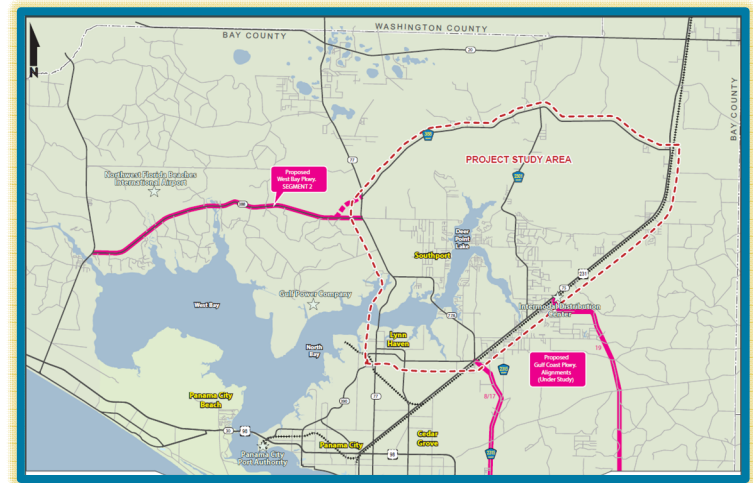




Alternative Corridor Evaluation (ACE) Process:

Webinar 1: ACE Overview and the Planning Phase

2021



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



Today's Presenters



Pete McGilvray

State Environmental Quality and Performance Administrator
Office of Environmental Management (OEM)
Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)



Silvia Beltre, PE

Stantec Consulting Services Inc.



Ted Devens, PE, MCE, CPM

Stantec Consulting Services Inc.



Chris Benitez, PE, PTOE, RSP

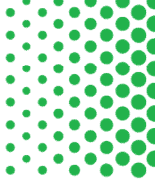
Stantec Consulting Services Inc.

Housekeeping

- Recording
- Handouts
- List of attendees
- Questions

The screenshot displays the 'Audio' settings window of a GoToWebinar application. The window title is 'Audio' and it includes a 'Sound Check' indicator with a green signal strength icon. Three radio buttons are visible: 'Computer audio' (selected), 'Phone call', and 'No audio'. Below these, a red 'MUTED' indicator is shown. The microphone is identified as 'Microphone (QuickCam Communicat...'. A volume slider is present, and the speaker output is 'Speakers (Realtek High Definition Au...'. A 'Talking:' section is partially visible. Below the audio settings, a 'Questions' panel is highlighted with a green border. It contains a text input field with the placeholder text '[Enter a question for staff]' and a 'Send' button. At the bottom of the interface, a 'Webinar Now' section displays 'Webinar ID: 359-913-139' and a red dot indicating 'This session is being recorded.' The GoToWebinar logo is at the bottom.

Training Session Outline



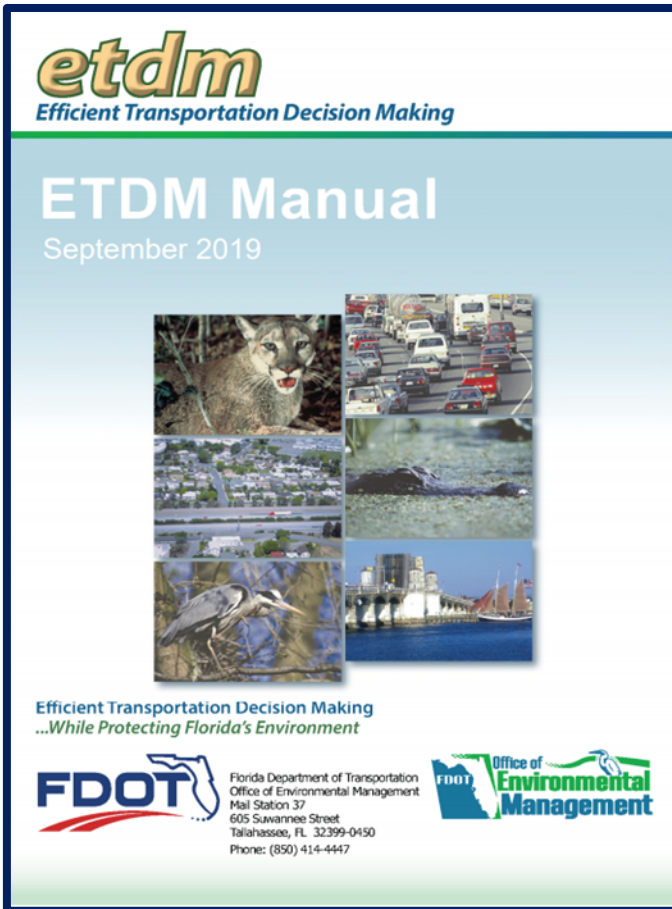
Webinar 1: ACE Overview and the Planning Phase

- Lesson 1 Overview of Planning Phase
- Lesson 2 ACE Process Overview
- Lesson 3 Scoping Considerations for an ACE Study

Webinar 2: Conducting an Alternative Corridor Evaluation (ACE) Study

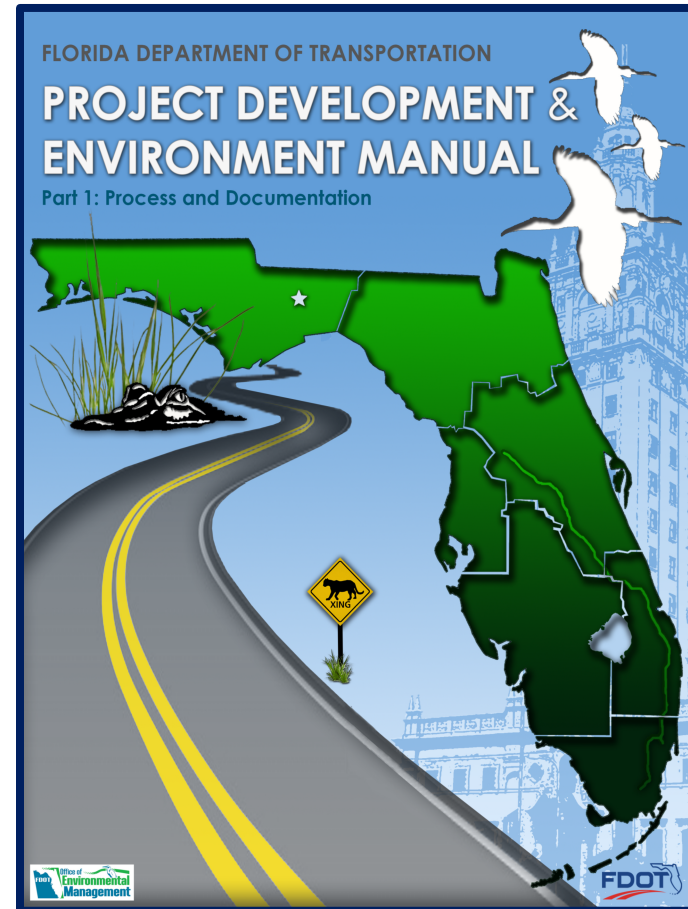
- Lesson 1 Perform Initial Analysis and Conduct Standard Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Screening
- Lesson 2 Development of the Methodology Memorandum (MM)
- Lesson 3 Tips on Corridor Refinements and Analysis Methods
- Lesson 4 Development of the Alternative Corridor Evaluation Report (ACER)

Resources



ETDM Manual, Chapters 3 and 4

<https://www.fdot.gov/environment/pubs/etdm/etdmmanual.shtm>

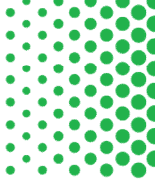


PD&E Manual, Part 1, Chapter 4

<https://www.fdot.gov/environment/pubs/pdeman/pdeman-current>



Recommended Trainings



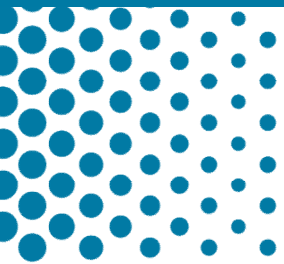
ETDM Training:

- Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Process Overview
- Environmental Screening Tool (EST) - Alternative Corridor Evaluation (ACE)
<https://www.fdot.gov/environment/sched/train1.shtm>

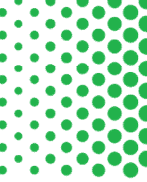
FDOT Office of Environmental Management (OEM) Trainings:

- Project Development & Environment (PD&E) Training: Project Development Process
<https://www.fdot.gov/environment/sched/track3.shtm>

Poll

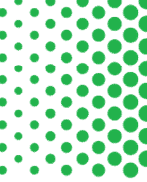


What Entity do you Represent?



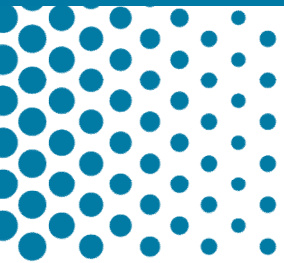
- a. FDOT District
- b. FDOT Central Office
- c. Consultant
- d. Other

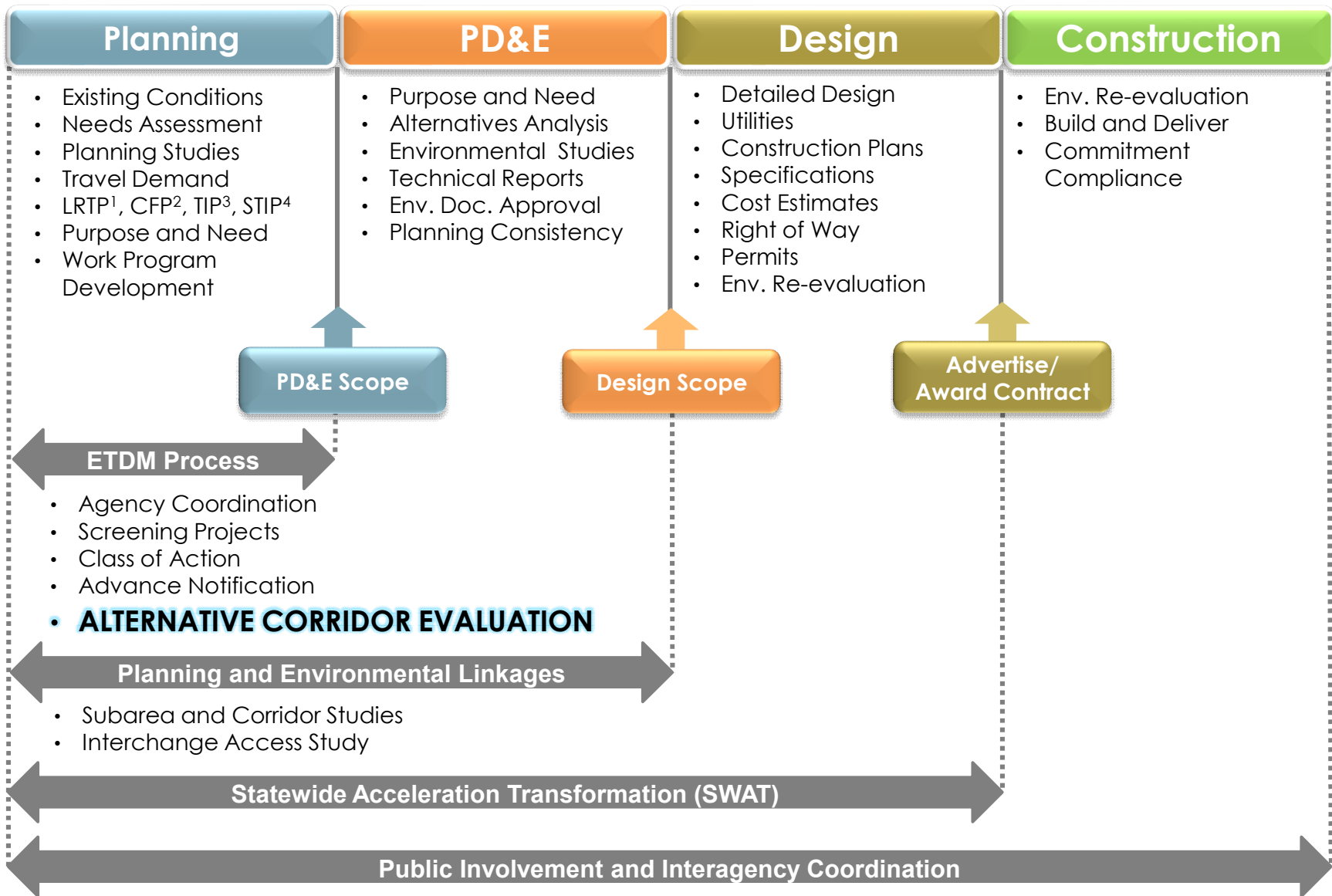
How many ACE studies have you participated in?



- a. None
- b. 1
- c. 2-3
- d. More than 3

Lesson 1: Overview of Planning Phase

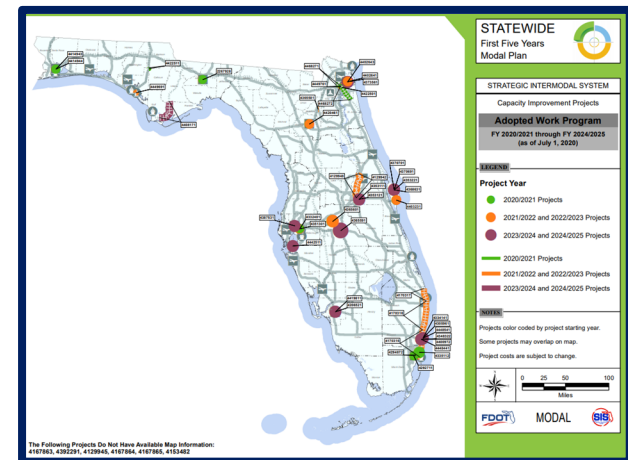




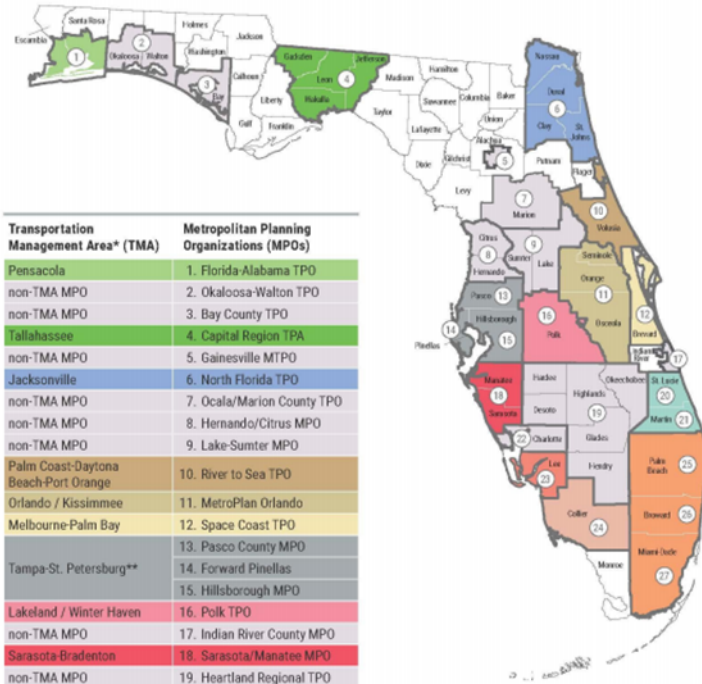
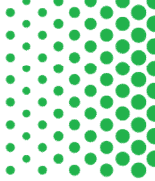
1-Long Range Transportation Plan; 2- Cost Feasible Plan; 3- Transportation Improvement Program; 4- State Transportation Improvement Program
 PD&E Manual Part 1 Figure 4-1

Transportation Systems Planning

- Planning begins with MPOs, Counties, FDOT, and other authorities
- Needs are identified with projects that meet those needs
- Planning products:
 - Florida Transportation Plan (FTP)
 - Strategic Intermodal System Plan
 - Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)
 - Cost Feasible Plan (CFP)
 - Local Government Comprehensive Plan
 - Transit Development Plan (TDP)
 - Municipal or Citywide Transportation Master Plan
 - Corridor planning study



Project Prioritization



Transportation Management Area* (TMA)	Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)
Pensacola	1. Florida-Alabama TPO
non-TMA MPO	2. Okaloosa-Walton TPO
non-TMA MPO	3. Bay County TPO
Tallahassee	4. Capital Region TPA
non-TMA MPO	5. Gainesville MTPO
Jacksonville	6. North Florida TPO
non-TMA MPO	7. Ocala/Marion County TPO
non-TMA MPO	8. Hernando/Citrus MPO
non-TMA MPO	9. Lake-Sumter MPO
Palm Coast-Daytona Beach-Port Orange	10. River to Sea TPO
Orlando / Kissimmee	11. MetroPlan Orlando
Melbourne-Palm Bay	12. Space Coast TPO
Tampa-St. Petersburg**	13. Pasco County MPO
	14. Forward Pinellas
	15. Hillsborough MPO
Lakeland / Winter Haven	16. Polk TPO
non-TMA MPO	17. Indian River County MPO
Sarasota-Bradenton	18. Sarasota/Manatee MPO
non-TMA MPO	19. Heartland Regional TPO
Port St. Lucie**	20. St. Lucie TPO
non-TMA MPO	21. Martin MPO
	22. Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO
Cape Coral	23. Lee County MPO
Bonita Springs	24. Collier MPO
	25. Palm Beach TPA
Miami**	26. Broward MPO
	27. Miami-Dade TPO

* Urbanized population over 200,000
 ** Tampa-St. Petersburg, Port St. Lucie and Miami TMA's contain multiple MPOs.

- **Prioritizing annually:**

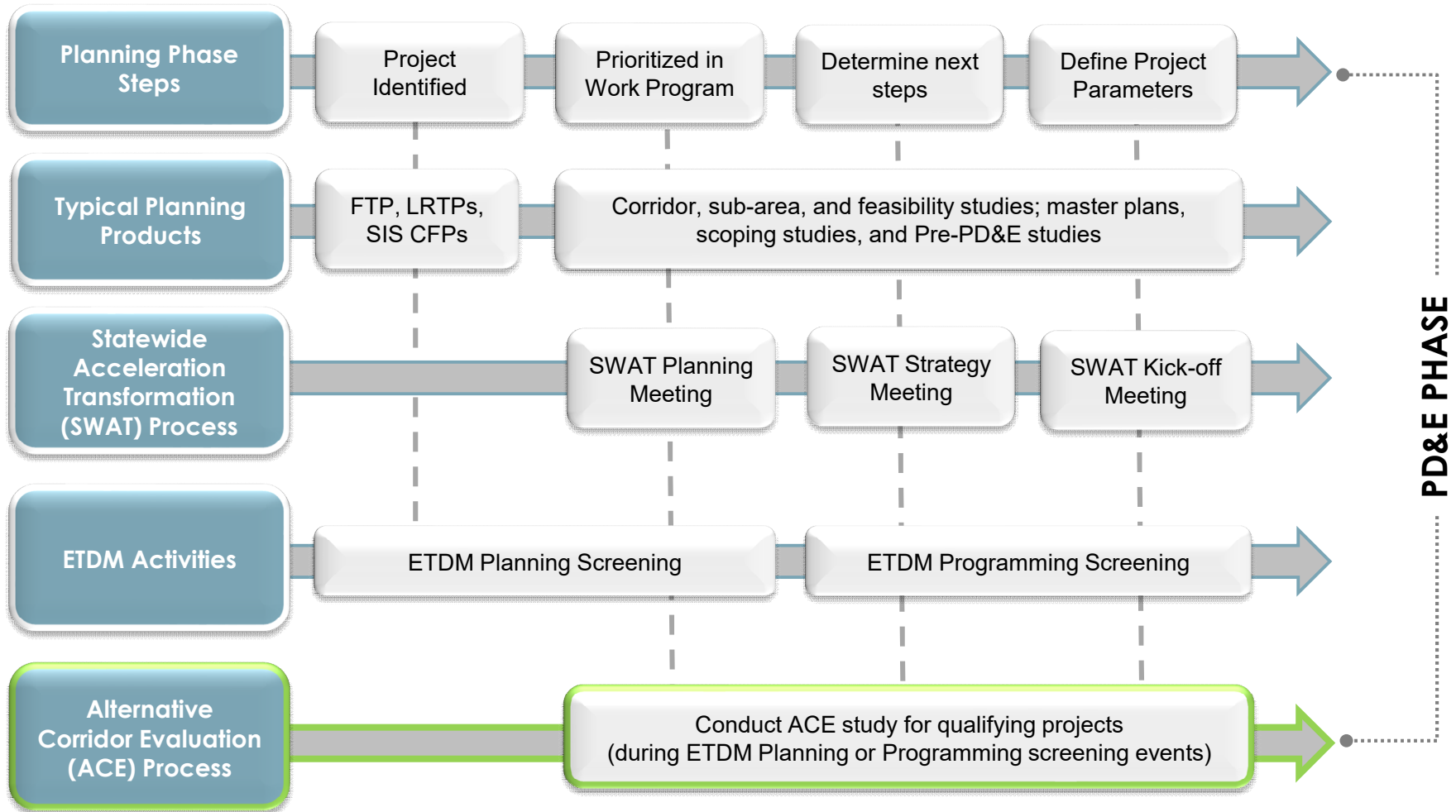
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO/TPO/TPA)
- Local governments (municipalities and counties)
- FDOT

- **FDOT coordinates with various MPOs/TPOs and local stakeholders throughout the state to develop a vision for the State's transportation system.**

- **Five-Year Work Program**

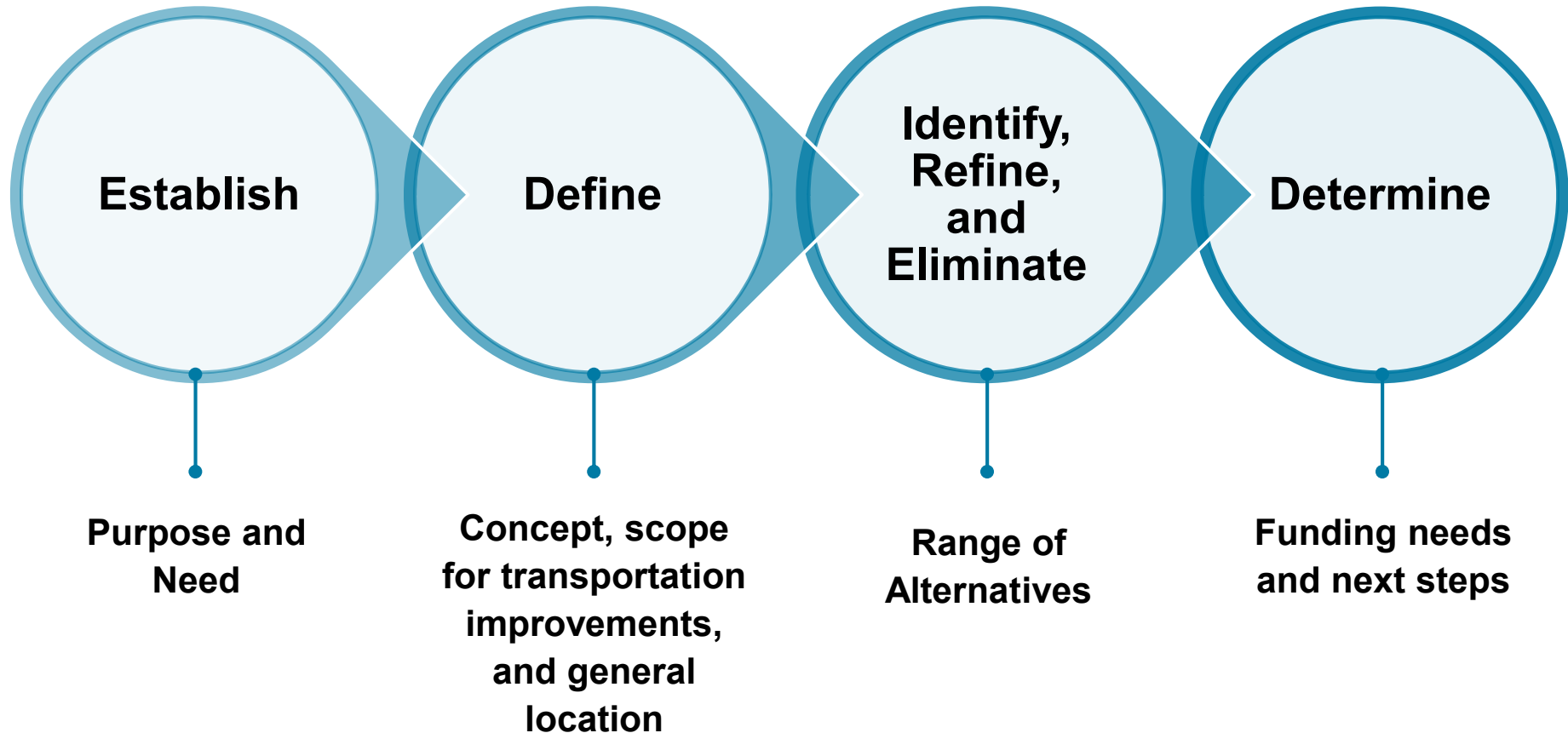
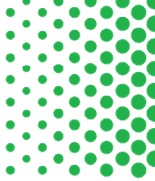
- **State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)**

FDOT Planning Phase



*For projects that may require a PD&E Study

Project Objectives during the Planning Process



Statewide Acceleration Transformation (SWAT) Process

- FDOT's project initiation process
- Evaluates projects before selection to the FDOT 5-Year Work Program
- Streamlines project delivery through early analysis
- Schedules Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) screenings
- Identifies the need for an ACE study
- More information can be found in the following website:

<http://www.fdot.gov/environment/SWAT.shtm>



Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Process

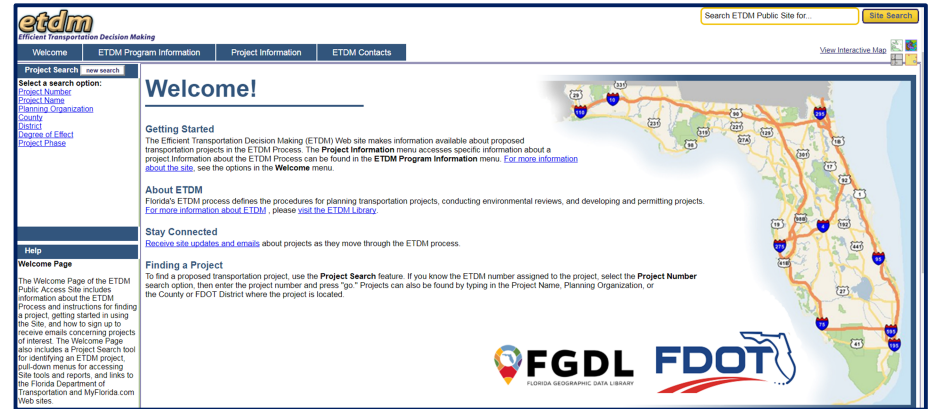
- FDOT's process for incorporating environmental considerations into transportation planning to inform project delivery

- Types of ETDM screening events:

- Planning
- Programming

- Environmental Screening Tool (EST): <https://etdmpub.fla-etat.org/est/>

- ACE studies conducted during an ETDM screening event



Environmental Technical Advisory Team (ETAT) and Public Access

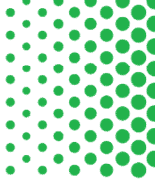
- ETAT reviews and provides comments
- ETAT representatives:
 - Federal and state resource agencies
 - MPOs/TPOs
 - Participating Native American Tribes
- ETDM Public Access Site
- ETAT and public review ACE study deliverables with EST



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

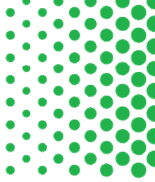


Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL)



- **Clearly establishes Planning Products (i.e., ACE studies) are legitimate components to be carried into the environmental review process**
- **Planning Phase decisions may be used in the NEPA analysis if they meet certain conditions (Ten (10) conditions listed in PD&E Manual, Part 1, Chapter 4)**
 - Planning products must be adopted within a 5-year period from approval date
 - Eliminating alternatives through the ACE process is a planning decision
- **Lead Agency determines if conditions are met**

Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL)



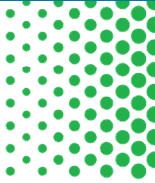
Required public notice language:

“The Florida Department of Transportation may adopt this planning product into the environmental review process, pursuant to Title 23 U.S.C. § 168(d)(4), or to the state project development process.”



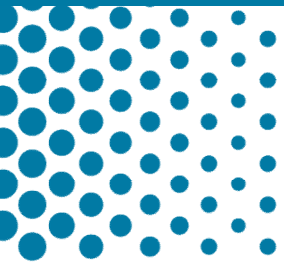
Without a deliberate organized approach, some “Planning Products” may fail to be successfully “adopted” or incorporated into the environmental review process.

ACE Studies and PEL Conditions

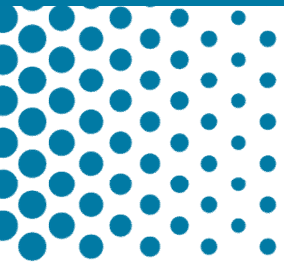


- **ACE process integrated into ETDM screening events**
- **Consultation with federal and state resource agencies and Indian Tribes**
- **Includes multidisciplinary considerations**
- **Documentation - methodology and results from ACE study**
- **Public notice language**
 - ACE study documents
 - ETDM screening reports
- **5-year time period for adoption begins from the Final Programming Screen Summary Report**

Questions?



Lesson 2: ACE Process Overview



ACE History

- **Federal authorization (SAFETEA-LU):**
 - Streamlining project delivery
 - Linking Planning and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process
 - Agency collaboration
- **More projects with new corridors**
- **Corridor Analysis Process (CAP)**
 - Established in 2010



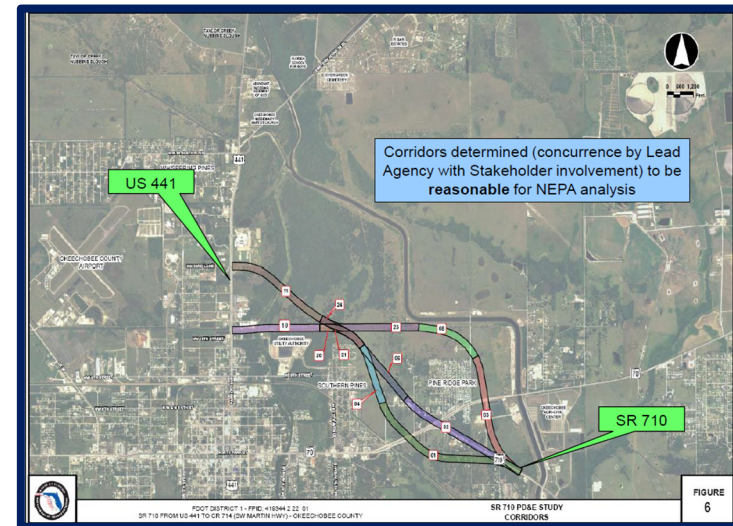
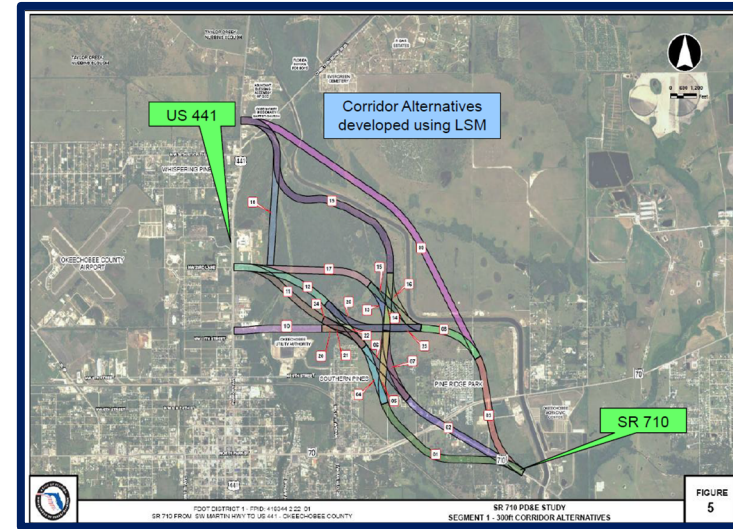
Corridor Analysis Process

Corridor Analysis Process (CAP)

- Evaluating corridors to narrow the range of reasonable alternatives prior to NEPA process
- Integrated with Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) process
- Consistent documentation statewide

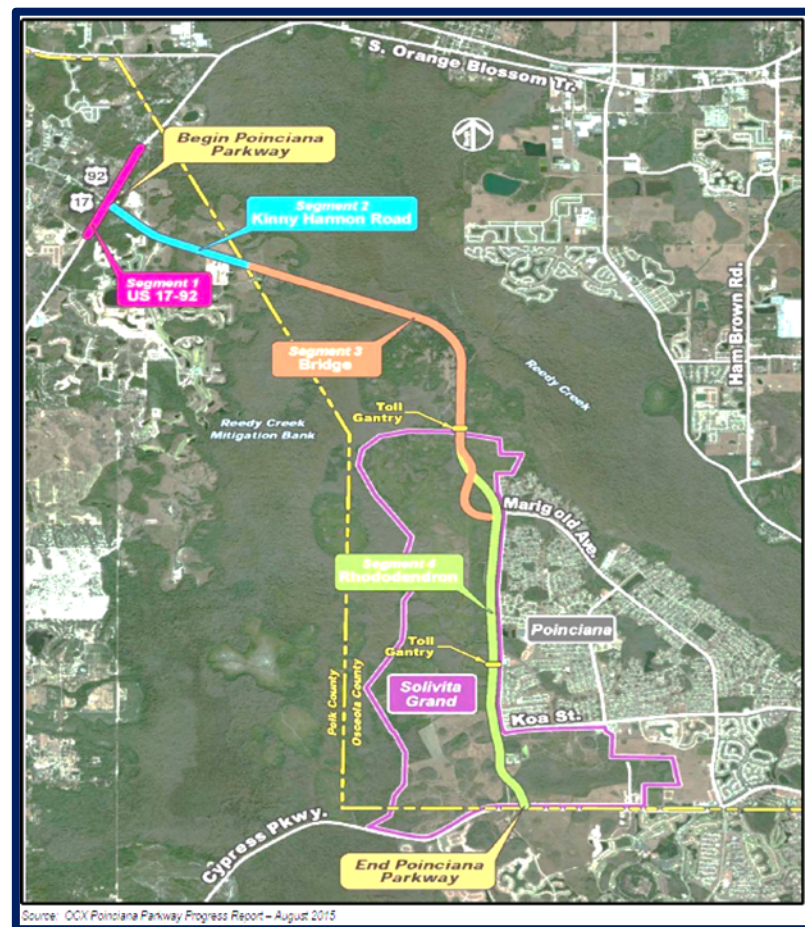
Alternative Corridor Evaluation (ACE) process

- NEPA Assignment in 2016



ACE Process

- Identify, evaluate, and eliminate alternative corridors on qualifying projects, prior to PD&E analysis
- **Other results and decisions:**
 - Purpose and need
 - Project area, travel modes, and corridors
 - Potential environmental impacts
- **Adopt results and decisions into the NEPA process**
- **Conducted with ETDM screening efforts (Planning or Programming)**



Performing an ACE Study

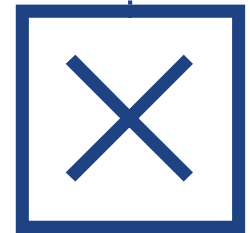
When to perform an ACE Study:

- **High potential of environmental impacts:**
 - Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
 - Environmental Assessment (EA)
 - Complex State Environmental Impact Reports (SEIRs)
- **Several alternative corridors to evaluate**
- **Potential to eliminate alternative corridors prior to PD&E**



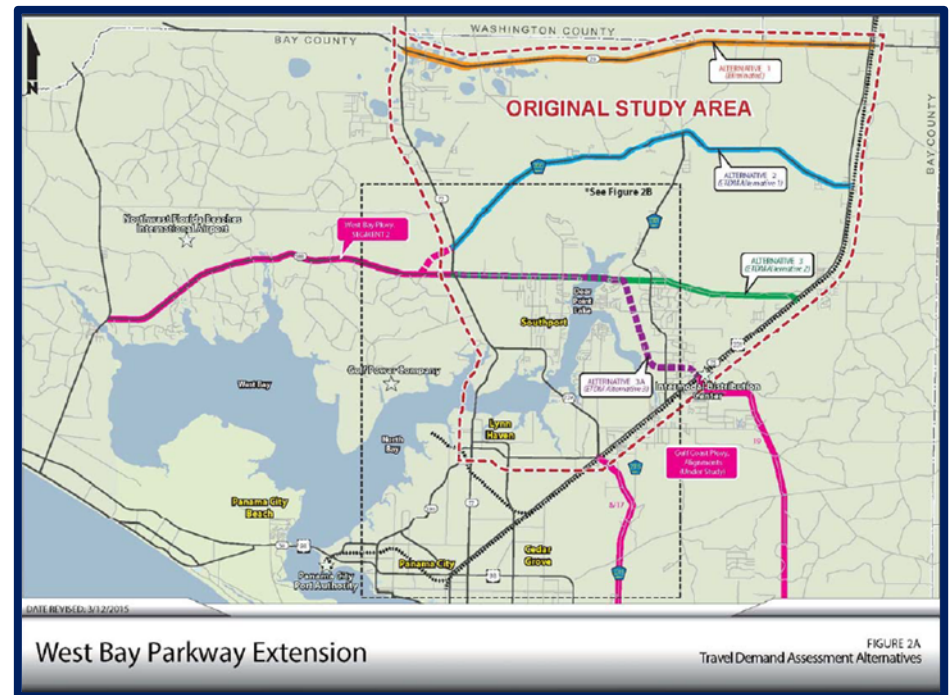
When not to perform an ACE Study:

- **Small number of alternative corridors**
- **No significant impacts anticipated:**
 - Type 2 Categorical Exclusion
 - Most SEIRs

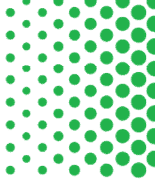


Types of Qualifying Projects

- New alignments including new roadways, new roadway connections or extensions
- Major realignments
- Major bypasses such as truck bypasses, city/town bypasses
- Other alignments based on consultation with OEM
- New freight corridors
- New bicycle and trail corridor projects



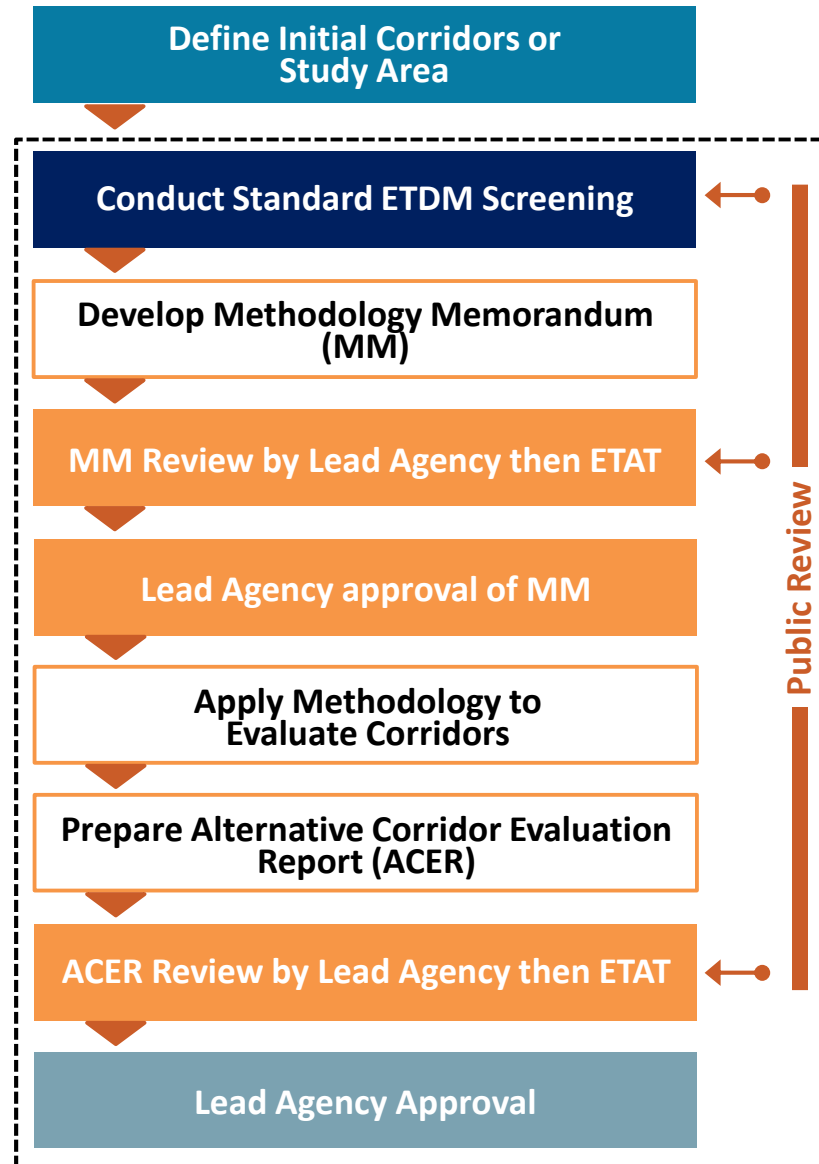
Identify Need for an ACE Study



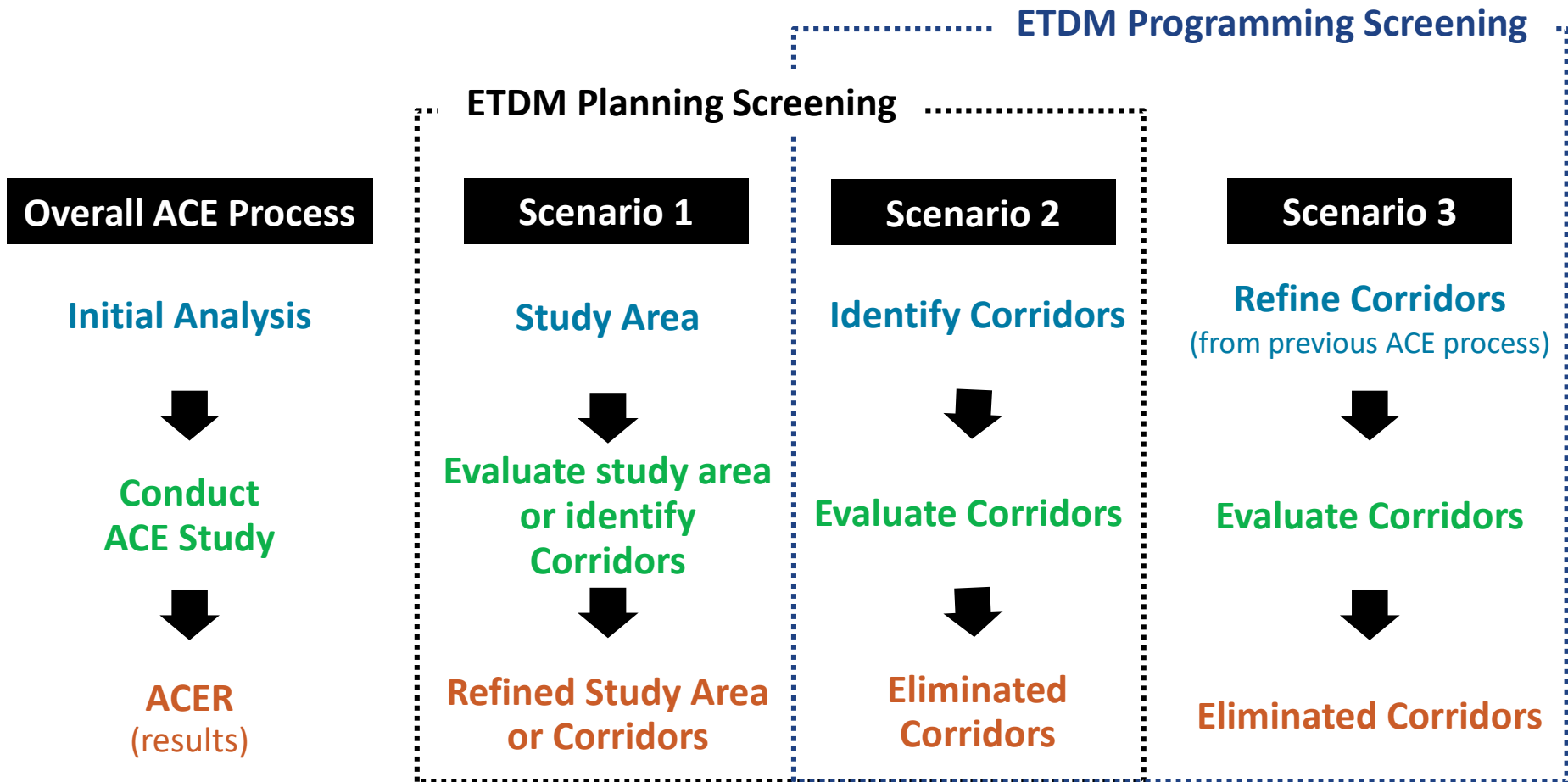
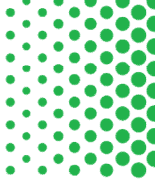
Desire to prioritize corridor improvement project from local agency (such as MPO) and/or District

- ✓ Determine qualifying project type
- ✓ Assess potential for multiple corridors
- ✓ Evaluate project characteristics such as potential public controversy
- ✓ Consult with Lead Agency (such as OEM)
- ✓ Determine project approach (ACE process vs. non-ACE process)

ACE Process



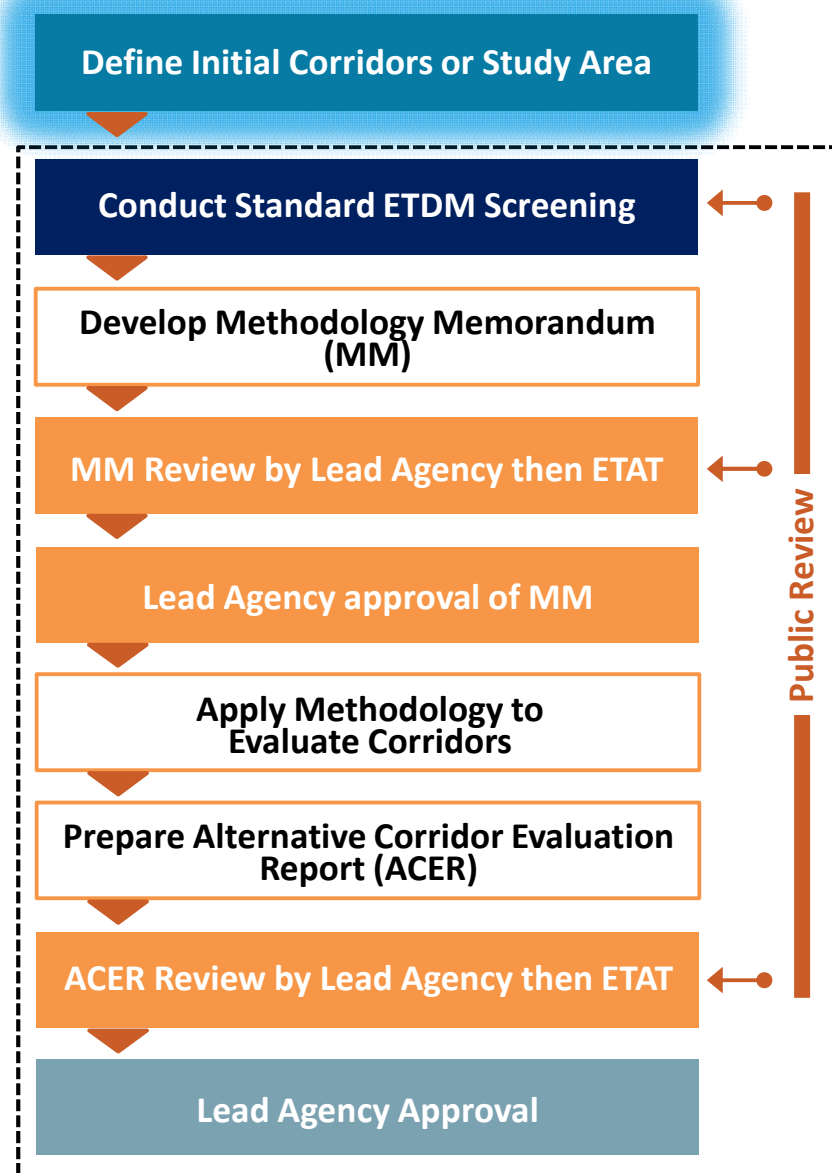
Project Progression in the ACE Process



Perform Initial Analysis

- Define study area or identify and define a reasonable range of initial corridors
- Consider previously completed planning activities:
 - Planning-level corridor/subarea/feasibility studies
- Identify sensitive resources
 - Utilize EST
- Assess ability to meet purpose and need

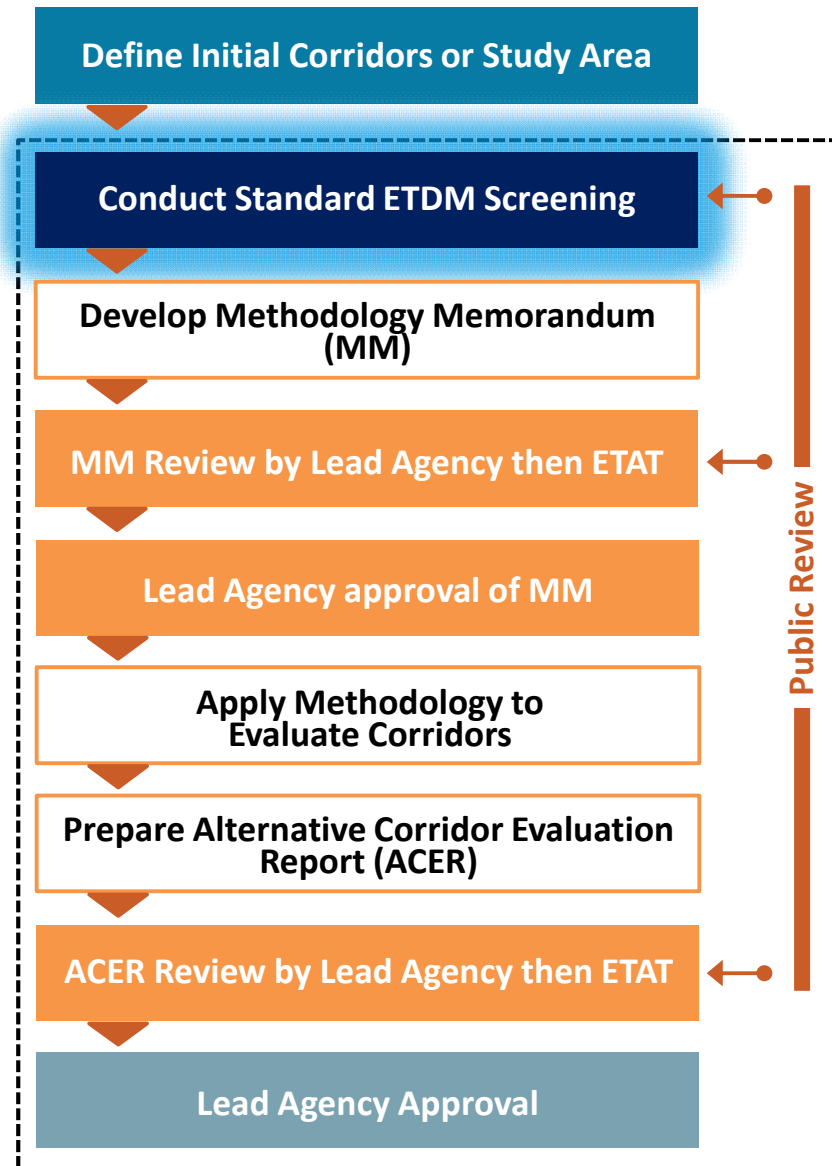
Identified corridors and study area should address the project's purpose and need



Conduct ETDM Screening

- ACE process occurs within ETDM Screening event
- Conduct ETDM Planning or Programming screening
- Used to screen initial study area or corridors
- Reviewed by Lead agency and ETAT
- ETDM Coordinator
 - Assigns Summary Degree of Effects (SDOEs)
 - Publishes Preliminary Screening Summary Report

Final ETDM summary report is published after the ACE study



Conduct ETDM Screening

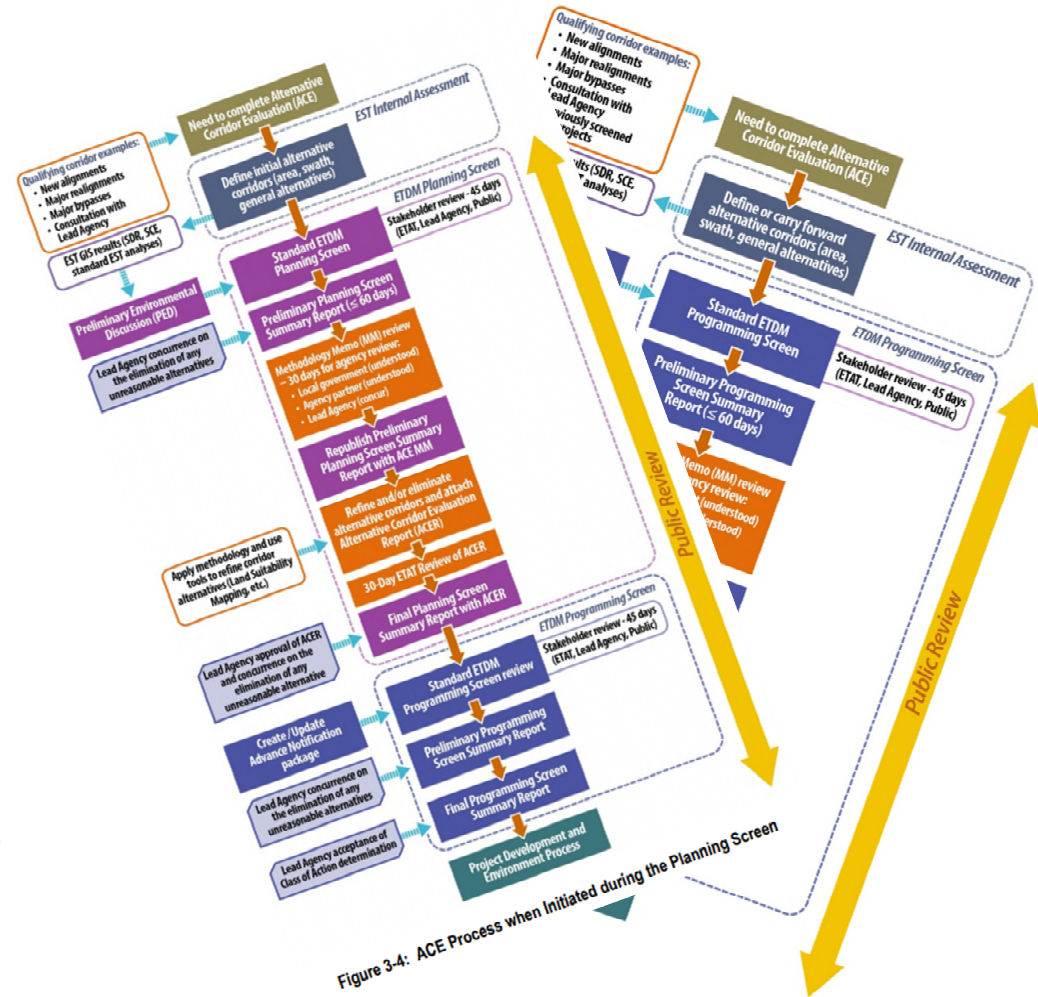
- ACE process varies whether it starts during Planning screening or Programming screening

- ACE Process maps:

- Planning Screening - ETDM Manual, Figure 3-4
- Programming screening - ETDM Manual, Figure 4-5

ETDM manual:

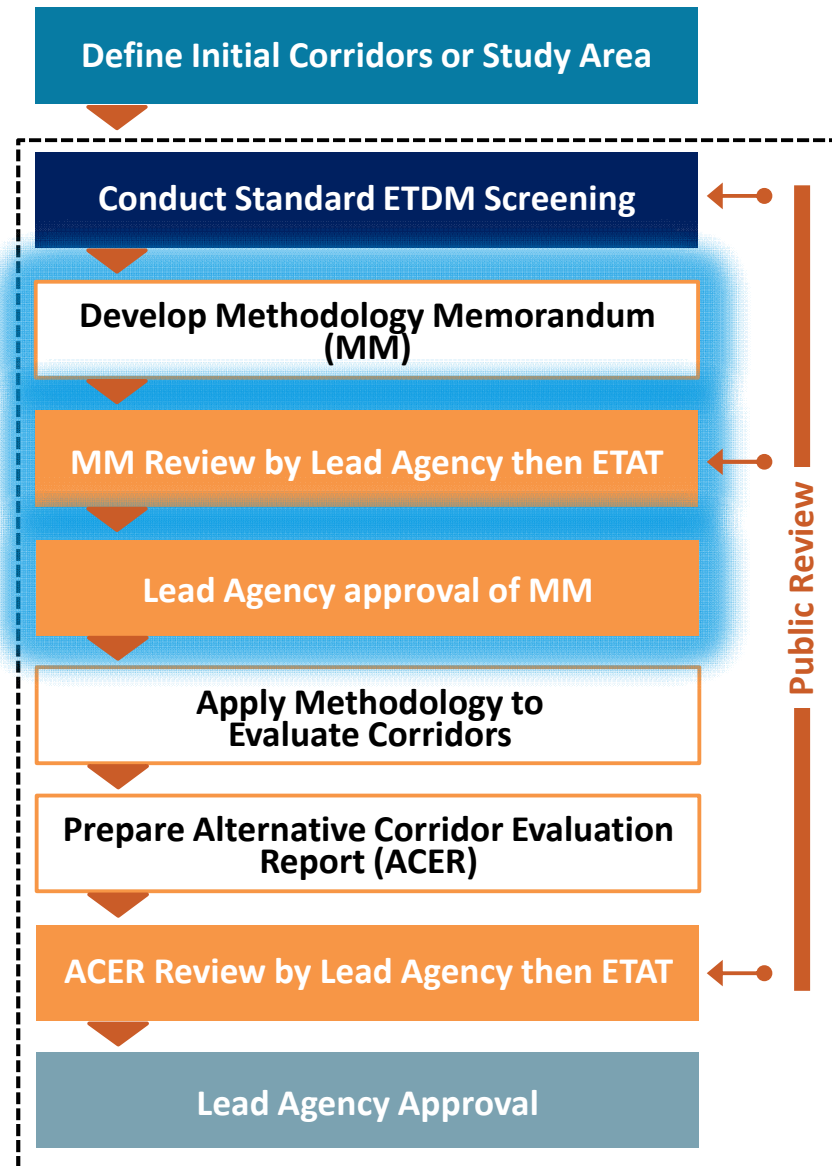
<https://www.fdot.gov/environment/pubs/etdm/etdmmanual.shtm>



Develop the Methodology Memorandum (MM)

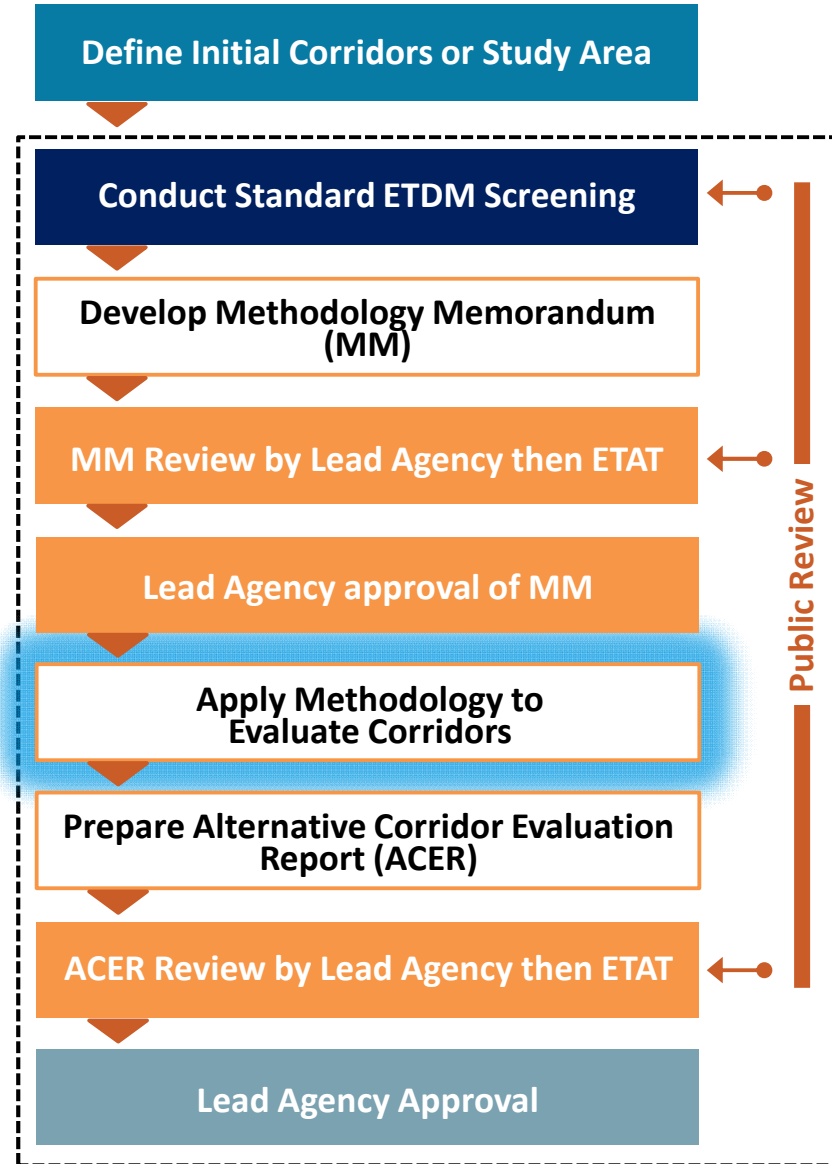
- **Describes the analysis methodology to:**
 - Refine study area
 - Develop, refine, and eliminate corridors
- **Establishes the goals of the ACE study**
- **Details the evaluation approach**
- **Forms the basis for decision making**
- **Distributed in EST for review by Lead Agency then ETAT and the public**
- **Approved by lead Agency**

Request sample MMs from OEM



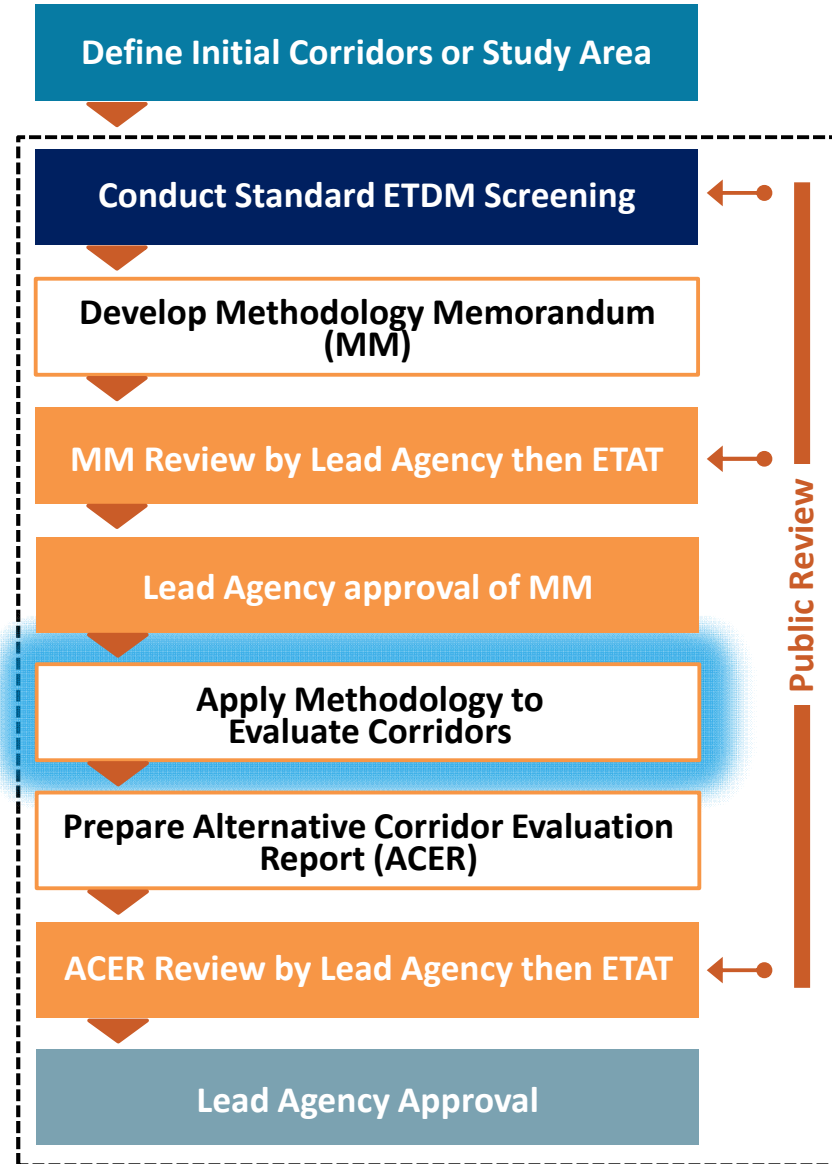
Apply Methodology

- Start with corridors or study area from initial analysis
- Consider ETAT and project stakeholder input
- Refine or develop additional corridors to:
 - Avoid or minimize potential environmental impacts
 - Determine ability to meet purpose and need



Apply Methodology

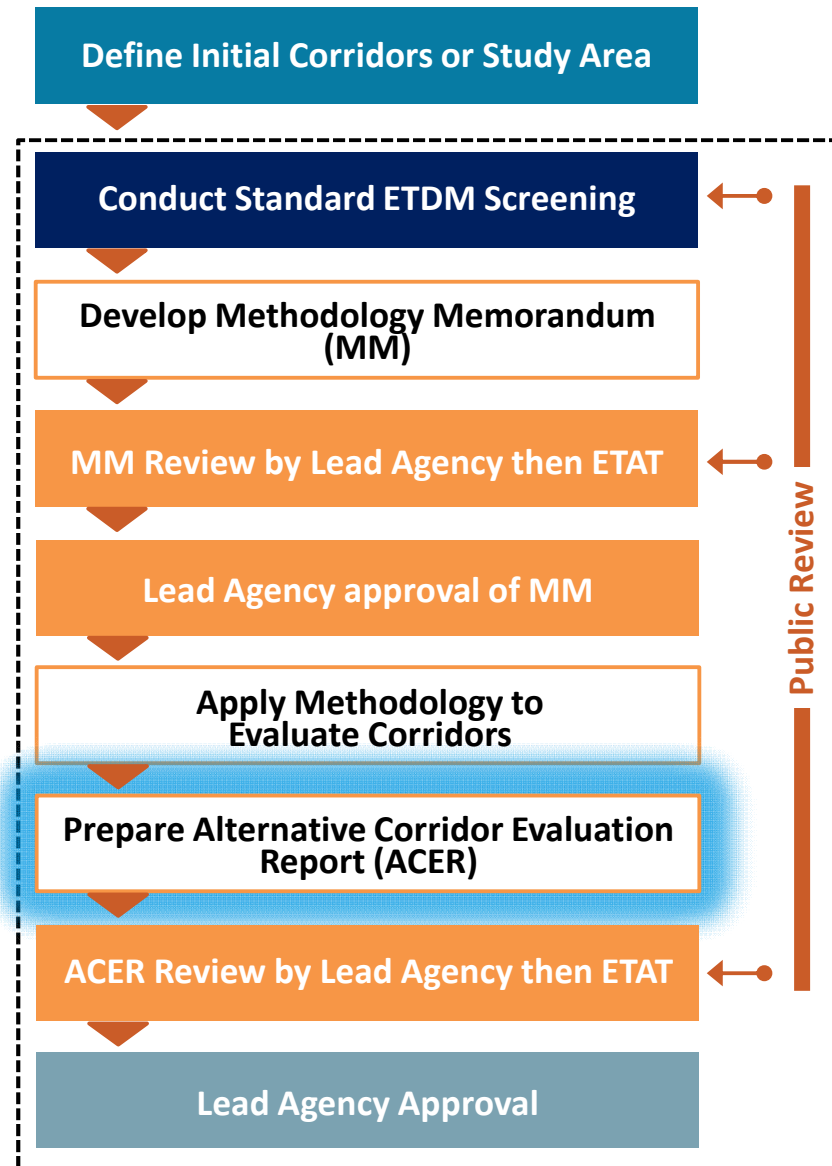
- Evaluate based on criteria in MM
- Analysis topics should include:
 - Purpose and Need
 - Environment
 - Engineering
 - Public and Agency input
 - Unique issues
- Eliminate corridors that do not meet criteria established in MM
- Determine corridors moving forward to PD&E



Prepare Alternative Corridor Evaluation Report (ACER)

- Document the eliminated alternatives
- Recommend alternative corridors for the PD&E study
- When starting with a study area, discuss refinements or the identified corridors

ACER outline provided on OEM website:
<https://www.fdot.gov/environment/publications.shtm>

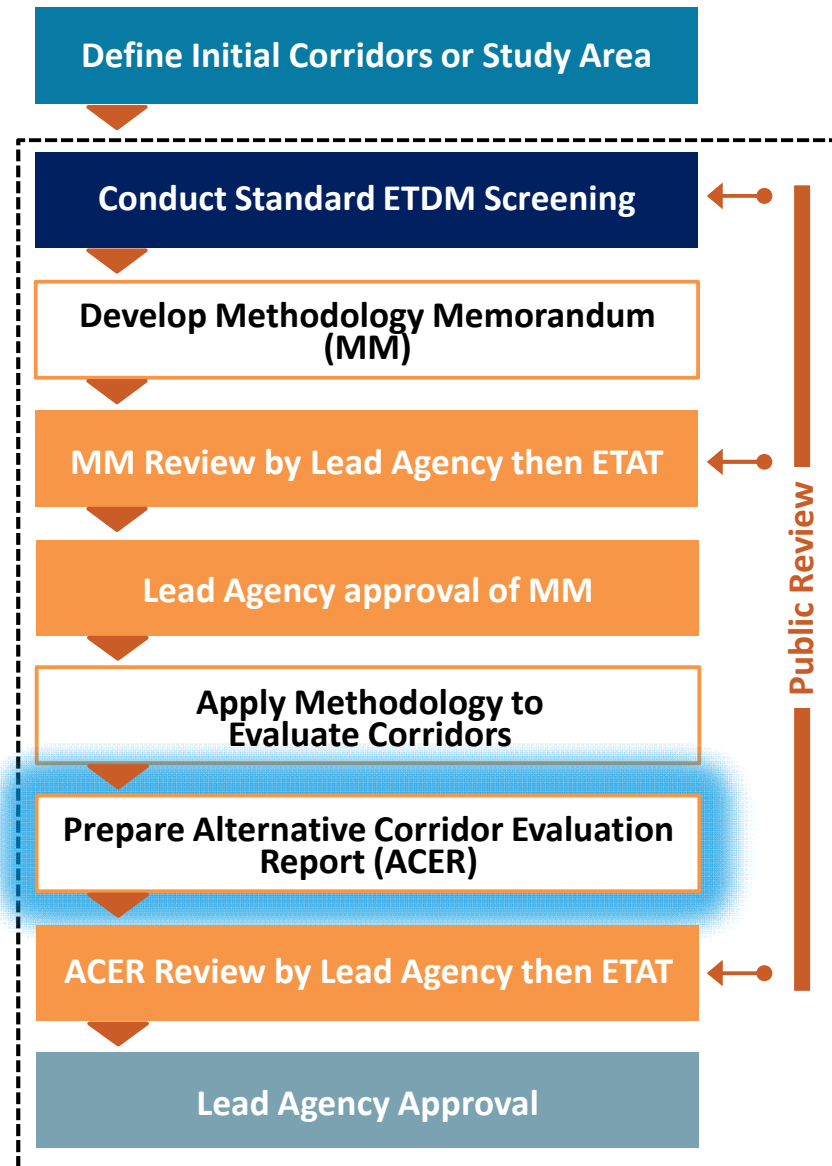


Prepare Alternative Corridor Evaluation Report (ACER)

- Critical to properly document methodology, data, analysis, public and agency involvement, and resulting decisions
- Results and decisions in ACER may be adopted into the PD&E study
- Standard public notice statement must be included (check ETDM Manual for latest)

ACER outline provided on OEM website:

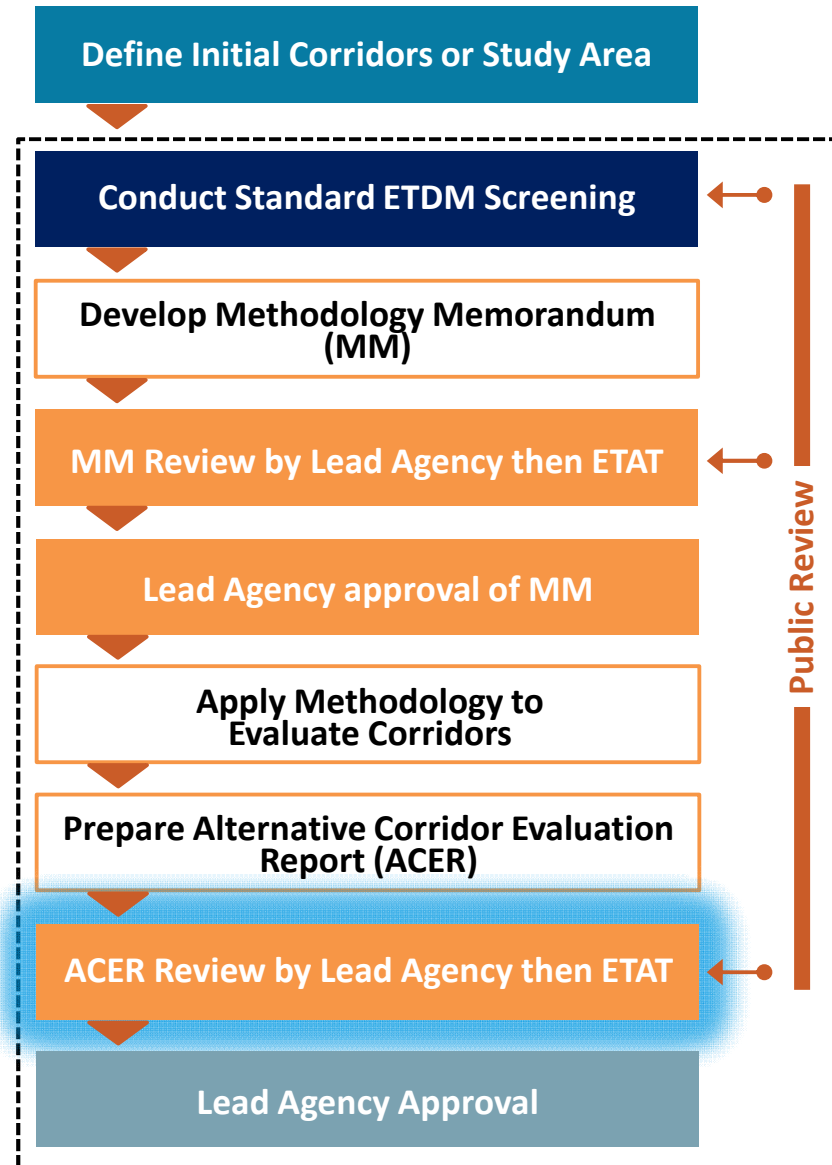
<https://www.fdot.gov/environment/publications.shtm>



ACER Review

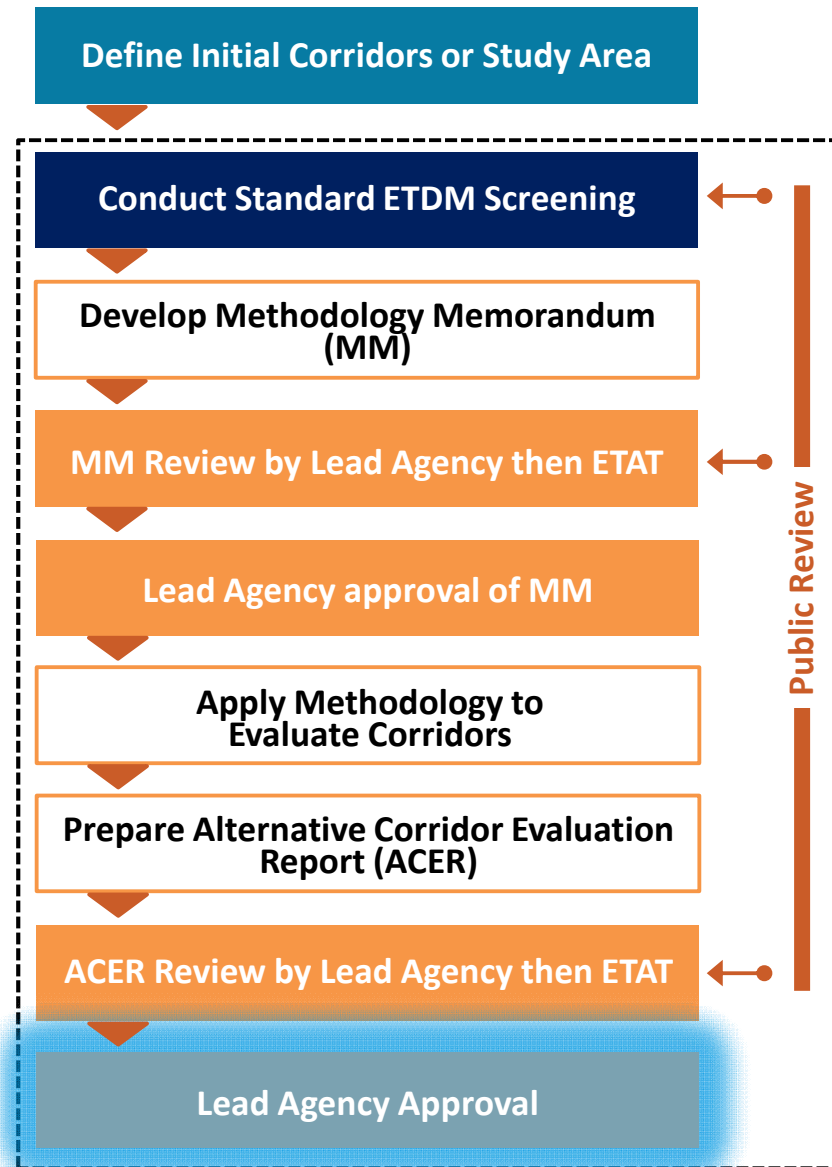
- **Submit draft to Lead Agency for review**
 - 21-days
- **Upload in EST for ETAT review**
 - 30-days
 - Public review on ETDM Public site

Prior to lead agency review, host a walkthrough meeting with the lead agency (i.e., OEM)

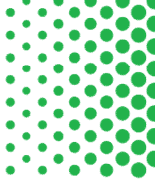


Approval

- Lead Agency approves ACER
- ACER is attached to ETDM Summary Report
- When corridors have been eliminated:
 - District makes formal request for adoption
 - Considered by Lead agency and potential cooperating agency
- ACER included in project file as supporting documentation for a PD&E Study



Benefits of the ACE Process

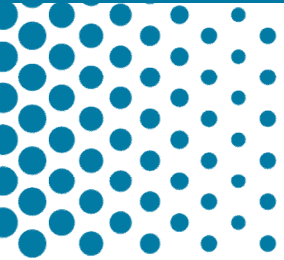


- Eliminate alternative corridors prior to the more detailed PD&E analysis
- Remaining alternatives may result in less potential for environmental impacts
- Decreasing impacts may allow for lower Class of Action (COA) than originally envisioned
- Establishes a consistent statewide approach while providing flexibility for analysis methods and stakeholder outreach
- Results and decisions adopted or incorporated by reference into the PD&E study

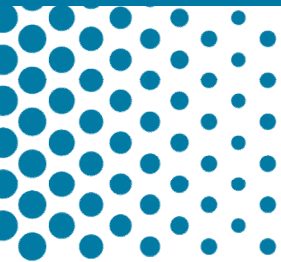


Combined with ETDM, ACE Study activities can be conducted in a manner that “checks the boxes” to link the Planning Phase with the environmental review process in PD&E Phase.

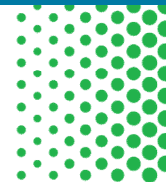
Questions?



Lesson 3: Scoping Considerations for an ACE Study



Scoping Support

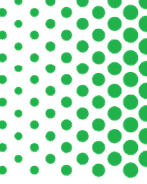


Alternative Corridor Evaluation Standard Scope of Services and staff hour form: <https://www.fdot.gov/environment/pubs/scope/sos.shtm>

Consult with OEM

- When to do an ACE study
- Latest analysis methodologies
- ACE study examples

Procurement Options



ACE Study only

- Entire ACE study from defining initial corridors to ACER
- ACE Study from MM to ACER
 - Initial corridors defined from previous or ongoing planning efforts

ACE with Option for PD&E Study

- Allows for seamless transition to PD&E study phase
- Potential to combine the final meeting for ACE study with a kick-off meeting for PD&E phase

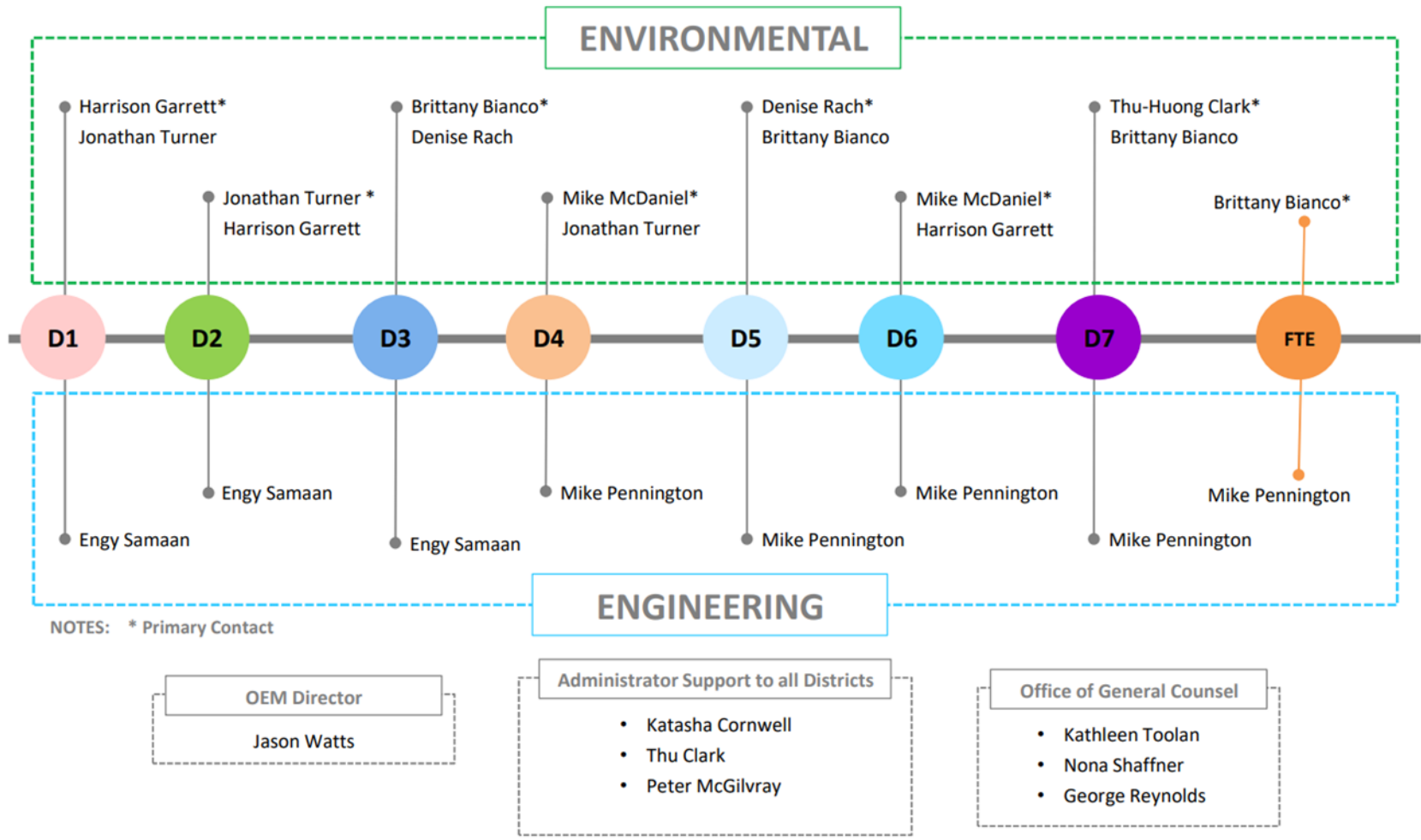
Resources



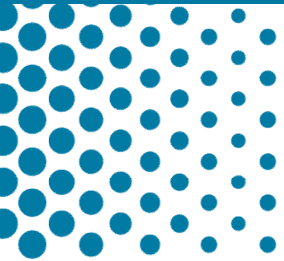
- ETDM Manual –
<http://www.fdot.gov/environment/pubs/etdm/etdmmanual.shtm>
- PD&E Manual - <http://www.fdot.gov/environment/pubs/pdeman/pdeman1.shtm>
- ACE Scope of Services and Staff Hour forms:
<https://www.fdot.gov/environment/pubs/scope/sos.shtm>
- ACER Outline: <https://www.fdot.gov/environment/publications.shtm>
- Environmental Management Academy Course Catalog:
 - FDOT Learning Curve - <https://floridadot.myabsorb.com/#/login>
- OEM Training - <http://www.fdot.gov/environment/sched/train1.shtm>



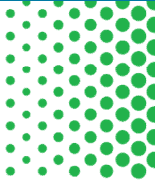
Resources: OEM Contacts



Poll



When should an ACE process be considered? (select all that apply)



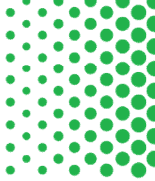
- a. Multiple alternative corridors
- b. High potential for environmental impacts
- c. No significant impacts
- d. Few alternative corridors

Which is a key deliverable in the ACE process?



- a. Type 2 Categorical Exclusion Determination Form
- b. Preliminary Engineering Report
- c. Corridor Study
- d. Methodology Memorandum

The Alternative Corridor Evaluation Report (ACER) should document which of the following (select all that apply):



- a. Preferred alternative to advance to design phase
- b. Methodology, data used, and analysis results
- c. Public and agency involvement
- d. Decisions from ACE Study

REMINDER:
Webinar Part 2 scheduled next week on
January 27

Questions

