographic Data Library.

The standard EST Study Area Report identifies natural, physical, social and cultural resources in the area according to the EST GIS database. The Sociocultural Data Report (SDR) displays a demographic profile of the area, based on data from the US Census Bureau. The SDR and EST Study Area Report present the same resource data used for the project evaluations described above in **Section 6.2.2 Sociocultural or Community Data and Section 6.2.3 Environmental Resource Data**. The AOI information is automatically deleted after 30 days, unless otherwise specified by the user.

6.2.5 Document Reviews

Authorized EST users (Document Review Administrators) may upload and distribute documents to ETAT members or other interested parties for review. These documents may or may not be related to an ETDM project. The review administrator uses the EST to:

- Set up a review period.
- Identify commenters, team members, and responders for each document review.

- Send email notifications to document review participants, notifying them that a review has started.
- Modify existing document review events.

Once notified, recipients may review the documents and add comments to the EST. Following the review period, responders consider the comments and document responses in the EST. The documents, comments, and responses can be transmitted to **FDOT Environmental Electronic Document Management System (EEDMS)** for storage and retention.

6.3 DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGIES

This section describes techniques for gathering and providing information for use in the EST. Unless otherwise indicated, these collection methodologies pertain to transportation project, resource, and sociocultural or community data. In general, users of this data define the data requirements. FDOT State Environmental Management Office (SEMO) leads the data requirement efforts and seeks expert input from practitioners. The GeoPlan Center locates data sources to satisfy the information needs developed by the users. The GeoPlan Center then standardizes and loads the data into the EST. Data may be entered into the EST through direct upload to the GeoPlan Center, online data entry using the EST mapping tools, or from handheld applications.

6.3.1 Transfer of Existing Digital Information

A rich diversity of information exists in the state of Florida. Rather than recreate the data, the ETDM process partners with data source authors to directly transfer information into the EST. Existing digital data transfers should include the following components:

- Spatial features that represent the geographic locations of real world objects
- Attribute data describing the objects, including a unique identifier linking each spatial feature to a record in its corresponding attribute table
- Projection and geographic coordinate information describing the parameters used to determine the geographic coordinates of the spatial features
- A metadata file containing information about the source, attribute information, and accuracy of the data
- Contact information for the data source to use regarding any questions or problems with the data

Data transfer protocols and formats vary by data type. Support staff of the GeoPlan Center and the information technology staff at the source organization determine specific transfer protocols. Contact the ETDM Help Desk (help@fla-etat.org) for more information about transferring existing digital information to the EST.

6.3.2 Online Data Entry

Online data entry utilities exist in the EST for transportation project, AOI, and community data that do not already exist in digital format. These utilities allow users to draw features on a map window available through their Internet browser and enter descriptive information on customized forms. When the users complete the data entry, the EST automatically updates the information. The [Environmental Screening Tool Handbook](#) provides instructions for using these utilities.

6.3.3 Field Data Collection

Applications for collecting field data using handheld data collection devices for specific resources are continually being developed or improved. These applications benefit ETDM data collection efforts by:

- Providing data formats compatible with the EST
- Customizing the data collection interface for ease of use
- Aiding locational accuracy

User documentation describing system requirements, application instructions, and data transfer mechanisms accompany completed applications. For information about the status and availability of these applications, contact help@fla-etat.org.

Source agencies may use other field data collection techniques at their own discretion. Metadata should document these alternative techniques. Coordinate EST data requirements and formats for documentation with the GeoPlan Center and FDOT SEMO in order to optimize data standardization.

6.4 QUALITY CONTROL/QUALITY ASSURANCE

This section establishes the data management Quality Control/Quality Assurance procedures used in the ETDM process. Standards and specifications established prior to data collection, followed by data processing protocols, and continual review and improvement ensure data quality.

6.4.1 Locational Accuracy

The goal for all EST data in terms of locational accuracy is 12 meters or better. This enables the data to be overlaid with relative accuracy over United States Geological Survey (USGS) 1:24,000-scale map series data and to be consistent with the FDOT roadway base map. Since this accuracy is not always available, dataset documentation must include an estimate of locational accuracy. Metadata for datasets used within the EST must meet the minimum Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) standards. The FDOT SEMO Project Manager overseeing the EST may exempt some transportation project, environmental resource, sociocultural, or community data from this requirement if FDOT determines the

data adds enough value to justify its inclusion. In these instances, the GeoPlan Center will work with the data provider to complete the metadata documentation. The responsibility for understanding the limitations of any dataset lies with the user.

6.4.2 Data Currentness and Completeness

The effectiveness of ETAT commentary largely depends on current and complete data.

1. Through protocols developed with the GeoPlan Center, ETAT agencies specify dataset update/revision schedules. ETAT members ensure the EST contains their agency's current environmental data and mapping. Once uploaded to the EST, ETAT members should review the data again to ensure nothing was corrupted in the upload process.
2. FDOT and MPO/TPO ETDM Coordinators ensure the currentness and completeness of transportation project data prior to each screening event, as further discussed in **Section 6.4.5**.
3. FDOT and MPO/TPO CLCs update community data.
4. The GeoPlan Center helps coordinate and manage data from each of the above participants, as well as works with non-ETAT agencies to obtain data that would also benefit the ETDM process.

6.4.3 Data Documentation Standard

Metadata provides information about a dataset, including when and how it was developed, and recommendations for its intended use. The [Environmental Screening Tool Handbook](#) defines the format of metadata for GIS datasets in the EST. A sample of the required metadata documentation format for transferring GIS data to the EST is provided under the Help tab in the EST.

Documentation core components include:

- Name and phone number for an agency contact person knowledgeable about the dataset
- Source
- Time period (year collected)
- Attribute definitions (table fields)
- File format (for example, shapefile)
- Coordinate system and projection parameters, if applicable (for example, latitude/longitude decimal degrees)
- Datum (for example, North American Datum 1927 or 1983)

- Data collection methods (for example, scanned, surveyed or digitized)
- Estimate of locational accuracy (for example, +/- 10 meters, survey quality, or developed from 1:24,000-scale source material)

For FDOT and MPO/TPO staff gathering GIS data from other sources, obtain a copy of the metadata, if possible. The GeoPlan Center will coordinate with the source agency to complete the metadata. The GeoPlan Center will also reformat metadata into the standard EST format, if needed.

6.4.4 Data Processing Procedures

The following outline describes data processing by the GeoPlan Center:

1. The GeoPlan Center secures data from ETAT participants.
2. The dataset is processed on local working directories. A text file is maintained in the subdirectory to describe the files that are in the directory. Minimally, it includes information about the data source, a description of the data contents, and the coordinate system for the dataset.
3. GIS data are re-projected as necessary into the standard FGDL projection. For projection specifications see <http://www.fgdl.org/metadataexplorer/fgdlfaq.html>.
4. Data are adjusted to the appropriate FDOT District or statewide extent.
5. Spatial indexes are created for all files. Additional indexes are created for frequently used fields to increase the speed of map queries.
6. The applicable agency reviews the dataset. A comparison of source data and newly processed data occurs to ensure errors were not introduced.
7. Metadata is modified, as necessary, to describe the lineage, accuracy, and usage of the data. A peer review process exists at the GeoPlan Center to confirm all metadata files.
8. The dataset is then loaded into the EST. The GeoPlan Center and ETAT member review the geometry again for any anomalies.
9. The EST data analysis routines, maps, and reports are updated to assess the new information.

An email is sent to EST users, who choose to be notified, that a new or updated data layer has been added.

6.4.5 Quality Review of Information

The EST provides a number of tools for performing a quality review on information in the system.

6.4.5.1 Transportation Project Data

Accurate reviews and commentary by the ETAT and the public require a clear representation of a transportation project's extent and location. When submitting project geometry to the EST, consider the following list to help identify and correct errors before initiating a formal review:

1. Verify that the project and any associated alternatives have unique names. This will prevent confusing one project or alternative for another within the EST.
2. Verify that the number of mapped alternatives equals the number of alternatives described in the project description.
3. Compare EST project geometry with the original source data.
4. For linear features, confirm consistency between mapped alternative endpoints and the "from" and "to" locations described in the project description.
5. Check the relationships among map features representing the project geometry (also known as "topology"):
 - a) Lines – alternative segments are adjoined at their respective endpoints unless otherwise intended and there are no duplicate lines representing the same feature.
 - b) Polygons – coincident borders do not overlap, nor contain gaps unless intended.
 - c) Points – one point per feature.
6. Compare the location of project features to other features represented on the map:
 - a) Zoom to a scale of 1:5,000 or less at the endpoint of an alternative. This scale range allows you to view the most detailed aeriels available in the EST – one-foot Resolution Digital Orthophoto Imagery (DOI).
 - b) Turn on additional map layers that will help confirm locational accuracy, such as:
 - i. Navteq Roads or railroads.
 - ii. Layers showing resources to avoid (schools, hospitals, parks, etc.).

- c) Using the pan tool, move along each project feature to see if it is in the right place relative to other features on the map and consistent with the project description. For example:
 - i. If a project is supposed to avoid a sensitive resource in the area, confirm that the project does not intersect the resource.
 - ii. If an alternative is intended to be within an existing road right-of-way, confirm that it is in fact within a few feet of a road.
7. Compare the value of the length field for a project alternative against the total length value entered in the Add/Update Alternative Description form.
8. Check that the geometry type best portrays the current status of the project. The EST allows point, polygon, and linear features.
9. Confirm that project geometry does not already exist by zooming to the proposed project area and turning on all subfolders within the project folder in the EST Map Viewer Table of Contents. For example, project geometry may exist at the time of a Planning Screen because it was uploaded at an earlier time as part of a MPO/TPO Needs Plan batch upload. Alternatively, institutional turnover at a MPO/TPO or FDOT may create a disjunction between existing and new geometry. When unclear whether to edit existing geometry or enter new geometry, coordinate with FDOT SEMO.

Before initiating a project screening event, ETDM Coordinators can adjust project geometry and information as needed to respond to their findings from the above checklist and their review of the preliminary EST GIS analysis results. When satisfied, the ETDM Coordinator may update the status of the project to inform the ETAT that it is ready to be screened. The [Environmental Screening Tool Handbook](#) provides instructions for updating the project status.

6.4.5.2 Environmental Resource and Community Information

Several mapping and query tools in the EST exist to help ETDM participants review datasets from their agency before they are uploaded into the FGDL. For each dataset, ETAT members review the metadata, line work, and database information for accuracy, completeness, and currentness. ETAT members compare this information with the data currently available from their agency to ensure the EST contains the most current and accurate data.

Consider the following during this review:

- Confirm that this is the most current version of the data available.
- Ensure the source contact information is listed in the metadata.

- Identify whether another dataset exists that more accurately reflects the current condition of the resource. If so, provide the GeoPlan Center with the data source contact information in order to obtain a copy for the FGDL.
- Review the dataset for errors (see suggested error checking items provided above for transportation information).
- Confirm the metadata is up-to-date and reflective of the constraints associated with using the data.

Contact data@fla-etat.org to provide information about any updates or required changes.

6.5 DATA AVAILABILITY AND RETENTION

The EST is an Internet application accessed via a web browser. SEMO grants write access to specific named users through the secure website based on access approval by ETDM Coordinators. EST System administrators create the appropriate account access credentials. Read-only access is provided to restricted user accounts authorized on the secure version of the EST site and to all users of the ETDM Public Access Site. Users can access the EST and EST Public Access site 24 hours per day, seven days a week. SEMO announces, in advance, downtime needed for system maintenance.

ETDM project data are extracted nightly and made available for download on the EST. This includes all reviewed projects or those currently in review. The file may be downloaded from ftp://ftp.geoplan.ufl.edu/pub/etdm/ETDM_file_GDBs/. Refer to the [Environmental Screening Tool Handbook](#) for more information.

The FDOT Records Retention and Disposal Schedule dictates record retention schedules for information stored in the EST. The FDOT System Manager for the ETDM database implements the following Standard Operating Procedures:

1. Transportation project information, associated records, and documents shall be retained in the EST for at least five years following completion of construction of the last project segment, including storing a recoverable snapshot at each project status and/or phase change during the project life cycle. Upon deletion from the ETDM database, these records shall be archived on electronic storage media.
2. For projects not constructed, records shall be retained on the EST for at least five years following the last action. Upon deletion from the ETDM database, these records shall be archived on electronic storage media.
3. Information associated with draft projects (not reviewed by the ETAT) shall be retained until obsolete, superseded, or administrative value is lost as determined by the ETDM Coordinator. These records shall not be archived upon deletion from the EST.

4. GIS data included in the EST to describe the natural, physical, cultural, and community resources are duplicate copies of the original source records. These records are retained until obsolete, superseded or administrative value is lost. They are archived upon deletion from the EST.
5. ETDM Summary Reports, Methodology Memorandums, Alternative Corridor Evaluation Reports, Class of Action Reports, Advance Notification Packages, Document Reviews, and Project Attachments are automatically attributed, tied to the document retention and disposal schedule, uploaded and archived in the FDOT EEDMS.
6. AOI shapes and reports are retained for 30 days unless otherwise indicated by the user in the AOI tool.

6.6 REFERENCES

Florida Department of Transportation. ETDM Public Access Site. Accessed at etdmpub.floridadot.org on 8/12/2015.

Florida Department of Transportation. 2010. Records Retention and Disposal Schedule.

Florida Department of Transportation. 2013. Environmental Screening Tool Handbook. Accessed at etdmpub.floridadot.org on 8/12/2015.

Florida Department of Transportation. 2013. Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Manual. Accessed at www.dot.state.fl.us/emo on 8/12/2015.

6.7 HISTORY

03/2006: Original Publication

07/2013: Edits to update and clarify data management procedures

12/2015: Updated to reflect current practices

ACRONYMS

A

- AA:** Agency Agreements
- AADT:** Annual Average Daily Traffic
- ACE:** Alternative Corridor Evaluation
- ACER:** Alternative Corridor Evaluation Report
- ACS:** American Community Survey
- AN:** Advance Notification
- AOA:** Agency Operating Agreement
- AOI:** Area of Interest

C

- CAT:** Corridor Analysis Tool
- CBRA:** Coastal Barrier Resources Act
- CE:** Categorical Exclusion
- CEQ:** Council on Environmental Quality
- CFR:** Code of Federal Regulations
- CLC:** Community Liaison Coordinator
- COA:** Class of Action

D

- DOE:** Degree of Effect
- DOI:** Digital Orthophoto Imagery

E

- EA:** Environmental Assessment
- EEDMS:** Environmental Electronic Document Management System
- EFH:** Essential Fish Habitat
- EIS:** Environmental Impact Statement
- EMO:** Environmental Management Office
- EST:** Environmental Screening Tool
- ETAT:** Environmental Technical Advisory Team
- ETDM:** Efficient Transportation Decision Making

F

- FAQ:** Frequently Asked Questions
- FCMP:** Florida Coastal Management Program
- FDEP:** Florida Department of Environmental Protection
- FDHR:** Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources
- FDOT:** Florida Department of Transportation
- FGDC:** Federal Geographic Data Committee
- FGDL:** Florida Geographic Data Library
- FHWA:** Federal Highway Administration

FONSI: Finding of No Significant Impact

FR: Federal Register

F.S.: Florida Statutes

FRA: Federal Railroad Administration

FTA: Federal Transit Administration

FTP: Florida Transportation Plan

G

GIS: Geographic Information System

H

HAPC: Habitat Area of Particular
Concern

I

ISD: Intermodal Systems Development

L

LAP: Local Agency Program

LDCA: Location and Design Concept
Acceptance

LGCP: Local Government
Comprehensive Plan

LRTP: Long Range Transportation Plan

LRSTP: Long Range Statewide
Transportation Plan

LSM: Land Suitability Mapping

M

MAP-21: Moving Ahead for Progress in
the 21st Century Act

MM: Methodology Memorandum

MOU: Memorandum of Understanding

MPO: Metropolitan Planning
Organization

MSFCMA: Magnuson-Stevens Fishery
Conservation and
Management Act

N

NEPA: National Environmental Policy
Act

NFE: Not Federal Eligible

NHPA: National Historic Preservation
Act

NMSA: Non-Major State Action

O

OFW: Outstanding Florida Waters

P

PD&E: Project Development and
Environment

PED: Preliminary Environmental
Discussion

PEIR: Project Environmental Impact
Report

PSM: Project Schedule and Management

S

SAFETEA-LU: Safe, Accountable,
Flexible, Efficient
Transportation Equity
Act: A Legacy for Users

SCE: Sociocultural Effects

SCH: Florida State Clearinghouse

SDOE: Summary Degree of Effect

SDR: Sociocultural Data Report

SEIR: State Environmental Impact
Report

SEMO: State Environmental
Management Office

SHPO: State Historic Preservation
Officer

SHS: State Highway System

SIS: Strategic Intermodal System

STIP: State Transportation Improvement
Program

SWAT: State-Wide Acceleration and
Transformation

T

TEA-21: Transportation Equity Act for
the 21st Century

THPO: Tribal Historic Preservation
Officer

TIP: Transportation Improvement
Program

TPO: Transportation Planning
Organization

Turnpike: Florida's Turnpike Enterprise

U

UPWP: Unified Planning Work Program

USACE: United States Army Corps of
Engineers

U.S.C.: United States Code

USCG: United States Coast Guard

USDOT: United States Department of
Transportation

USGS: United States Geological Survey