

PART 2, CHAPTER 4

SOCIOCULTURAL EFFECTS EVALUATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

4.1 OVERVIEW	4-1
4.1.1 Purpose	4-1
4.1.2 Sociocultural Effect Issues.....	4-2
4.1.3 Application	4-3
4.1.3.1 Planning Phase	4-3
4.1.3.2 PD&E Phase	4-3
4.1.3.3 Updating SCE Evaluations in Subsequent Phases	4-4
4.2 PROCEDURE	4-4
4.2.1 Step 1: Review Project Information.....	4-9
4.2.1.1 Collect and Review Project Information.....	4-9
4.2.1.2 Gather Community Information	4-11
4.2.1.3 Support the PD&E Public Involvement Plan.....	4-12
4.2.1.4 Conduct Field Review	4-13
4.2.2 Step 2: Define the Study Area	4-13
4.2.2.1 Review Field Notes and Project Information	4-14
4.2.2.2 Define SCE Study Area.....	4-14
4.2.3 Step 3: Prepare Community Information.....	4-15
4.2.3.1 Supplement the Community Data	4-15
4.2.3.2 Summarize Community Information	4-17

4.2.4 Step 4: Evaluate Sociocultural Effects	4-18
4.2.4.1 Identify Community Resources and Level of Importance	4-18
4.2.4.2 Perform Community Outreach.....	4-18
4.2.4.3 Assess Potential Direct Effects	4-19
4.2.4.4 Assess Potential Indirect Effects	4-22
4.2.4.5 Assess Potential Cumulative Effects	4-22
4.2.4.6 Describe Degree of Project Effects	4-22
4.2.4.7 Identify Adverse Effects on Minority and Low-income Populations	4-23
4.2.5 Step 5: Identify Solutions to Project Impacts	4-24
4.2.5.1 Review Previous Recommendations.....	4-24
4.2.5.2 Work with Communities to Evaluate/Devise Solutions	4-24
4.2.5.3 Focus Outreach on Affected Populations and Neighborhoods	4-25
4.2.5.4 Document Solutions to Project Impacts.....	4-25
4.2.6 Step 6: Document Results	4-25
4.2.7 Identify Disproportionately High and Adverse Effects	4-25
4.2.8 Updating SCE in Subsequent Phases	4-26
4.3 DOCUMENTATION.....	4-27
4.3.1 Update Project File	4-27
4.3.2 Prepare Environmental Document.....	4-27
4.3.2.1 Type 1 Categorical Exclusions or Non-Major State Actions	4-28
4.3.2.2 Type 2 Categorical Exclusions	4-28
4.3.2.3 Environmental Assessments	4-29
4.3.2.4 Environmental Impact Statements	4-30

4.3.2.5 State Environmental Impact Reports.....	4-31
4.3.2.6 Documentation for Nondiscrimination Considerations.....	4-31
4.3.3 Develop Conceptual Stage Relocation Plan	4-34
4.3.4 Considerations for Evaluating Relocation Effects	4-35
4.3.4.1 Last Resort Housing.....	4-35
4.3.4.2 Information Required When a Relocatee is Involved	4-36
4.3.4.3 Information Required When There are No Relocations.....	4-37
4.4 REFERENCES.....	4-38
4.5 FORMS	4-41
4.6 HISTORY	4-42

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4-1 Examples of Potentially Underrepresented Populations	4-2
Table 4-2 Sociocultural Effects Evaluation Issues.....	4-2
Table 4-3 Comparison of the SCEs in ETDM Process and PD&E Phase	4-6
Table 4-4 SCEs Vary Based on Impact Potential.....	4-8
Table 4-5 SCE Considerations.....	4-43

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4-1 SCE Evaluation Process Diagram	4-46
Figure 4-2 Recommended SCE Technical Memorandum Outline.....	4-47

PART 2, CHAPTER 4

SOCIOCULTURAL EFFECTS EVALUATION

4.1 OVERVIEW

4.1.1 Purpose

Pursuant to **23 United States Code (U.S.C.) § 327** and the implementing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) executed on December 14, 2016, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has assumed Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA's) responsibilities under the **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)** for highway projects on the State Highway System (SHS) and Local Agency Program (LAP) projects off the SHS. In general, FDOT's assumption includes all highway projects in Florida whose source of federal funding comes from FHWA or which constitute a federal action through FHWA. This includes responsibilities for environmental review, interagency consultation and other activities pertaining to the review or approval of **NEPA** actions. Consistent with law and the MOU, FDOT will be the Lead Federal Agency for highway projects with approval authority resting in the Office of Environmental Management (OEM).

This chapter contains the FDOT's procedures for evaluating sociocultural effects (SCE) throughout the transportation project delivery process. The SCE evaluation process, illustrated at the end of this chapter in [Figure 4-1](#), identifies and addresses potential effects of transportation projects on communities and community resources. The SCE evaluation process is collaborative, involving government agencies, the public, and other stakeholders, to ensure that community values and concerns receive consideration during project delivery and that no population groups are disproportionately affected. Note, in some state and federal policies, SCE evaluation is called "Community Impact Assessment."

FDOT proactively engages with communities in delivering transportation projects. The SCE evaluation process supports legal requirements during project development to consider and account for sociocultural resources that may be affected by project activities.

The SCE evaluation process assesses social, economic, land use changes, mobility, aesthetics effects and relocations, including potential issues associated with Environmental Justice, Civil Rights, and other nondiscrimination laws. Project benefits and effects on communities are assessed in the SCE evaluation with special consideration for minority, low-income, and other potentially underrepresented populations (see examples in [Table 4-1](#)). The SCE evaluation process analyzes the potential effects of a transportation action on a community. Information gathered through

the SCE evaluation process is carried forward and used as a basis for decision making throughout project delivery.

Table 4-1 Examples of Potentially Underrepresented Populations

Demographic Characteristics	Legal Authority for Protection from Discrimination
Race, color, or national origin	Title VI of the Civil Rights Act
Disability	Americans with Disabilities Act and Rehabilitation Act
Age	Age Discrimination Act
Gender	23 United States Code (USC) 324
Limited English Proficiency	Executive Order (EO) 13166
Minority and low income	EO 12898 (Environmental Justice)
Handicap, age, race, color, sex, or national origin	23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 771

4.1.2 Sociocultural Effect Issues

The SCE evaluation focuses on the six sociocultural issues listed below in [Table 4-2](#). The table also includes examples of topics evaluated for each of the six issues. The issues are described in [Section 4.2.4](#). For additional information, see the [SCE Issue Sheets](#) located on the [SCE Reading Materials](#) page of the [SCE Evaluation Process](#) website. See [Section 4.4](#) for the internet address to all web sites and links used in this chapter.

Table 4-2 Sociocultural Effects Evaluation Issues

<p>Social</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographics • Community Cohesion • Safety/Emergency Response • Community Goals • Quality of Life • Special Community Designations <p>Economic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business & Employment • Tax Base • Traffic Patterns • Business Access • Special Needs Patrons 	<p>Land Use Changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land Use – Urban Form • Local Plan Consistency • Open Space • Sprawl • Focal Points <p>Mobility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modal Choices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pedestrian ○ Bicyclists ○ Transit • Transportation Disadvantaged • Connectivity • Traffic Circulation • Public Parking 	<p>Aesthetic Effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noise/Vibration • Viewshed • Compatibility <p>Relocation Potential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential • Non-Residential • Public Facilities
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4.1.3 Application

The SCE evaluation process starts at the earliest planning stages of a project and continues throughout the project delivery process. Each successive phase builds on the data, analysis, and results of previous SCE evaluations to achieve the particular objectives of the project phase. The level of analysis required to determine potential project effects varies according to project phase, project nature and scope, level of potential controversy, and potential for project effects. Projects qualifying for screening through the Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) process receive early consideration of sociocultural effects during the Planning phase. For other projects, SCE consideration begins during the Project Development and Environment (PD&E) phase. Project types qualifying for ETDM screening are identified in **Chapter 2** of the [ETDM Manual, Topic No. 650-000-002](#).

4.1.3.1 Planning Phase

In the Planning phase, ETDM projects are evaluated for sociocultural effects in the Planning Screen and Programming Screen.

The objectives of the Planning Screen are to consider project feasibility; focus the issues to be addressed during the Programming Screen; and allow for early identification of potential avoidance, minimization, and mitigation opportunities. The Planning Screen is performed for projects being considered for adoption in the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)/Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). It is also performed for some projects that have not been previously screened, but are already cited in these plans. See **Chapter 3** of the [ETDM Manual, Topic No. 650-000-002](#) for more information about the Planning Screen.

The Programming Screen builds upon the Planning Screen evaluation (if conducted) to further identify, refine, and understand potential project issues while supporting the development of a scope of service to complete the detailed analysis during the PD&E Study. Not all Programming Screen projects are preceded by a Planning Screen review. See **Chapter 4** of the [ETDM Manual, Topic No. 650-000-002](#) for more information about the Programming Screen.

4.1.3.2 PD&E Phase

The SCE evaluation process is an important part of the PD&E Study to comply with Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations **40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §§ 1500-1508**, which requires federal agencies to use all practicable means, consistent with the requirements of the **NEPA**, to avoid or minimize any possible adverse effects of their actions upon the quality of the human environment. The SCE evaluation

process also applies to non-federal projects. The level of assessment during PD&E depends on the potential for significant impacts, as defined by **40 CFR §§ 1500-1508**.

4.1.3.3 Updating SCE Evaluations in Subsequent Phases

Communities may change over time. Therefore, potential sociocultural effects are updated at each phase of project delivery. Typically, in the design phase, community information and concerns are gathered through public involvement activities identified in the Community Awareness Plan (CAP). These activities vary depending on the community context, the nature and scope of the project, and the potential for adverse project effects. If commitments have been made, they are carried out according to FDOT [Procedure No. 700-011-035, Project Commitment Tracking](#) and documented in the Environmental Document (see [Part 2, Chapter 22, Commitments](#) for more information).

4.2 PROCEDURE

The major steps in the SCE evaluation process, shown in [Figure 4-1](#), include:

- Step 1** - Review Project Information
- Step 2** - Define the Study Area
- Step 3** - Prepare Community Information
- Step 4** - Evaluate Sociocultural Effects
- Step 5** - Identify Solutions to Project Impacts
- Step 6** - Document Results

An important consideration throughout the SCE evaluation process is the potential for project effects on potentially underrepresented population groups protected under **Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI)**, the President's Executive Order (EO) on Environmental Justice (**EO 12898**), and related nondiscrimination statutes and regulations. The following definitions apply to these nondiscrimination protections:

- **Disabled/Handicapped Person** - Any person who (a) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, (b) has a record of such an impairment, or (c) is regarded as having such an impairment.
- **Minority** - Black or African American, Hispanic, Asian American, American Indian/Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.
- **Limited English Proficient (LEP) persons** - Persons for whom English is not their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English. It includes people who reported to the U.S. Census that they

speaking English “less than very well” (i.e., speak English well, not well, or not at all). It also refers to people of low basic literacy.

- **Low-Income** - A person whose median household income is at or below the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) poverty guidelines. These guidelines are updated annually and are available at the HHS website (see [Section 4.4](#) for the website address).

Thorough demographics for these populations, potential effects on them, and possible solutions to adverse effects must be adequately assessed. The SCE evaluation process incorporates the goals of Environmental Justice throughout the transportation planning and project development process. These goals, as articulated in the US Department of Transportation’s (USDOT) *Environmental Justice Strategy (USDOT, 2016)*, include:

1. Avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority populations and low-income populations.
2. Ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process.
3. Prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.

Considerations and guidance to address these concerns are included in the discussion of each of the SCE evaluation process steps in the following sections of this Chapter. More information about addressing these issues is available on the [SCE Evaluation Process website](#).

All six steps of the SCE evaluation process apply whether the evaluation occurs during the Planning Screen, Programming Screen, or PD&E phase. However, the activities within each step may vary. Generally, as a project transitions from the ETDM process to the PD&E phase, the SCE issues receive more detailed consideration. The level of effort in each step is tailored to the project phase, nature and scope, and study area characteristics, including conditions that may have changed between project phases. [Table 4-3](#) compares the activities that typically occur to support SCE evaluations in Planning Screens, Programming Screens, and PD&E Studies. SCE updates occur in subsequent phases. Activities during those phases will vary depending on the community context, the nature and scope of the project, and potential for adverse project effects.

Table 4-3 Comparison of SCE Evaluations in ETDM Process and PD&E Phase

STEP 1 REVIEW PROJECT INFORMATION		
<i>Planning Screen</i>	<i>Programming Screen</i>	<i>PD&E Study</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review current data [e.g., Environmental Screening Tool (EST) data] Perform community outreach Review prior public input Conduct field review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Planning Screen Summary Report/Issues and Recommendations (if conducted) Review current data (e.g., EST data) Identify/fill data gaps Perform community outreach with local planners and community leaders Review prior public input Conduct field review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Final Programming Screen Summary Report or other project information, if available Identify/fill data gaps Identify affected populations for Public Involvement Plan outreach Conduct field review
STEP 2 DEFINE THE STUDY AREA		
<i>Planning Screen</i>	<i>Programming Screen</i>	<i>PD&E Study</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review field review notes Review EST buffers Review additional data Select appropriate study areas (EST buffers) to evaluate SCE issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review field review notes Review EST buffers focusing on project alternative(s) Review updated data Select appropriate study areas (EST buffers) to evaluate SCE issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review/update field review notes Review available project information Review ETDM screening study areas Refine study area to account for project alternative(s) moving forward
STEP 3 - PREPARE COMMUNITY INFORMATION		
<i>Planning Screen</i>	<i>Programming Screen</i>	<i>PD&E Study</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review compiled material Acquire additional community data Create Sociocultural Data Reports (SDR) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review data from previous SCE evaluation, if completed Acquire additional data Create or update SDRs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review data from previous SCE evaluation Verify community boundaries, community desired features and demographic data Create or update SDR
STEP 4 - EVALUATE SOCIOCULTURAL EFFECTS		
<i>Planning Screen</i>	<i>Programming Screen</i>	<i>PD&E Study</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify resources and level of importance Assess potential effects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct effects Indirect effects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify resources and level of importance Assess potential effects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct effects Indirect effects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify resources and level of importance Evaluate feasible alternatives and no-build Review ETDM screening issues and public input

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cumulative effects (optional) ● Assign Degrees of Effect ● Review ETAT comments ● Assign Summary Degree of Effect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cumulative effects (optional) ● Assign Degrees of Effect ● Review ETAT comments ● Assign Summary Degree of Effect ● Determine PD&E Study scope 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review PD&E phase public input ● Assess effects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Direct effects ○ Indirect effects ○ Cumulative effects ● Assess severity of impacts
STEP 5 - IDENTIFY SOLUTIONS TO PROJECT IMPACTS		
<i>Planning Screen</i>	<i>Programming Screen</i>	<i>PD&E Study</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify potential solutions to project effects or project enhancements ● Identify potential recommendations to address potential effects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review potential solutions/enhancements identified in Planning Screen ● Identify potential solutions to project effects or project enhancements ● Document recommendations to address potential effects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review potential solutions/enhancements from previous screenings ● Work with affected communities to identify viable solutions ● Focus outreach on most affected populations and neighborhoods ● Recommend methods to avoid, minimize, or mitigate project effects or enhance the project
STEP 6 - DOCUMENT RESULTS		
<i>Planning Screen</i>	<i>Programming Screen</i>	<i>PD&E Study</i>
Record potential effects in EST: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Direct effects ● Indirect effects ● Cumulative effects Create Summary Report	Record/update potential effects in EST: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Direct effects ● Indirect effects ● Cumulative effects Create Summary Report	Document: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Project File ● Environmental Document ● Conceptual Stage Relocation Plan (CSRP)

The remainder of [Section 4.2](#) focuses on SCE evaluations conducted during PD&E and subsequent phases. For more information about SCE evaluations in the ETDM process, see the [Practical Application Guides for SCE Evaluations: ETDM Process](#).

In the PD&E phase, project detail is developed to the level necessary to accurately assess and address potential project effects on the natural, cultural, physical, and social environments and support project decisions. The PD&E Study takes into account the potential environmental impacts of a project and the community’s need for safe and efficient transportation. The SCE evaluation is the portion of the study that considers potential effects, both positive and negative, on the sociocultural (or human) environment. It also addresses Environmental Justice, Civil Rights, and related issues.

The SCE evaluation supports the development of an Environmental Document. Information on the various types of Environmental Documents is provided in [Part 1, Chapter 2, Class of Action Determination for Highway Projects](#), and [Part 1, Chapter](#)

10, State, Local, or Privately Funded Project Delivery. The level of assessment and documentation varies by project depending on the:

- Scale and complexity of the project
- Level of controversy involved
- Potential for significant impacts
- Degree and quality of information available from previous activities

SCE evaluations are prepared for projects with minimal to no impact potential and those with greater impact potential. While SCE issues are considered, they are not usually evaluated in detail for projects with minimal or no impact. [Table 4-4](#) compares the difference between SCE evaluations for these different types of projects.

Table 4-4 SCE Evaluations Vary Based on Impact Potential

Projects with Minimal or No Impact Potential	Projects with Greater Impact Potential
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These projects might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Type 1 Categorical Exclusion (CE) ○ Non-Major State Action (NMSA) • Typically, do not qualify for ETDM screenings • SCE evaluations typically focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Local traffic patterns ○ Property access ○ Community cohesiveness ○ Planned community growth or land use patterns • SCE evaluations include sufficient detail to rule out any significant community impacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These projects might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Type 2 CE ○ Environmental Assessment (EA) ○ Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) ○ State Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) • SCE evaluations include detailed evaluation of issues of concern and methods to avoid, minimize, or mitigate potential project impacts • Level of analysis and documentation will vary based on the project context and intensity of effects • If previously screened as an ETDM project, the project SCE evaluation builds upon the previous evaluation to fill information gaps as needed to evaluate issues of concern and complete the appropriate environmental documentation

In the PD&E phase, further evaluation of sociocultural effects may be unnecessary if:

- SCE evaluation process steps for each SCE issue (identified in [Section 4.1.2](#)) were adequately completed and potential sociocultural effects were adequately considered and documented during a previous phase;
- Conditions in the project area have not changed appreciably since the prior SCE evaluation, and
- A community concern is not identified during PD&E.

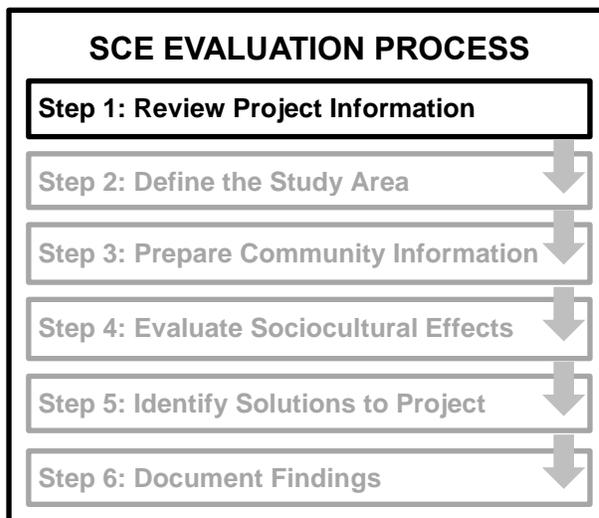
Any SCE issue that was not adequately evaluated and documented during Planning must be evaluated in the PD&E phase. Each of the six SCE issues ([Table 4-2](#)) must be discussed in the Environmental Document to show when and how they were considered in project decision making. If no involvement for a particular issue is indicated, then a statement to that effect is included in the Environmental Document.

Each step of the SCE evaluation process is described in the following subsections. Refer to the [ETDM Manual, Topic No. 650-000-002](#), the [Practical Application Guides for SCE Evaluations](#), the [SCE Evaluation Process](#) website and the [Public Involvement Handbook](#) for additional information regarding techniques and methodologies to support the SCE evaluation.

4.2.1 Step 1: Review Project Information

Information from an earlier project phase or acquired in preparation for the PD&E Study can help determine the level of analysis for the SCE evaluation. For some projects, this information may indicate previously identified community concerns or topics requiring additional consideration such as potentially underrepresented populations in the project vicinity.

During this step, existing project information is supplemented and verified through community outreach, field review of the project area, and data obtained from other sources, as necessary.



4.2.1.1 Collect and Review Project Information

Establish a preliminary understanding of the project by reviewing current project information and information from previous phases (if applicable). Current information will include the project description and purpose and need, Preliminary Environmental

Discussion (PED), personal knowledge of the project area, and, in some cases, contextual information including Geographic Information System (GIS) data analyses and maps from sources such as the Environmental Screening Tool (EST) or other GIS-based analysis tools. Information from previous project phases may also include agency and public commentary. Use available project information to:

- Understand the purpose and need of the project to identify anticipated benefits for the affected community.
- Define a preliminary study area for the SCE evaluation.
- Identify any changes in the project area since the prior project phase.
- Identify need for additional/updated information and targeted community outreach to enhance understanding of the project area and potential sociocultural effects.
- Determine the appropriate level of analysis for the SCE evaluation.
- Recognize community issues/preferences identified in prior project phases so adequate attention can be devoted to these results during the PD&E phase.
- Forward recommendations identified in prior project phases to support subsequent project phases.

In determining the appropriate level of analysis and need for additional information for the SCE evaluation process, consider if the project would:

- Require large amounts of Right of Way (ROW).
- Displace a large number of people.
- Disproportionately affect a potentially underrepresented population group.
- Cause a substantial increase or decrease in traffic through an area.
- Conflict with local government comprehensive plans.
- Impact community facilities, such as schools, parks, or churches.
- Impact historic districts or community landmarks.
- Adversely affect aesthetic features, such as a canopy road or scenic vista.
- Disrupt or divide a cohesive neighborhood.

ETDM Projects

Projects may have received consideration of sociocultural effects during the ETDM process. The results of the Programming Screen are documented in a **Programming Screen Summary Report**, available in the EST. For more details about using the EST, refer to the [EST Handbook](#). In addition, the following guidance documents are available on the [SCE Evaluation Process](#) website to help you find information on the EST:

- [Environmental Screening Tool Project Information](#) includes instructions on locating general project information.
- [Defining Context - Useful Environmental Screening Tool Information](#) identifies material which may help you establish a contextual overview of the project area.

Following the ETDM screening, additional project information may be obtained from the PD&E Project Manager.

Non-ETDM Projects

For non-ETDM projects, a planning phase feasibility study may be a source of project information. Some Districts upload these projects to the EST to enable a preliminary review of existing information through the standard GIS analyses. Other information may be available from the Project Manager or District Planning Office.

4.2.1.2 Gather Community Information

Begin gathering community information describing the sociocultural context of the project area including community facilities/services; presence of certain population groups; and indications of community values, concerns, and preferences. Sources for this information may include:

- Most recent U.S. Census Bureau data (e.g., American Community Survey)
- EST (e.g., the **Sociocultural Data Report** or **Area of Interest Tool**)
- City/county/regional planners within government planning, transit, economic development, housing, and other departments
- Community plans or studies and related public involvement (e.g., neighborhood plan, redevelopment plan, public infrastructure/service plan, and corridor study)
- County property appraiser (e.g., parcel data)
- State licensing agencies (e.g., social service agency and business data)
- Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR)

- Commercially available data sources (e.g., employment data)
- Local historical society (if the project is in a historic district or historically significant area)
- PD&E Project Manager/team

Review the demographic data to help identify where potentially underrepresented populations are located. In order to support the Environmental Justice assessment of disproportional effects, make reasonable efforts to identify the presence of distinct minority and/or low-income communities residing both within and in proximity to the proposed project. Identify those minority and/or low-income groups who use or are dependent on the natural and community resources within the project area.

4.2.1.3 Support the PD&E Public Involvement Plan

Share information about population groups and potential meeting venues in the project area with the PD&E public involvement coordinator to support the development of the PD&E **Public Involvement Plan (PIP)**. To fulfill the **PIP's** purpose in verifying community concerns and preferences for alternatives, inform the public involvement coordinator of any special community outreach needs to support the SCE evaluation. If a project was evaluated during a previous phase, the project information may indicate a population group or neighborhood that should be a focus of the **PIP**. Close coordination between the PD&E team's SCE analyst and public involvement coordinator throughout the SCE evaluation process will help maximize effectiveness and minimize duplication of efforts in obtaining public input.

Identify community contact sources to assist in identifying whether potentially underrepresented populations live, work, or receive services in the project area. If any of these populations have been identified, contact the local government and area leadership organizations for input about the best ways to involve them in the SCE evaluation process. Examples of best practices for reaching potentially underrepresented populations include:

- Identifying community leaders who are willing to help identify common meeting places for people in their communities.
- Conducting a variety of activities to reach people at different times of day and during non-work hours. Also, consider methods for increasing participation of people who may work non-traditional hours.
- Ensuring workshops and hearings are located within safe walking distances from public transit stops.
- Providing information in appropriate languages for those with limited English proficiency.

For more information about the development of the *PIP* and public involvement techniques, see [Part 1, Chapter 11, Public Involvement](#) and the [FDOT Public Involvement Handbook](#).

4.2.1.4 Conduct Field Review

Visit the project area to get a first-hand look. The field review allows you to observe the physical conditions in the project area and how people use the project corridor or site. Pay particular attention to indications of low-income areas or communities of minority populations. In preparation for the field review, coordinate with the MPO/TPO, local government planners, and neighborhood groups to identify community/neighborhood boundaries (e.g., local government jurisdiction, delineated neighborhood, and residential subdivision); special districts (e.g., school, legislative, historic, redevelopment, and employment); and community focal points, history, and goals. When possible, include PD&E team members representing other disciplines and MPO/TPO/local government staff knowledgeable about the project area to participate in the field review.

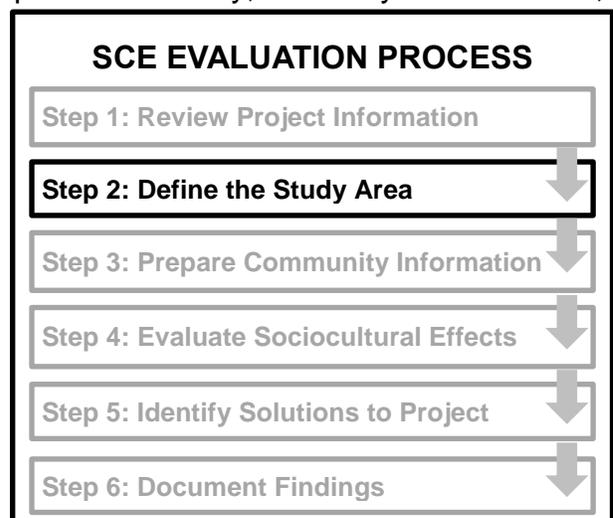
During the field review, check the currency and accuracy of the information you already have identified:

- Inconsistencies between the information and field conditions
- Additional community features or characteristics
- Additional information needed to support the SCE evaluation

View aerial maps to detect community resources, physical features, land use, and other features in the project area. Photograph features in the project area that could be affected by the project, including the existing transportation facility, roadway intersections, community resources, and human activity. Create a photo log as a supplement to the field review notes to enhance the information for the SCE evaluation and PD&E Study documentation. Additional resources are available on [Reading Materials](#) page of the [SCE Evaluation Process](#) website.

4.2.2 Step 2: Define the Study Area

The study area for the SCE evaluation defines the geographic area encompassing the project alternatives and communities/community resources that may be affected by the project. If developed in a previous phase, the study area is further refined in the PD&E phase to encompass only



those project alternatives moving forward and potentially affected communities/community resources.

4.2.2.1 Review Field Notes and Project Information

Review field notes, if available, and project information to become familiar with the area encompassing the project alternatives and potentially affected communities/community resources. During the PD&E phase, the study area boundary will reflect the community context and potential sociocultural effects. Make refinements to the study area as needed to delineate a preliminary study area for the SCE evaluation.

4.2.2.2 Define SCE Evaluation Study Area

The study area for the SCE evaluation may differ from the PD&E project area. The study area may extend beyond the immediate project area depending on the nature of the project, affected communities, and SCE issue. The evaluation of relocation potential, for example, will likely require a finer level of analysis than the evaluation of land use effects. Consider that community cohesion could span a single neighborhood, multiple neighborhoods, or even a small town. An understanding of the characteristics of the community will assist in determining the extent of the study area.

When establishing the study area boundaries, the area should be large enough to include the area likely to experience effects and neither artificially dilute or inflate an affected minority population and/or low-income population. The study area should initially include the potentially underrepresented populations adjacent to the project and should not be adjusted to exclude these communities.

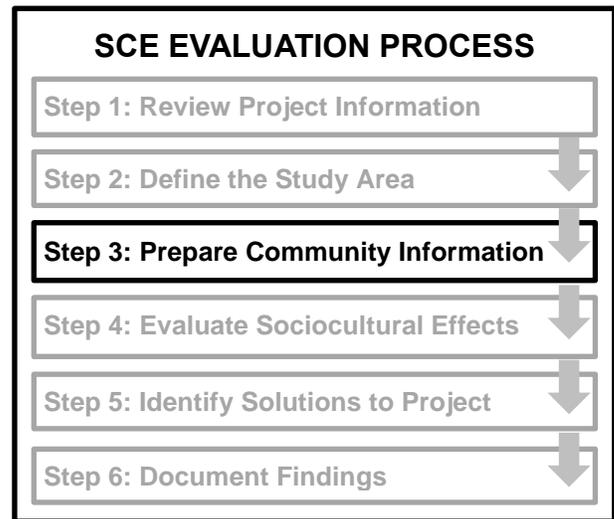
Using maps depicting the conceptual layout of the project alternatives and information collected during Step 1, delineate the area encompassing the communities/community resources having potential for effects. Describe existing conditions, including physical barriers (e.g., highways, waterways, and open spaces), activity centers, special districts and designations, average home values, neighborhood or block boundaries, selected demographic characteristics, and community input. Other sources of information include:

- Newspaper and business journal archives
- Community organization websites
- FDOT staff (e.g., District government liaisons)

Document the methodology used in defining the study area relative to Environmental Justice, Civil Rights and other related issues.

4.2.3 Step 3: Prepare Community Information

Community information for the SCE evaluation describes the history, present physical and sociocultural characteristics, and future trends in the study area for use in identifying and assessing sociocultural effects. The compiled information is organized, verified, and summarized for each SCE issue as it relates to specific communities and population segments in preparation for Steps 3-6, including community outreach activities. At this point, identify any population groups in the study area that require additional consideration under the Environmental Justice, Civil Rights, or other nondiscrimination regulations.



4.2.3.1 Supplement the Community Data

In Steps 1 and 2, you reviewed existing project information and existing conditions, collected a portion of the community information needed for the SCE evaluation, and defined the study area. In this step, supplement the community information as needed to enable you to identify:

- Community/neighborhood boundaries
- Demographic characteristics of communities within the study area, including minority, low-income, limited English proficiency, elderly, or other population subgroups
- Community focal points including service areas and user groups
- Community value placed on community focal points and resources

The type and extent of community information needed for the SCE evaluation depends on the potential for sociocultural effects. If the project was evaluated in a previous phase, focus on updating previously collected data and collecting more detailed data, as appropriate. If a community narrative was prepared, it may provide insights on community values, concerns, and preferences. Building on previous evaluations to deepen your understanding of potential sociocultural effects in the PD&E phase is particularly important.

If community data from a previous phase is unavailable, substantial time has elapsed or change has occurred within the project area, acquire or update the information needed to identify and evaluate potential sociocultural effects.

Community Information for SCE Evaluation - Again, the type and extent of community information collected will depend on the potential for project effects. Refer to [Data Sources for Sociocultural Effects Evaluations](#) for guidance on where to locate community data (found on [Reading Materials](#) page of the [SCE Evaluation Process website](#)).

Demographic Information - Analyze the most recent data available from the U.S. Census Bureau to identify:

- Demographic characteristics of the county where the project is located and communities within the study area (Note: Initially look at a 1-mile buffer area for rural areas and a ¼-mile buffer area for urban areas).
- Percentage of each population group relative to the total population of the study area and the county/counties and municipality/municipalities where the project is located, as appropriate.
- Population groups that may be underrepresented in the project development process based on race, color, national origin, age, gender, religion, economic status, and disability present within the study area.
- Number of census blocks adjacent to the project with proportionately large potentially underrepresented populations.
- Any of the potentially underrepresented population groups representing a small proportion of the census block group population but having a concentrated presence in a smaller geographical unit (i.e., census block).

Community Focal Points - The community information should include an inventory of the places that are important to the community, such as:

- Schools
- Religious facilities
- Community centers
- Parks
- Fire stations
- Law enforcement facilities
- Government buildings
- Healthcare facilities
- Cultural facilities
- Civic centers
- Social service facilities
- Intermodal facilities
- Business districts
- Theme parks
- Major attractors/multi-use facilities
- Bridges
- Cemeteries
- Historic places
- Other significant quality-of-life features

Community/Neighborhood Boundaries - Community/neighborhood boundaries are geographic areas with similar characteristics (e.g., land use, property values, or demographic character) or divided from other areas by natural or constructed boundaries (e.g., water bodies or major roads). Areas of interest that are not official community boundaries, but delineated specifically for the SCE evaluation, should be verified through community outreach.

4.2.3.2 Summarize Community Information

When the community information for the evaluation is collected, it should be summarized in a spreadsheet or other informal report. Indicate whether minority, low-income, or other potentially underrepresented populations are located in the study area. List any readily identifiable groups or clusters of minority or low-income persons in the study area.

The CEQ's *Environmental Justice Guidance under NEPA* states: "Minority populations should be identified where either: (a) the minority population of the affected area exceeds 50 percent or (b) the minority population percentage of the affected area is meaningfully greater than the minority percentage in the general population or other appropriate unit of geographic analysis" (CEQ, 1997). However, it is important to understand that Environmental Justice determinations are based on effects, not population size. It is essential to consider the comparative impact of an action among different population groups. A very small minority or low-income population in the project study area does not eliminate the possibility of a disproportionately high and adverse effect on these populations.

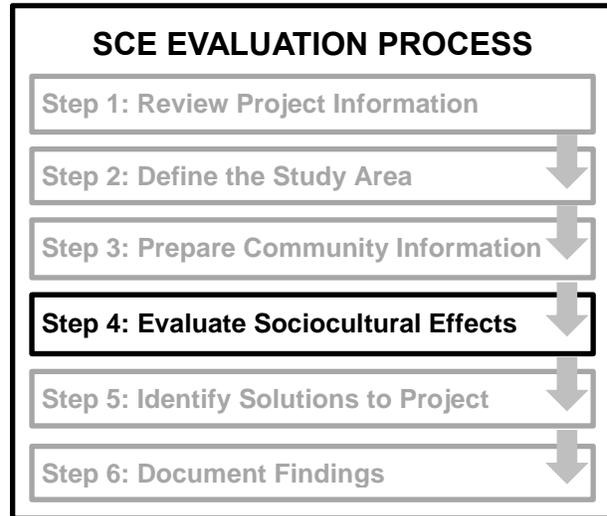
Depending on the complexity of the project and potential for adverse impacts, the summary format may vary. For example, more complex projects such as Environmental Assessments (EAs) or Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) will usually include the following:

- Narrative describing community characteristics, such as population demographics, socioeconomic history and community values, valued resources, and plans for the future
- Visual map or map series depicting physical characteristics, such as neighborhood boundaries, land uses, public facilities, and commercial/employment centers
- Tables, charts, and graphs summarizing important results, such as the presence of population groups, employment, and trends

4.2.4 Step 4: Evaluate Sociocultural Effects

The inventory of community data and public commentary are examined relative to each SCE issue to evaluate potential project effects. Three general types of effects are evaluated as defined by CEQ regulations **40 CFR §§ 1500-1508**:

- **Direct effects** are caused by the action and occur at the same time and place.
- **Indirect (or secondary) effects** are caused by the action and are later in time or farther removed in distance but still reasonably foreseeable.
- **Cumulative effects** result from the incremental effects of an action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions regardless of which agency or person undertakes the action.



The SCE evaluation also analyzes interrelationships among the SCE issues and how various considerations contribute to the avoidance, minimization, or mitigation of project impacts. This analysis becomes a part of the section of the Environmental Document that discusses potential effects of the project. Details about the analysis may also be provided in a **SCE Technical Memorandum**. See [Section 4.3](#) for guidance about documenting the SCE evaluation results.

Project issues identified during previous project phases and review of current data and local knowledge are assessed relative to the project alternative(s), including the no-build alternative (refer to [Part 2, Chapter 3, Engineering Analysis](#) for further guidance on procedures relative to project alternatives). The SCE evaluation is documented in the appropriate Environmental Document in accordance with Part 1 of the PD&E Manual.

4.2.4.1 Identify Community Resources and Level of Importance

Identify potentially affected community resources and the level of importance placed on those resources by the community. The SCE Considerations included in [Table 4-5](#) provide guidance on identifying community resources relative to the six SCE issues ([Table 4-2](#)).

4.2.4.2 Perform Community Outreach

In coordination with the PD&E public involvement coordinator, perform community outreach throughout the SCE evaluation process to provide opportunity for input on the

project, verify community data, and identify community concerns and preferences for project alternatives/features. The focus of PD&E phase community outreach is specific to community groups and neighborhoods with potential for project effects. The methods and level of community outreach should be tailored to the specific community, the nature of the project, and the potential for project effects. Special considerations may be necessary to effectively involve potentially underrepresented populations.

Coordinate with the PD&E public involvement coordinator to identify any special community outreach needs for the SCE evaluation that could be accommodated during *PIP* activities (e.g., outreach materials tailored to a limited English proficient population). Suggest refinements to the *PIP* to ensure adequate participation and consultation of affected community groups and neighborhoods.

More information on community outreach for PD&E projects is provided in [Part 1, Chapter 11, Public Involvement](#) and in the [FDOT Public Involvement Handbook](#).

4.2.4.3 Assess Potential Direct Effects

Assess the potential for both positive and negative direct effects from the project on the community and area of effect. An example of a direct effect is increased customer exposure to a grocery store due to a higher level of vehicle traffic on a widened road. The widened road might also make it more difficult for a local transportation-disadvantaged population to walk across the road to access the grocery store.

Use information from any previous project phases, community data, community commentary, and the SCE considerations listed in [Table 4-5](#) to assist in identifying direct effects for each SCE issue. Also refer to the [Practical Application Guides for SCE Evaluation: PD&E](#), and [SCE Evaluation Aids](#) available on the [SCE Evaluation Process](#) website.

If an evaluation of direct effects was performed in a previous phase, verify those results and update as needed. If considerable time has passed since the prior evaluation, conditions have changed appreciably in the project area, or additional impacts are identified, additional study may be required in the PD&E phase.

Social

Determine the potential for effects on community groups and community resources. Analyze the demographics of the study area and the potential for disproportionate impacts on populations addressed in Title VI and related nondiscrimination statutes. Consider whether the project could influence a significant influx or departure of residents. Look for signs of community cohesion. Assess the quantity and quality of human interaction and potential for the project to create/eliminate barriers to interaction. Be alert to potential changes in the environment affecting the safety of pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists, and delivery of emergency services. Consider whether the project complements or detracts from the community's goals or special designations (e.g., community

redevelopment area). Investigate the community's history, community goals, community focal points, unique attributes, and quality of life features to help identify potential project effects. The team members preparing the Cultural Resources Assessment Survey for the PD&E Study may be able to provide information about the community's history.

Useful information for this evaluation includes census data, public commentary, field review notes, local planner interviews, established community/neighborhood boundaries, community plans, special designations, and datasets for emergency services, transportation facilities, and community focal points.

Economic

Identify potential project effects on economic activity in the study area, local area, and region. Note potential project effects on business and employment activity in the study area, including industries with special needs (e.g., freight distributor) or significance (e.g., regional employer). Identify economic-oriented land uses/designations, economic development plans/goals, special designations (e.g., truck routes), and community development priorities in the study area. Consider potential impacts on property values and the local government tax base. Identify changes to routes, access, parking, or visibility that could benefit or impair businesses, employment centers, or community facilities. Note transportation modes serving special needs populations and identify potential effects on these populations, including any disproportionate economic effects.

Useful information for this assessment includes public commentary, field review notes, local planner interviews, community plans (e.g., local strategic economic development plan), datasets for existing/future land uses, special designations (e.g., community redevelopment area, enterprise zone, or brownfield), major employers, and freight-related features.

Land Use Changes

Evaluate the project's consistency with the physical character of the area and applicable community plans. Consider the project's compatibility with the community's land use vision and existing/planned land use patterns and urban form. Review the local government comprehensive plan(s) and any special area plans to assess the project's consistency with community goals. Evaluate the potential for changes in the acreage devoted to recreational/open space and rural lands. Assess the project's potential to facilitate or deter urban sprawl. Explore the potential for effects on unique community features (e.g., historic landmarks/structures, water features, parks, landscaping, and natural vegetation).

Useful information for this evaluation includes public commentary, field review notes, local planner interviews, community plans (e.g., local government comprehensive plan), planned and approved development information, datasets for existing/future land uses and special designations (e.g., overlays, brownfields, and historic districts).

Mobility

Identify potential project effects on mobility and accessibility in the study area with emphasis on non-driving population groups (i.e., elderly, young, disabled, and low-income individuals). Identify existing and planned transportation modes (e.g., pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and vehicle) and services (e.g., public bus routes, school bus routes, and transportation disadvantaged services), and examine the project's relationship to those modes and potential for effects. If a transportation-disadvantaged population is present in the study area, consider potential effects on the transportation system serving this population. Examine the travel behavior of residents, workers, shoppers, and others in the study area; and, evaluate how the project could impede or enhance mobility and access. If changes to existing traffic patterns, circulation, or access are envisioned, consider who might benefit or be impacted as a result. Identify if tolling is being considered and potential effects on low-income communities [*Environmental Justice and Tolling: A Review of Tolling and Potential Impacts to Environmental Justice Populations (USDOT, 2016)*]. Identify potential effects on public parking. Verify that the project is consistent with local and regional transportation plans.

Useful information for this evaluation includes public commentary, field review notes, local planner interviews, census data, transportation plans, community plans, and datasets for mobility features and community focal points.

Aesthetic Effects

Assess the project's compatibility with the community's aesthetic values such as noise, vibration, and physical appearance. Examine the type and intensity of project impacts on noise sensitive sites (e.g., residential areas, hotels, nursing homes, and parks); vibration sensitive sites (e.g., residential uses, eye clinics, dentist offices, and hospitals); special viewsheds and vistas; community focal points; historic structures, districts, and landmarks; and community character (e.g., existing and planned streetscaping, highway beautification, canopy roads, and development patterns). See [Part 2, Chapter 5, Aesthetic Effects](#) for further guidance on evaluating aesthetic effects.

Useful information for this evaluation includes public commentary, field review notes, local planner interviews, community plans, special designations, and datasets for historical/archeological sites, healthcare facilities, and points of interest.

Relocation Potential

Identify residences, businesses, and institutional or community facilities that may require relocation to accommodate the project. Some facilities such as hospitals, sports arenas, and those involving industrial activities can be difficult to relocate. Estimate the number of parcels located in the project right of way that are occupied by residential, non-residential, institutional, and other community facility uses.

Useful information for this evaluation includes public commentary; field review notes; right of way maps; property appraiser parcel information; **Conceptual Stage Relocation Plan (CSRP)**; and datasets for existing land use, points of interest, and historical structures/archaeological sites. See [Section 4.3.4](#) for more information about the **CSRP** and how to include the information it contains into the Environmental Document.

4.2.4.4 Assess Potential Indirect Effects

Assess the potential for both positive and negative project-related indirect effects on the community, greater local area, and region. Indirect effects are caused by other actions that have an established relationship or connection to the project. These related actions would not or could not occur without the original project. For example, the displacement of an anchor tenant in a business complex as a result of a new road alignment could cause other tenants in unaffected buildings to relocate.

Use information from any previous project phases, community data, community commentary, and the SCE considerations listed in [Table 4-5](#) to assist in identifying indirect effects. Methods for analyzing indirect effects include quantitative methods, such as travel demand models and integrated land use and transportation models, and qualitative methods, such as scenario writing, focus groups, and expert panels. Additional guidance for evaluating indirect effects is available on the **American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Center for Environmental Excellence** website (See [Section 4.4](#) for website).

4.2.4.5 Assess Potential Cumulative Effects

Consider whether project effects, when combined with the effects of other actions, will contribute to cumulative effects on a community. Cumulative effects can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over time. If a Cumulative Effects Evaluation (CEE) is indicated, it is important to document the consideration of cumulative effects and the rationale for determining the level of analysis. Refer to the [FDOT Cumulative Effects Evaluation Handbook](#) for considerations and guidance.

4.2.4.6 Describe Degree of Project Effects

Information from the previous steps helps to identify the potential for project effects on the community/community resources, the community's values/desires, and the public's reaction to the proposed project. The next step in the process is to use this information, along with public input, to describe the project effects for each of the six SCE issues. Consider both positive effects (benefits) and adverse effects (burdens). When potentially underrepresented populations are located in the affected area, describe the effects relative to these populations. Describe project effects in terms of the following factors:

- Magnitude - size or amount of effect
- Geographic extent - how widespread the effect may be
- Duration and frequency - whether the effect is a one-time event, intermittent, or chronic

When characterizing effects, consider the project context. Effects may vary depending on the setting, or context, of the project. Community input will help with this assessment.

4.2.4.7 Identify Adverse Effects on Minority and Low-income Populations

If minority or low-income populations are located in the affected area, the next step of the process identifies adverse effects to those populations. This sub-step is not necessary if minorities or low-income populations are not affected by the project.

For the purposes of Environmental Justice, consider all effects, not just the six SCE issues. Coordinate with other members of the PD&E project team to obtain information about other potential effects. The **USDOT Order 5610.2(a)**, defines adverse effects as: “the totality of significant individual or cumulative human health or environmental effects, including interrelated social and economic effects, which may include, but are not limited to: bodily impairment, infirmity, illness or death; air, noise, and water pollution and soil contamination; destruction or disruption of man-made or natural resources; destruction or diminution of aesthetic values; destruction or disruption of community cohesion or a community's economic vitality; destruction or disruption of the availability of public and private facilities and services; vibration; adverse employment effects; displacement of persons, businesses, farms, or nonprofit organizations; increased traffic congestion, isolation, exclusion or separation of minority or low-income individuals within a given community or from the broader community; and the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of, benefits of DOT programs, policies, or activities” (**USDOT, 2012**).

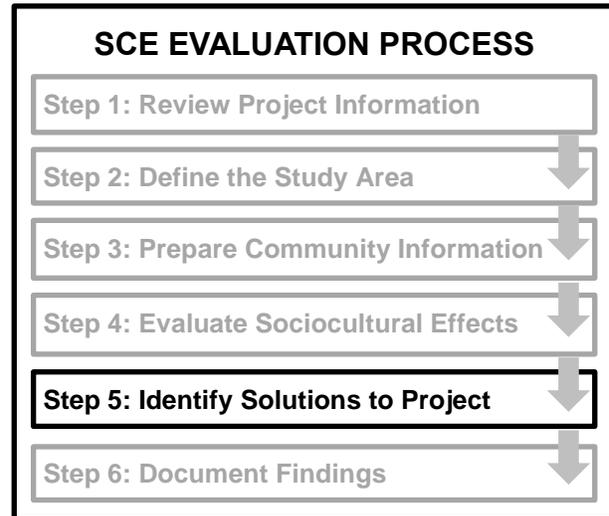
When evaluating whether a potential effect is “adverse,” consider input from the affected community. What one group perceives as an adverse effect may be considered a benefit by another group. It is also possible for different individuals within a community to perceive the effect differently. Some may see it as a benefit, others as a burden. A robust public involvement plan will assist with this part of the assessment. See [Part 1, Chapter 11, Public Involvement](#) for more information about public involvement.

4.2.5 Step 5: Identify Solutions to Project Impacts

One of the functions of the PD&E phase SCE evaluation is to recommend methods to avoid, minimize, or mitigate potential project impacts or enhance the project's fit in the community. Recommendations to address potential project impacts may be carried forward from previous project phases or may originate during the PD&E phase. Refer to the [Resolving SCE Issues Guidance Sheet](#).

4.2.5.1 Review Previous Recommendations

Review any recommendations made during a previous project phase to address project impacts or enhance the project. Evaluate whether the recommendations are still acceptable in light of any changes the community may have experienced since the previous project phase. This information will be the starting point for further discussion with the community about the project.



4.2.5.2 Work with Communities to Evaluate/Devise Solutions

Work with project stakeholders to solicit input from affected communities on transportation solutions and design features to address project impacts. This can happen through targeted group meetings with project stakeholders, homeowners' associations, affected businesses. The range of solutions to address adverse project impacts fall into the following four categories:

1. **Avoidance** - Alterations to the project so that an adverse effect does not occur (e.g., minor alignment shifts or reduced cross-sections to avoid a community resource)
2. **Minimization** - Modifications to the project to reduce the severity of the effect (e.g., timing construction to coincide with the tourism off-season)
3. **Mitigation** - Actions to alleviate or offset an effect or replace a protected resource (e.g., replacement of impacted property or facilities)
4. **Enhancement** - Additional desirable or attractive features added to the project to make it fit more harmoniously into the community (e.g., landscaping to complement the existing or planned community aesthetics, placement of crosswalks, refuge areas, and transit stops to improve pedestrian mobility and accessibility)

Consider avoidance solutions first, moving sequentially to other approaches if initial solutions appear unviable (e.g., creates other impacts or is inconsistent with the project purpose and need, community preferences, or FDOT standards and requirements). Regardless of approach, coordination with appropriate FDOT offices (e.g., Design, Construction, ROW) must take place and any commitments must be documented consistent with [Procedure No. 700-011-035, FDOT Commitment Tracking](#) and [Part 2, Chapter 22, Commitments](#).

4.2.5.3 Focus Outreach on Affected Populations and Neighborhoods

Obtain public input on potential project solutions through community outreach. Focus outreach on populations and neighborhoods that may be potentially affected by the project. Refer to [Part 1, Chapter 11, Public Involvement](#) and the [FDOT Public Involvement Handbook](#) for additional guidance.

4.2.5.4 Document Solutions to Project Impacts

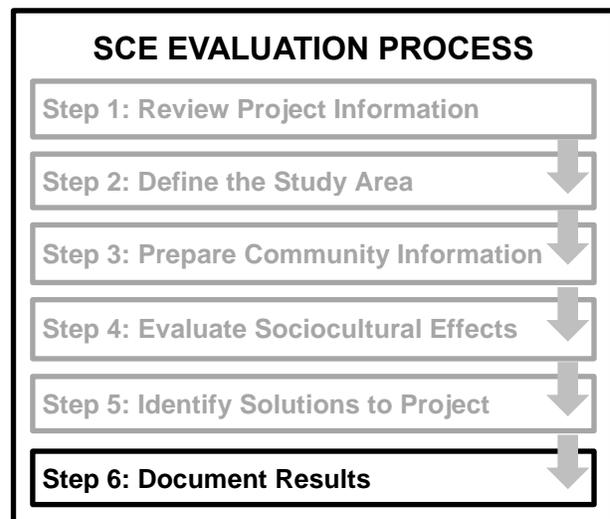
Work with the PD&E Project Manager and team to identify solutions to project impacts, incorporating community values and preferences as appropriate and feasible. When considering project commitments to address sociocultural effects, refer to FDOT [Procedure No. 700-011-035, Project Commitment Tracking](#), for requirements. The Project Manager is responsible for the coordination, documentation, and transmission of project commitments.

4.2.6 Step 6: Document Results

Refer to [Section 4.3](#) for instructions about documenting the SCE evaluation results.

4.2.7 Identify Disproportionately High and Adverse Effects

If the effects remain adverse after mitigation is considered, then a determination must be made whether those effects are disproportionately high and adverse with respect to minority and/or low-income populations. This sub-step is not necessary if minority or low-income populations are not affected by the project.



Per **USDOT Order 5610.2(a)**, a disproportionately high and adverse effect on a minority or low-income population means the adverse effect is predominantly borne by such population or is appreciably more severe or greater in magnitude on the minority or low-income population than the adverse effect suffered by the non-minority or non-low-income population. Compare the impacts on the minority and/or low-income populations with

respect to the impacts on the overall population within the project area. Consider the results of the SCE evaluation as well as other topics such as air, noise, water pollution, hazardous waste, and construction.

If there are no disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and/or low-income populations once mitigation and benefits are considered, that determination should be stated in the document. This completes the Environmental Justice evaluation.

If there is a disproportionately high and adverse effect on minority or low-income populations, after taking benefits and mitigation into account, evaluate whether there are practicable mitigation measures or alternatives that would avoid or reduce the disproportionately high and adverse effects [**USDOT Order 5610.2(a)**]. When determining whether these options are possible, take into account the social, economic, and environmental effects as well as the cost of the options. Use appropriate outreach techniques to seek input from the affected communities. Consistent with **USDOT Order 5610.2(a)**, federal projects with disproportionately high and adverse effects will only be approved if further mitigation measures or alternatives that would avoid or reduce the disproportionately high and adverse effects are not practicable.

In addition, **Title VI** prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin. Accordingly, a project that results in a disparate impact to one of these groups may be carried out only if: 1) there is a substantial legitimate justification for the project; and 2) there are no reasonable alternatives that would be less adverse on protected population. See FHWA's **Guidance on Environmental Justice and NEPA** and **FTA circular 4702.1B** for specific guidance regarding these factors.

4.2.8 Updating SCE Evaluations in Subsequent Phases

At each production phase, projects are re-evaluated in accordance with **23 CFR Part 771** to assure that there has not been a significant change in the project design, project limits, scope, or environmental impacts since approval of the Environmental Document. Communities may change over time and potential effects and the community's perception of those effects may also change. Therefore, the SCE evaluation is reviewed during Re-evaluation. [Part 1, Chapter 13, Re-evaluations](#) provides more information on Re-evaluations.

If there are changes in the affected community, they are described in the Re-evaluation. Typical activities include:

- **Desktop data analysis** - Compare the previous SCE evaluation results with current information.
- **Windshield survey** - Review aerial photographs and drive through the project area to identify new community features or changes in the community characteristics.

- **Public Involvement** - Identify any new community concerns and potential solutions during any public involvement activities conducted after approval of the Environmental Document and through the **Community Awareness Plan (CAP)**. If potentially underrepresented populations will be affected by the project due to project changes, special considerations may be necessary to fully engage the community. See [Part 1, Chapter 11, Public Involvement](#) for more information about public involvement.

4.3 DOCUMENTATION

In the PD&E phase, the SCE evaluation results, recommendations, and supporting information are used to update the project file and prepare appropriate sections of the Environmental Document. Information from the **CSRP** (See the [Right of Way Procedures Manual, Topic No. 575-000-000](#)), which supports the evaluation of potential relocation effects, is also used to prepare the Environmental Document.

4.3.1 Update Project File

Appropriate information for the project file includes:

- All information compiled and assessments performed for the SCE evaluation (e.g., demographic data, maps, analyses—including the **CSRP**—and public comments)
- Community outreach materials (e.g., contact lists, description of activities, project information handouts, and correspondence)

Documents in the project file provide justification for project recommendations, demonstrate that public input was solicited and considered in project decisions, and provide guidance for subsequent project phases and future projects.

4.3.2 Prepare Environmental Document

Maintain a written record of all results, beginning with the potential sociocultural effects suggested by the compiled community information and proceeding to more detailed analysis as alternatives are refined and evaluated. Prepare an executive summary of key results, including public concerns, conclusions of various analyses, strategies for addressing impacts, and any commitments made to the public.

Summarize the results and recommendations of the SCE evaluation in the appropriate sections of the project's Environmental Document or a separate **SCE Technical Memorandum** (see [Figure 4-2](#) for a sample outline). If a separate **SCE Technical Memorandum** is prepared, summarize the results in the Environmental Document. These memorandums may be used at any time, and are recommended when there are substantial concerns about community effects.

When preparing a separate **SCE Technical Memorandum** for federal highway projects, include the following statement on the cover page:

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by FDOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. § 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated December 14, 2016 and executed by FHWA and FDOT.

Documentation of the SCE evaluation in the Environmental Document varies by Class of Action (COA) and complexity of the project.

Results of the SCE evaluation are documented in the Environmental Document as described below.

4.3.2.1 Type 1 Categorical Exclusions or Non-Major State Actions

Minimal documentation on sociocultural effects is required for Type 1 Categorical Exclusions (CEs) and Non-Major State Actions (NMSA). For Type 1 CEs, the SCE evaluation results are recorded on the **Type 1 Categorical Exclusion Checklist, Form No. 650-050-12** found in [Part 1, Chapter 2, Class of Action Determination for Highway Projects](#). For NMSAs, the SCE evaluation results are recorded on the **Non-Major State Actions Checklist, Form No. 650-050-30** found in [Part 1, Chapter 10, State, Local, or Privately Funded Project Delivery](#).

4.3.2.2 Type 2 Categorical Exclusions

The Environmental Document for a Type 2 CE (also referred to as Type 2 CE documentation) includes the **Type 2 Categorical Exclusion Determination Form, Form No. 650-050-11, Preliminary Engineering Report (PER)** and, if applicable, the public hearing transcript. For additional information on the components of a Type 2 CE, see [Part 1, Chapter 5, Type 2 Categorical Exclusion](#).

Environmental Analysis - To document sociocultural effects on the **Type 2 Categorical Exclusion Determination Form, Form No. 650-050-11**, place an "X" in the appropriate column indicating the level of impact in the Environmental Analysis section. The six SCE issues are documented in **Section 3.A, Social and Economic**, of the **Type 2 Categorical Exclusion Determination Form, Form No. 650-050-11**. If an SCE issue is not in any way involved with the project, mark the column indicating "NoInv." If the project is expected to result in an enhancement to the resource, mark the column "Enhance" and provide documentation. If a perceived impact is not significant, mark the column "No" and provide documentation. If a perceived impact is significant, mark the column "Yes" and provide documentation.

Attach documentation to substantiate the impact determination and reference the attachment(s) the Supporting Information column. Summarize any required minimization

and mitigation actions or features that were developed in response to community impacts. Include summaries and analyses of community outreach and public involvement activities that supported the SCE evaluation. Describe any ideas implemented in the preferred alternative that addressed community concerns.

To record that the project has fully considered effects to minorities and other groups under the **Civil Rights Acts of 1964**, Environmental Justice, and other nondiscrimination laws and regulations, the following standard statement is included above the reviewers' signatures in **Section 6** on the **Type 2 Categorical Exclusion Determination Form**:

This project has been developed without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, or family status.

Commitments - List commitments to address sociocultural effects or controversies for the selected alternative during design and/or construction in the Commitments section of the **Type 2 Categorical Exclusion Determination Form, Form No. 650-050-11** per [Part 2, Chapter 22, Commitments](#). These commitments should be the same as those on the **Project Commitment Record, Form No. 700-011-35**.

For additional guidance on documenting Type 2 CEs, refer to [Part 1, Chapter 5, Type 2 Categorical Exclusion](#).

4.3.2.3 Environmental Assessments

Environmental Analysis - Summarize the results of the SCE evaluation in the Social and Economic sub-section. The summary should be commensurate in scope with the impact analysis result and should provide sufficient information to briefly describe the communities and community resources that have the likelihood to be impacted by the project; descriptions of foreseeable impacts to the six SCE issues; and recommended avoidance, mitigation, minimization, or enhancement actions.

To record that the project has fully considered effects to minorities and other groups under the **Civil Rights Acts of 1964**, Environmental Justice, and other nondiscrimination laws and regulations, the following standard statement must be included in this section of the document:

This project has been developed without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, or family status.

Comments and Coordination - Include a summary of community outreach activities used in the SCE evaluation. Documentation of this section will be in accordance with the public involvement requirements found in [Part 1, Chapter 11, Public Involvement](#).

Commitments - Provide any commitments to address sociocultural effects or controversies for the selected alternative during design and/or construction in the Commitments section per [Part 2, Chapter 22, Commitments](#). These commitments

should be the same as those on the ***Project Commitment Record, Form No. 700-011-35***.

The processing of an EA and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) are discussed in [Part 1, Chapter 6, Environmental Assessment](#) and [Part 1, Chapter 7, Finding of No Significant Impact](#).

4.3.2.4 Environmental Impact Statements

Executive Summary - To record that the project has fully considered effects to minorities and other groups under the ***Civil Rights Acts of 1964***, Environmental Justice, and other nondiscrimination laws and regulations, the following standard statement must be included in this section of the document:

This project has been developed without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, or family status.

Environmental Analysis - Provide a concise summary of the existing sociocultural environment for each of the six SCE issues in the Social and Economic sub-section of the Environmental Analysis section of the EIS by using the compiled community information for the project. Include information demonstrating that special populations have received full consideration. Summarize the potential adverse community impacts for each alternative and strategies for resolving adverse impacts in this sub-section. A separate section addressing Environmental Justice is recommended for projects where this may be an issue. If any of the SCE issues has a significant impact, it should be clearly described in this section.

Comments and Coordination - Indicate project features developed in conjunction with community outreach and coordination with government agencies, private groups, and the public and provide documentation of coordination efforts.

Commitments - List commitments to address sociocultural effects or controversies for the selected alternative during design and/or construction per [Part 2, Chapter 22, Commitments](#). These commitments should be the same as those on the ***Project Commitment Record, Form No. 700-011-35***.

EISs addressing a significant SCE issue typically include a separate ***SCE Technical Memorandum***. See [Figure 4-2](#) for a recommended outline.

See [Part 1, Chapter 11, Public Involvement](#) for additional information related to ***Title VI*** and ***Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*** compliance. Refer to [Part 1, Chapter 8, Draft Environmental Impact Statement](#), and [Part 1, Chapter 9, Final Environmental Impact Statement](#) for more information about preparing EISs.

4.3.2.5 State Environmental Impact Reports

Environmental Analysis - Include the SCE evaluation results in **Section 2** of the **State Environmental Impact Report Form, Form No. 650-050-43** (found in [Part 1, Chapter 10, State, Local, or Privately Funded Project Delivery](#)). Place an "X" in the appropriate column indicating the level of impact in the Environmental Analysis section. The SCE evaluation issues are documented in section A "Social Impacts." If an SCE issue is not in any way involved with the project, mark the column indicating "NoInv." If an issue exists but there is minimal impact, mark the column indicating "No" and provide documentation. If a perceived impact is significant, mark the column "Yes" and provide documentation. Provide documentation in the Supporting Information column and supplement with attachments as necessary to substantiate the impact determination.

To record that the project has fully considered effects to minorities and other groups under the **Civil Rights Acts of 1964**, Environmental Justice, and other nondiscrimination laws and regulations, the following standard statement is included in **Section 9.** of the **State Environmental Impact Report Form, Form No. 650-050-43**:

This project has been developed without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, or family status.

Commitments - Discuss all project commitments made in coordination with the community in this section of the State Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) per [Part 2, Chapter 22, Commitments](#). See [Procedure No. 700-011-035, FDOT Commitment Tracking](#).

For more information about developing SEIRs, see [Part 1, Chapter 10, State, Local, or Privately Funded Project Delivery](#).

4.3.2.6 Documentation for Nondiscrimination Considerations

When minority or low income population groups will be adversely affected by the project, it is often addressed in a separate section of the Social and Economic sub-section titled Social of the Environmental Document. Otherwise, it may be incorporated into the discussion of the six SCE issues as appropriate. In either case, the documentation should include the following:

1. Briefly describe **EO 12898**. See the example below.

EXAMPLE

Describing Executive Order 12898 in the Environmental Document

“Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations, signed by the President on February 11, 1994, directs federal agencies to take appropriate and necessary steps to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse effects of federal projects on the health or environment of minority and low-income populations to the greatest extent practicable and permitted by law.”

2. **Provide Demographic Information** - The characteristics of the population in the study area, including those identified in [Table 4-1](#), should be listed in a table and compared to a larger reference community such as the county, census tract, or traffic analysis zone. The discussion should also describe the method used to identify minority and low income populations (e.g., analysis of Census data, minority business directories, direct observation, or a public involvement process).

When minority or low-income populations will not be adversely affected by the proposed project, the Environmental Document should reflect that determination (see example text below).

EXAMPLE

Determination of No Adverse Effects

“No minority or low-income populations have been identified that would be adversely impacted by the proposed project, as determined above. Therefore, in accordance with the provisions of ***Executive Order 12898*** and ***FHWA Order 6640.23a***, no further Environmental Justice analysis is required.”

3. **Explain Coordination, Access to Information, and Participation** - In the appropriate section of the Environmental Document, discuss the major proactive efforts used in the project to ensure meaningful opportunities for public participation, including activities to increase participation of low-income and minority populations. Include in the document the views of the affected populations about the project and any proposed mitigation, and describe what steps are being taken to resolve any controversies that exist. Document the degree to which the affected groups of minority and/or low-income populations have been involved in the decision-making process related to the alternative selection, impact analysis, and mitigation.

- 4. Describe Project Effects** - Summarize the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the project on the community. References to other sections in the Environmental Document can be cited, as appropriate. The beneficial and adverse effects on the overall population and on minority and low-income populations, in particular, need to be addressed under the applicable social & economic, cultural, natural, or physical topics.

Discuss what measures are being considered for alternatives to avoid or mitigate the adverse effects. Any activity that demonstrates sensitivity to special needs should be highlighted, such as accommodations for transit dependency and/or addressing the need for translators. For projects that travel through predominantly minority and low-income and predominantly non-minority and non-low-income areas, compare mitigation and environmental enhancement actions that affect each group.

If the effects remain adverse after mitigation is considered, then a determination must be made whether those effects are disproportionately high and adverse with respect to minority and/or low-income populations.

In selecting the preferred alternative, the Environmental Document should include a discussion of the magnitude and distribution of disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority and low income populations for all alternatives. If there are no disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and/or low-income populations once mitigation and benefits are considered, that determination should be stated in the document (see example below).

EXAMPLE

Statement of a Determination of No Disproportionately High and Adverse Effects

“Based on the above discussion and analysis, the XYZ alternative(s) will not cause disproportionately high and adverse effects on any minority or low-income populations in accordance with the provisions of **Executive Order 12898** and **FHWA Order 6640.23a**. No further Environmental Justice analysis is required.”

- 5. Document Decision to Proceed when Disproportionately High and Adverse Effects Exist, if applicable** - When there is a disproportionately high and adverse effect on minority or low-income populations, the Environmental Document should describe how the impacted populations/communities were involved in the decision-making process. The document also needs to identify what practicable mitigation commitments have been made. In addition, if the affected population is a minority population protected under **Title VI (42 U.S.C. §§ 2000d – 2000d-7)**, the document must include the following determinations, as appropriate:

- There is a substantial need for the project, based on the overall public interest; and
- Alternatives that would have less adverse effects on protected populations have either:
 - Adverse social, economic, environmental, or human health impacts that are more severe; or
 - Would involve increased costs of an extraordinary magnitude

For Environmental Documents prepared for the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), refer to [Part 1, Chapter 14, Transit Project Delivery](#) and *FTA's Circular 4703.1, Environmental Justice Policy Guidance for FTA Recipients (FTA, 2012)*.

4.3.3 Develop Conceptual Stage Relocation Plan

Whenever relocations are anticipated for a project, a **Conceptual Stage Relocation Plan (CSRP)** is prepared by District ROW Office at the same time that the Environmental Document is being prepared by the District environmental staff. The plan should include detailed data about the demographics of the households and businesses being relocated, replacement property, and relocation assistance. [Chapter 9](#) of the [Right of Way Procedures Manual, Topic No. 575-000-000](#) contains a wide range of methods for addressing potential impacts, including financial, design, replacement/restoration, planning/programmatic assistance, and regulatory strategies. If there are no relocatees, or if relocation assistance is not going to be provided on the project, then a **CSRP** is not required.

It is the responsibility of District environmental staff to coordinate with the District ROW Office to ensure that the preparation of the **CSRP** coincides with project scheduling and that delays are avoided. Close coordination will also ensure that all alignment alternatives have been properly assessed.

The data from the plan must be incorporated into the Environmental Document (Type 2 CE, EA, EIS, or SEIR). Upon receipt of the plan from the District ROW Office, District environmental staff summarize the data contained in the **CSRP** in the appropriate sections of the Environmental Document to address anticipated relocation effects. It must accompany the Type 2 CE, EA, or Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) Environmental Documents when provided to OEM. Acceptance of the **CSRP** as adequate supporting documentation occurs when the Type 2 CE is approved or the EA or DEIS is approved for public availability. The **CSRP** is then placed in the project file for the administrative record.

Information about relocations is updated during a re-evaluation as the project progresses, consistent with [Part 1, Chapter 13, Re-evaluations](#).

4.3.4 Considerations for Evaluating Relocation Effects

Listed below are some important points to keep in mind in developing the information from the **CSRP** for inclusion in the Relocation Potential section of the Environmental Document:

- All relocation information must be quantifiable (i.e., a general statement such as “There are sufficient resources available for residential relocatees” is not acceptable as quantifiable data).
- The **CSRP** must document the sources of information used in developing the plan. Since most of the information provided in the **CSRP** is secondary source information, the data are estimates. Ensure that the information provided in the Environmental Document is accurate, timely, and adequate with respect to identifying and discussing relocation effects within the project area.
- All pertinent data in the **CSRP** must be summarized and discussed in the Environmental Document.
- A brief discussion of Last Resort Housing must be provided when comparable replacement housing is not available. [Section 4.3.4.1](#) of this chapter provides standard information to be incorporated into the Environmental Document.
- A brief summary of FDOT’s Relocation Assistance Program must also be provided. [Sections 4.3.4.2](#) and [4.3.4.3](#) provide standard information to be incorporated into the Environmental Document depending on whether there is involvement with relocatees.
- If “functional replacement” pursuant to **23 CFR § 710.509** may be provided, the results of discussions and decisions concerning “functional replacement” must be included in the Environmental Document. Any commitments must also be listed in the appropriate sections. See [Procedure No. 700-011-035, FDOT Commitment Tracking](#).

4.3.4.1 Last Resort Housing

When comparable replacement housing is not available, the following standard paragraph must be included in the Relocation Potential section of the Environmental Document (Type 2 CE, EA, EIS or SEIR):

Comparable replacement housing for sale and rent is available in (Any City). However, there may be some last resort rent supplements and last resort replacement housing payments necessary. Last resort housing payments would be used in order to place the relocatees in decent, safe, and sanitary housing, if necessary. Should last resort housing be constructed, the housing would be available before the relocatees are required to vacate

their dwellings. There are numerous residential lots available for new construction within the (Any City) area. Lot sizes range from ___ square feet to ___ square feet and are priced from \$___ to \$___.

4.3.4.2 Information Required When a Relocatee is Involved

The following standard information must be included in the Relocation Potential section of the Environmental Document when there is involvement of a relocatee:

In order to minimize the unavoidable effects of Right of Way acquisition and displacement of people, the Florida Department of Transportation will carry out a Right of Way and Relocation Program in accordance with Florida Statute 339.09 and the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (Public Law 91-646 as amended by Public Law 100-17).

The Florida Department of Transportation provides advance notification of impending Right of Way acquisition. Before acquiring Right of Way, all properties are appraised on the basis of comparable sales and land use values in the area. Owners of property to be acquired will be offered and paid fair market value for their property rights.

No person lawfully occupying real property will be required to move without at least 90 days written notice of the intended vacation date, and no occupant of a residential property will be required to move until decent, safe and sanitary replacement housing is made available. "Made available" means that the affected person has either by himself obtained and has the right of possession of replacement housing, or that the Florida Department of Transportation has offered the relocatee decent, safe and sanitary housing which is within his financial means and available for immediate occupancy.

At least one relocation specialist is assigned to each highway project to carry out the Relocation Assistance and Payments program. A relocation specialist will contact each person to be relocated to determine individual needs and desires, and to provide information, answer questions, and give help in finding replacement property. Relocation services and payments are provided without regard to race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

All tenants and owner-occupant relocatees will receive an explanation regarding all options available to them, such as (1) varying methods of claiming reimbursement for moving expenses; (2) rental replacement housing, either private or publicly subsidized; (3) purchase of replacement housing; and (4) moving owner-occupied housing to another location.

Financial assistance is available to the eligible relocatee to:

- *Reimburse the relocatee for the actual reasonable costs of moving from homes, businesses, and farm operations acquired for a highway project.*
- *Make up the difference, if any, between the amount paid for the acquired dwelling and the cost of a comparable decent, safe and sanitary dwelling available on the private market, as determined by the department.*
- *Provide reimbursement of expenses, incidental to the purchase of a replacement dwelling.*
- *Make payment for eligible increased interest cost resulting from having to get another mortgage at a higher interest rate. Replacement housing payments, increased interest payments, and closing costs are limited to \$31,000 combined total.*

A displaced tenant may be eligible to receive a payment, not to exceed \$7,200, to rent a replacement dwelling or room, or to use as down payment, including closing costs, on the purchase of a replacement dwelling.

The brochures that describe in detail the Florida Department of Transportation's Relocation Assistance Program and Right of Way acquisition program are "Residential Relocation Under the Florida Relocation Assistance Program", "Relocation Assistance Business, Farms and Non-profit Organizations", "Sign Relocation Under the Florida Relocation Assistance Program", "Mobile Home Relocation Assistance", and "Relocation Assistance Program Personal Property Moves". All of these brochures are distributed at all public hearings and made available upon request to any interested persons.

Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. §§ 3601-3619) guarantees each person equal opportunity in housing.

4.3.4.3 Information Required When There are No Relocations

The following standard information must be included in the Relocation Potential section of the Environmental Document whenever the proposed action does not involve a residential or business relocation:

The proposed project, as presently conceived, will not displace any residences or businesses within the community. Should this change over the course of the project, the Florida Department of Transportation will carry out a Right of Way and Relocation Program in accordance with Florida Statute 339.09 and the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (Public Law 91-646 as amended by Public Law 100-17). The brochures that describe in detail the FDOT's Relocation

Assistance Program and Right of Way acquisition program are “Residential Relocation Under the Florida Relocation Assistance Program”, “Relocation Assistance Business, Farms and Non-profit Organizations”, “Sign Relocation Under the Florida Relocation Assistance Program”, “Mobile Home Relocation Assistance”, and “Relocation Assistance Program Personal Property Moves”. All of these brochures are distributed at all public hearings and made available upon request to any interested persons.

4.4 REFERENCES

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U.S. Rehabilitation Act of 1973, U.S.C. 29 § 701

4.5 FORMS

State Environmental Impact Report Form, Form No. 650-050-43

Non-Major State Actions Checklist, Form No. 650-050-30*

[Project Commitment Record, Form No. 700-011-35](#)

Type 1 Categorical Exclusion Checklist, Form No. 650-050-12*

Type 2 Categorical Exclusion Determination Form, Form No. 650-050-11*

*To be completed in [SWEPT](#)

Note: Hyperlinks are only for those with FDOT Intranet access only. Those without Intranet access may view or download forms at: <http://www.fdot.gov/procedures/>. Sign in is required.

4.6 HISTORY

11/10/2003, 11/09/2009, 02/21/2014, 8/25/2016

SCE CONSIDERATIONS

Social

1. What are the demographics of the potentially affected population?
2. What displacements of population, if any, would be expected as a result of the project?
3. Would any increases or decreases in population be expected as a result of the project?
4. Would any displacement of minority populations be expected as a result of the project?
5. Are there any disproportionate effects on special populations?
6. Have minority populations previously been affected by other public projects in the area?
7. Would the project result in any barriers dividing an established neighborhood(s) or would it increase neighborhood interaction?
8. What changes, if any, in traffic patterns through an established neighborhood(s) would be expected as a result of the project?
9. Would any changes to social relationships and patterns be expected as a result of the project?
10. Would the project result in any loss, reduction or enhancement of connectivity to a community or neighborhood activity center(s)?
11. Would the project affect community cohesion?
12. Would the project result in the creation of isolated areas?
13. Would any increase or decrease in emergency services response time (fire, police, and EMS) be expected as a result of the project?
14. Does the project affect safe access to community facilities?
15. Would any changes in social value be expected as a result of the project?
16. Would the project be perceived as having a positive or negative effect on quality of life?
17. Have community leaders and residents had opportunities to provide input to the project decision-making process in the present and/or past?
18. Have previous projects in this area been compatible with or conflicted with the plans, goals and objectives of the community?
19. Is the proposed project consistent with the community vision?
20. Are transportation investments equitably serving all populations?

Economic

1. Would any changes to travel patterns be expected that would eliminate or enhance access to any businesses?
2. Would any increases or decreases in traffic through traffic-based business areas be expected?

Table 4-5 SCE Considerations

<ol style="list-style-type: none">3. Would any changes in travel patterns be expected that would result in a business or district being bypassed?4. Would access for special-needs patrons increase or decrease as a result of the project?5. Would any increase or decrease in business visibility for traffic-based businesses be expected as a result of the project?6. Would the loss of any businesses be expected as a result of the project?7. Would any increases or decreases in employment opportunities in the local economy be expected as a result of the project?8. Would regional employment opportunities be enhanced or diminished as a result of the project?9. What is the effect of the project on military installations?10. Would any real property be removed from the tax roles as a result of the project?11. Is it likely that taxable property values would increase or decline as a result of the project?12. Would changes in business activities increase or decrease the tax base?
<p><i>Land Use Changes</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Would the project result in a change in the character or aesthetics of the existing landscape?2. Would the amount of recreation/open space be expected to increase or decrease as a result of the project?3. Would the project be compatible with local growth management policies?4. Would the project be compatible with adopted land use plans?
<p><i>Mobility</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Would access to public transportation facilities be increased or reduced as a result of the project?2. Would pedestrian mobility be increased or decreased as a result of the project?3. Would non-motorist access to business and service facilities be increased or reduced as a result of the project?4. How does the project affect intermodal connectivity?5. Would any change in connectivity between residential and nonresidential areas be expected as a result of the project?6. What are the expected changes to existing traffic patterns as a result of the project?7. Would a change in any public parking areas be expected as a result of the project?8. Would access for transportation disadvantaged populations be affected?

Table 4-5 SCE Considerations (Page 2 of 3)

Aesthetic Effects

1. Are there noise or vibration sensitive sites near the project?
2. Is the project likely to affect a vista or viewshed?
3. Does the project blend visually with the area?
4. Is the project adjacent to any community focal point?
5. Is the project likely to be perceived as being compatible and in character with the community's aesthetic values?
6. What feature(s), if any, of the project might be perceived by the community as inconsistent with the character of that community?

Also see requirements in ***Part 2, Chapter 5, Aesthetic Effects***.

Relocation Potential

1. Would any displacement of residences and/or dwellings be expected as a result of the project?
2. Would any displacement of non-residential land uses be expected as a result of the project?
3. Do any potentially displaced non-residential uses have any unique or special characteristics that are not likely to be reestablished in the community?
4. Would any displacement of community or institutional facilities be expected as a result of the project?

See additional requirements in ***Section 4.3.4, Considerations for Evaluating Relocation Effects***.

Table 4-5 SCE Considerations (Page 3 of 3)

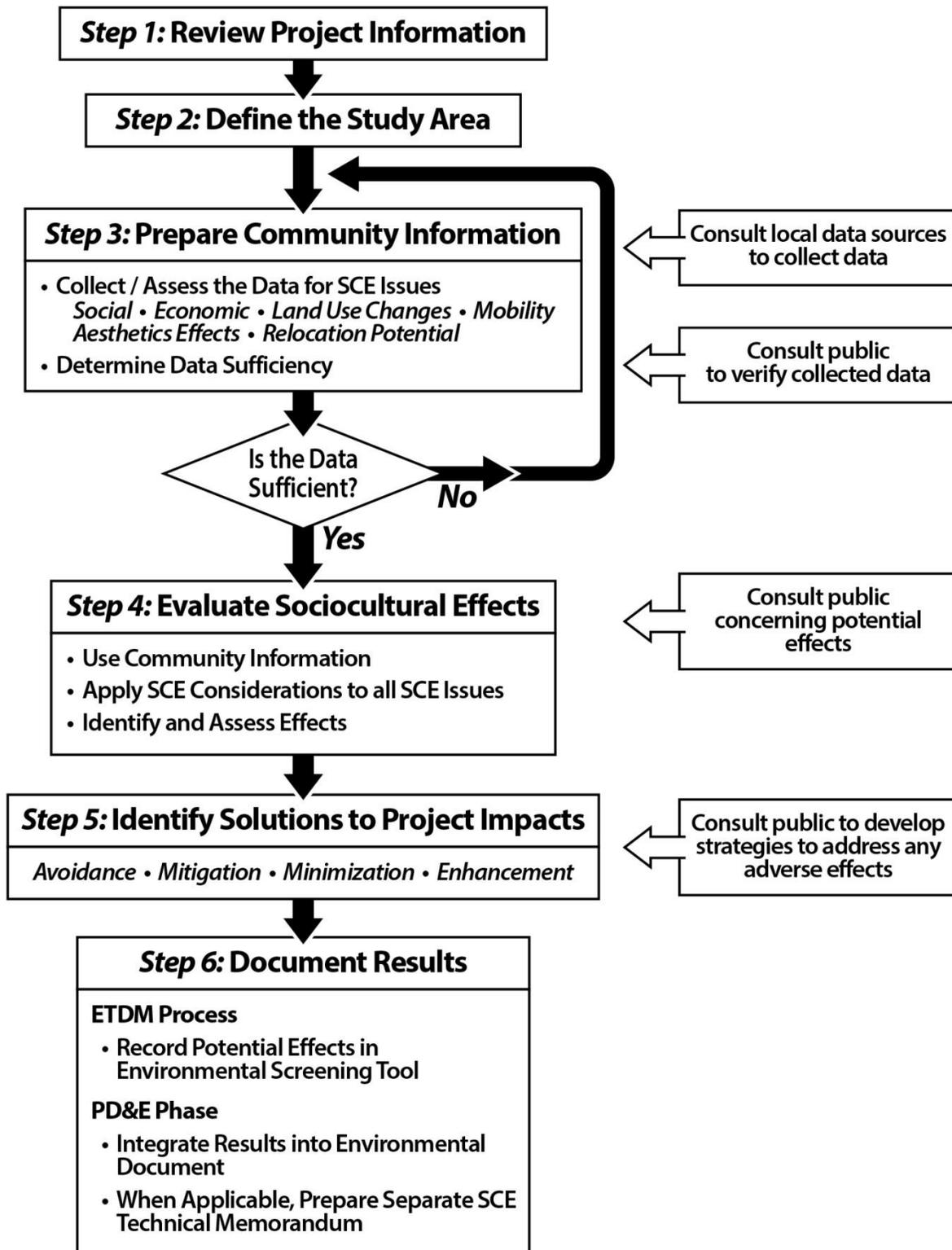


Figure 4-1 SCE Evaluation Process Diagram

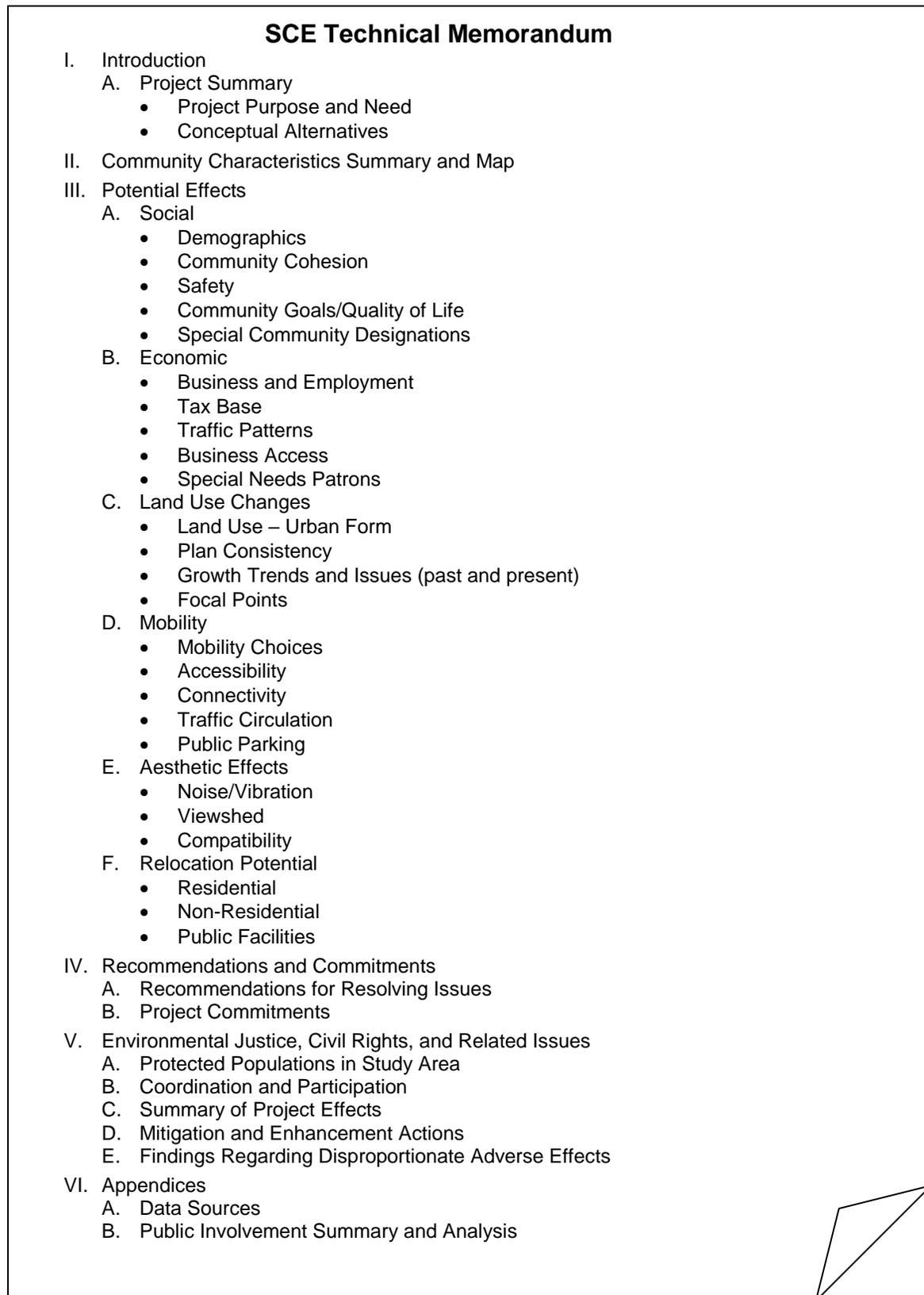


Figure 4-2 Recommended SCE Technical Memorandum Outline