

CHAPTER 6

DATA MANAGEMENT

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6.1 OVERVIEW

This chapter describes the data management procedures used to provide consistent, high-quality information for supporting the Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) process through the Environmental Screening Tool (EST). These procedures define data collection, preparation, and maintenance responsibilities and techniques. Contact help@fla-etat.org for the minimum system requirements needed to operate the EST.

As illustrated in **Figure 6-1**, the flow of information during the ETDM process begins when the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) or Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)/Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) ETDM Coordinator enters project and community information into the EST. Environmental Technical Advisory Team (ETAT) members identify new or updated information from their agencies and confirm that the resource data they have provided to the Florida Geographic Data Library (FGDL) is the most current and accurate available. They work with FGDL staff to update it as necessary. The University of Florida GeoPlan Center houses both the FGDL and EST and is responsible for system administration and data maintenance.

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

Section 6.1 provides an overview of how information flows through the ETDM process, identifying data sources, processing, and output. **Section 6.2** describes the major data components of the EST. **Section 6.3** discusses data collection techniques and **Section 6.4** describes Quality Control/Quality Assurance measures for processing the data. **Section 6.5** provides information for authorizing user access to the EST. **Section 6.6** describes the data archival standards of the EST.

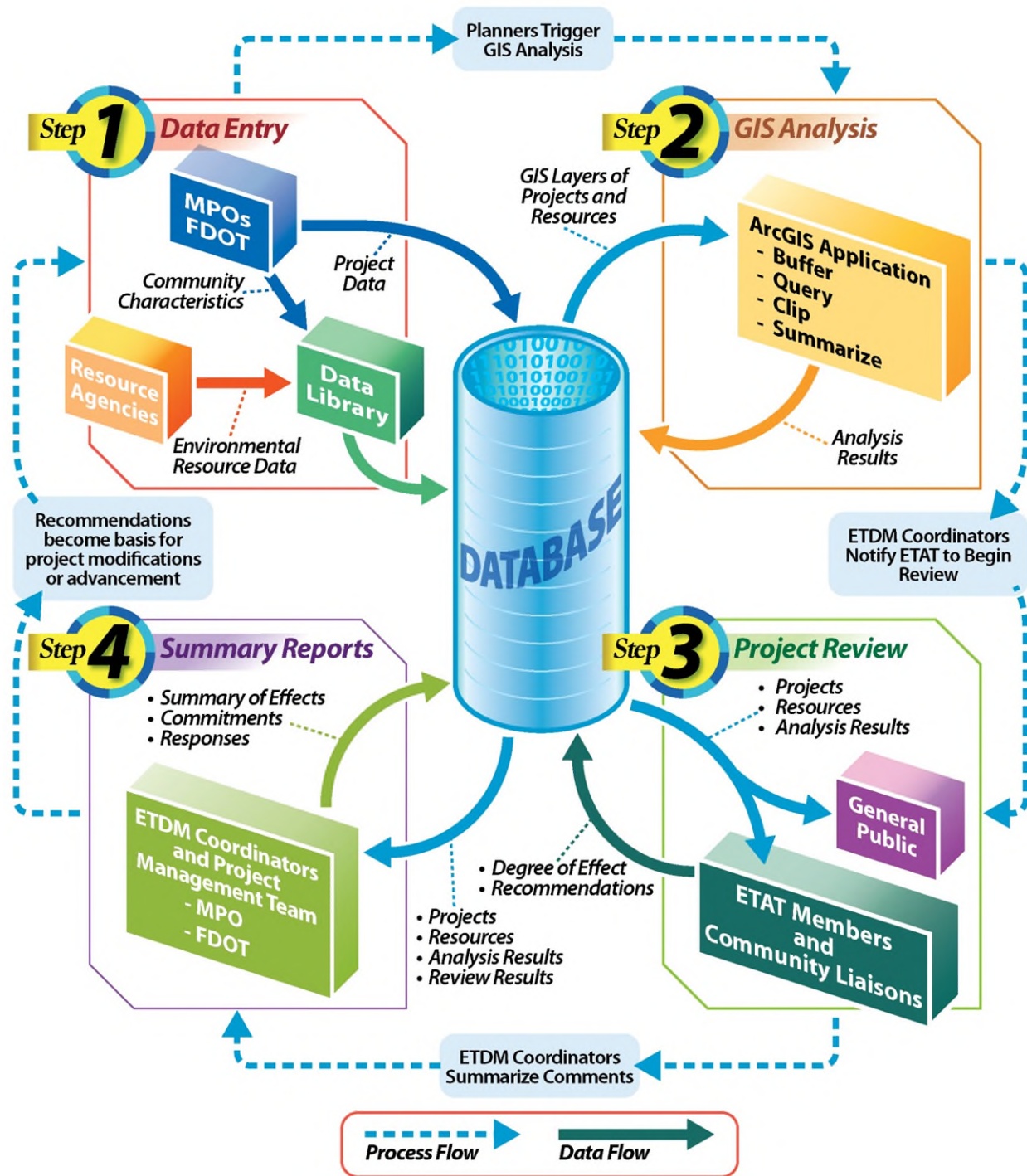


Figure 6-1: Environmental Screening Tool Process and Data Flow Diagram

6.2 DATA COMPONENTS

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

Table 6–1: Data Component Entry/Update Responsibilities

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

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

6.2.1 Transportation Project Data

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

1. Information regarding Plan Consistency pursuant to “Planning Requirements for Environmental Document Approvals” and local government comprehensive plans. Refer to [Project Development and Environment \(PD&E\) Manual, Part 2, Chapter 1, Project Description and Purpose and Need](#).
2. Project description with information regarding project mode, termini, project length, estimated cost, and any other known supporting information, including the roadway functional classification and Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) for existing and future conditions, and whether or not the project is within an Urban Service Area. If the project involves widening an existing facility, describe the existing right-of-way considerations and whether the agency responsible for the project intends to widen within the existing right-of-way (if known). All project alternatives should be described. The alternative descriptions should highlight anything unique to the alternative.
3. Purpose and need based on considerations for items such as emergency evacuation, community-expressed needs, and transportation demand. Refer to the [PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 1, Project Description and Purpose and Need](#) for guidance.
4. Visual representation of the project location (project geometry/mapping) for GIS analysis and review.

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

6.2.2 Sociocultural or Community Data

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



Figure 6–2: Process for Developing Community Information

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

Table 6–2: Sociocultural or Community Data

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

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

FDOT’s [ETDM Training Website](#) contains instructions for defining community boundaries using the **Area of Interest (AOI) Tool** and generating a SDR from these efforts.

6.2.3 Environmental Resource Data

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

It is the ETAT member's responsibility to identify GIS data within their organization that are available to use in determining the potential effects of transportation projects on agency goals and regulated resources. Examples include datasets developed from environmental studies and established agency plans, programs, and initiatives. This information could include locations and descriptions of the natural, physical, social, and cultural resources that identify priority resources. When a data set includes information that is exempt from public record (such as the location of archeological sites), the ETAT agency informs the GeoPlan Center. This information is available on the secure EST to support the ETDM process, but it is not distributed through the FGDL or made available on the ETDM Public Access Site. Requests for datasets with exempt information are directed to the data custodian to handle.

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

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

6.2.4 Areas of Interest

FDOT project teams can use the EST to define and analyze an area anywhere in Florida to learn more about people, places, and natural resources at that location. When a project does not qualify for ETDM screening, The team can use the Area of Interest (AOI) function in the map viewer to draw a point, line, or polygon on the map. After the location is entered, the website summarizes environmental and community resource information from the Florida Geographic Data Library.

The standard EST GIS Analysis Report identifies natural, physical, social and cultural resources in the area according to the EST GIS database. The Sociocultural Data Report (SDR) displays a demographic profile of the area, based on data from the US Census Bureau. The Cultural Resources Data (CRD) Report pulls together information regarding historic and archaeological resources. The CRD, SDR, Watershed Approach to Evaluating Regional Stormwater Solutions (WATERSS), Resilience Report and EST GIS Analysis Report present the same resource data used for the project evaluations described above in **Section 6.2.2 Sociocultural or Community Data and Section 6.2.3 Environmental Resource Data**. The AOI information is automatically deleted after 30 days, unless otherwise specified by the user.

6.2.5 Document Reviews

Authorized EST users (Document Review Administrators) may upload and distribute documents to ETAT members or other interested parties for review. These documents may

or may not be related to an ETDM or SWEPT project. The review administrator uses the EST to:

- Set up a review period.
- Identify commenters, team members, and responders for each document review.
- Send email notifications to document review participants, notifying them that a review has started.
- Modify existing document review events.

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

6.3 DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGIES

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

6.3.1 Transfer of Existing Digital Information

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

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

- Contact information for the data source to use regarding any questions or problems with the data

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

6.3.2 Online Data Entry

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

6.3.3 Field Data Collection

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

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

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

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

6.4 QUALITY CONTROL/QUALITY ASSURANCE

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

6.4.1 Locational Accuracy

The goal for all EST data in terms of locational accuracy is 12 meters or better. This enables the data to be overlaid with relative accuracy over United States Geological Survey (USGS) 1:24,000-scale map series data and to be consistent with the FDOT roadway base map. Since this accuracy is not always available, dataset documentation must include an estimate of locational accuracy. Metadata for datasets used within the EST must meet the minimum Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) standards. The FDOT OEM Project Manager overseeing the EST may exempt some transportation project, environmental resource, sociocultural, or community data from this requirement if FDOT determines the data adds enough value to justify its inclusion. In these instances, the GeoPlan Center will work with the data provider to complete the metadata documentation. The responsibility for understanding the limitations of any dataset lies with the user.

6.4.2 Data Collection Time Frame and Completeness

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

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

6.4.3 Data Documentation Standard

Metadata provides information about a dataset, including when and how it was developed, and recommendations for its intended use. FGDL staff work with the data provider to prepare consistent metadata for information available in the EST. For information about metadata format for GIS datasets in the EST, contact help@fla-etat.org.

Documentation core components include:

- Name and phone number for an agency contact person knowledgeable about the dataset
- Source
- Time period (year collected)

- Attribute definitions (table fields)
- File format (for example, shapefile)
- Coordinate system and projection parameters, if applicable (for example, latitude/longitude decimal degrees)
- Datum (for example, North American Datum 1927 or 1983)
- Data collection methods (for example, scanned, surveyed or digitized)
- Estimate of locational accuracy (for example, +/- 10 meters, survey quality, or developed from 1:24,000-scale source material)

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

6.4.4 Data Processing Procedures

The following outline describes data processing by the GeoPlan Center:

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

6.4.5 Quality Review of Information

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

6.4.5.1 Transportation Project Data

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

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

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

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

6.4.5.2 Environmental Resource and Community Information

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

Consider the following during this review:

- Confirm that this is the most current version of the data available.
- Ensure the source contact information is listed in the metadata.
- Identify whether another dataset exists that more accurately reflects the current condition of the resource. If so, provide the GeoPlan Center with the data source contact information in order to obtain a copy for the FGDL.
- Review the dataset for errors (see suggested error checking items provided above for transportation information).

- Confirm the metadata is up-to-date and reflective of the constraints associated with using the data.

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

6.5 USER ACCESS AND AUTHORIZATION

The EST is an Internet application accessed via a web browser. OEM grants write access to specific named users through the secure website based on access approval by ETDM Coordinators. EST System administrators create the appropriate account access credentials. Read-only access is provided to restricted user accounts authorized on the secure version of the EST site and to all users of the ETDM Public Access Site.

The EST uses role-based security to limit access to appropriate features in the system. For example, ETAT members can provide comments within the Districts they are assigned, but cannot update project information. Some FDOT project team members can update project information, but others cannot. The ETDM Coordinators identify the level of access to the EST for users within their organization (FDOT District, Turnpike, or MPO/TPO). OEM coordinates user access for FDOT Central Office and ETAT agency users. The following table provides a quick reference for typical EST roles needed for the FDOT and MPO/TPO transportation project team members:

Table 6–3: Project Team Member Roles in the EST

Team Member	EST Role
PD&E Project Manager	ETDM Project Manager
Environmental Manager	ETDM Coordinator Management Team
Project Development Manager	ETDM Coordinator Management Team
ETDM Coordinator	ETDM Coordinator
Community Liaison Coordinator (CLC)	Community Liaison Coordinator
Environmental Permit Coordinator	Environmental Permit Coordinator
Other Staff or Consultants	ETDM Coordinator Management Team, Area of Interest Only, or Emergency Response Tool Editor

When requesting access for users within the FDOT network, the ETDM Coordinator uses FDOT’s Automated Access Request Form (AARF) and selects from the following options:

- EST - Area of Interest Only
- EST - Emergency Response Tool Editor
- EST - Community Liaison Coordinator
- EST - District LAP Coordinator

- EST - ETDM Coordinator
- EST - ETDM Coordinator Management Team
- EST - ETDM Project Manager

For external users, the ETDM Coordinator sends an email to the ETDM Help Desk with the person's contact information and the desired EST role (from the list above).

6.6 DATA AVAILABILITY AND RETENTION

Users can access the EST and EST Public Access Site 24 hours per day, seven days a week. OEM announces, in advance, downtime needed for system maintenance.

ETDM project data are extracted nightly and made available for download on the EST. This includes all reviewed projects or those currently in review. Refer to the ***Frequently Asked Questions*** page on the EST for more information.

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

1. Transportation project information, associated records, and documents shall be retained in the EST for at least five years following completion of construction of the last project segment, including storing a recoverable snapshot at each project status and/or phase change during the project life cycle. Upon deletion from the ETDM database, these records shall be archived on electronic storage media.
2. For projects not constructed, records shall be retained on the EST for at least five years following the last action. Upon deletion from the ETDM database, these records shall be archived on electronic storage media.
3. Information associated with draft projects (not reviewed by the ETAT) shall be retained until obsolete, superseded, or administrative value is lost as determined by the ETDM Coordinator. These records shall not be archived upon deletion from the EST.
4. GIS data included in the EST to describe the natural, physical, social, and cultural resources are duplicate copies of the original source records. These records are retained until obsolete, superseded or administrative value is lost. They are archived upon deletion from the EST.
5. ETDM Summary Reports, Methodology Memorandums, Alternative Corridor Evaluation Reports, Class of Action Determination Reports, Advance Notification Packages, Document Reviews, and Project Attachments are automatically attributed, tied to the document retention and disposal schedule, uploaded and archived in the FDOT EEDMS.

6. AOI shapes and reports are retained for 30 days unless otherwise indicated by the user in the AOI tool.

6.7 REFERENCES

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6.8 HISTORY

03/2006: Original Publication

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

12/2015: Updated to reflect current practices

05/2017: Updated to incorporate requirements of the Memorandum of Understanding dated 12/14/2016 and executed by FHWA and FDOT concerning the State of Florida's participation in the Surface Transportation Project Delivery Program pursuant to **23 U.S.C. § 327**

09/2019: Updated to reflect current practices

12/2021: Reviewed for updates in authorities, requirements and practices. Only editorial changes were needed.

12/2024: Pen and ink edits to incorporate updates to the PD&E manual.