

# etdm

Efficient Transportation Decision Making

## Progress Report #7



Efficient Transportation Decision Making  
*...While Protecting Florida's Environment*



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## Executive Summary

This report provides an update on the progress made by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) process. Since **ETDM Progress Report #6**, released in November 2016, a significant change has occurred. On December 14, 2016, FDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) executed the NEPA Assignment MOU. Under this MOU, FDOT assumed sole responsibility in lieu of FHWA in its compliance with, among other laws and regulations, both 23 USC §139 (Efficient environmental reviews for project decision-making) and §168 (Integration of planning and environmental review), which are the Sections that apply to the ETDM process. Pursuant to 23 U.S.C. § 327(a)(2)(B), FDOT replaces the FHWA as lead agency and now has leadership and oversight responsibility for ETDM pursuant to Sections 3.2.1 and 4.2.4 of the MOU.

Within six months of execution of the MOU, FDOT was required to modify all existing ETDM tri-party agreements with Environmental Technical Advisory Agencies to remove FHWA for the agreement except to verify the agreement activities that qualify for federal reimbursement.

This report reflects ETDM Performance Survey results, outcomes, findings, benefits, opportunities and recommendations; and provides a status on the ETDM program, existing agency agreements, ongoing activities and future initiatives. This document is the seventh in a series of progress reports that covers the period from January 2016 through December 2017 (referred to as the “reporting period”).

### 2017 ETDM Survey Results

The Survey found District and Agency interactions received highly favorable ratings. The Districts rated overall interaction with Agencies a score of 4.18 (Very Good) on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest). Rating criteria included communication, working relationship, problem solving, comments and recommendations, quality of information, and overall performance. The Survey found that the Agencies rated overall interaction with the Districts a score of 4.36 (Very Good) using the same scale and criteria.

Other Survey results were favorable to the ETDM process, including Office of Environmental Management (OEM) support and recent ETDM initiatives. The Survey found ETDM continued to meet its objectives, worked well to incorporate environmental considerations into transportation planning, and had a number of highly rated process benefits (highest rated benefits were strengthened interagency coordination & communication [4.72] and increased awareness of environmental resources [4.57]).

The Survey found several opportunities for improvements, including the ETDM process, training and guidance, Environmental Screening Tool (EST) enhancements, and communication and meetings.

Additionally, after the MOU was executed, Performance Measures of the ETDM program continued to receive exceptionally high ex ratings for communications and collaboration. Agencies rated FDOT 4.21 (Very Good) for quality of communications and rated FDOT 4.22 (Very Good) for how well FDOT works with the agencies. Per the MOU, FDOT is required to report these performance measure results to FHWA during annual program self-assessments, which are intended to be informational sources for FHWA audits to verify that relationships with agencies remain unchanged. During the reporting period, FHWA has completed two audits (2017 & 2018). In both audit reports (final 2017 and draft 2018), FHWA reviewed and considered the ETDM survey performance results and interviewed agency partners. In both instances, FHWA identified our fantastic agency relationships as being a successful practice.

## **FHWA 2017 ETDM Financial Program Review**

During the reporting period FHWA conducted an ETDM Financial program review, which began in August 2016 and was completed in March 2017. This program is still a national model for program development, operation and management for environmental streamlining substantially meeting the federal program and financial requirements of 23 USC 139(j) and 2 CFR 200.

## **ETDM Status**

During the reporting period, a total of 77 screening events were completed, with 11 Planning Screens and 66 Programming Screens. There are 17 active agency agreements. A number of enhancements have been made to the Environmental Screening Tool (EST), including:

- Support for OEM's ETDM review and approval tasks under NEPA assignment
- Annual ETAT Survey to measure stakeholder communication
- Cooperating Agency review and concurrence prior to eliminating alternatives
- Additional checks for the United States Coast Guard (USCG) for navigational determination
- Notifications to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) regarding sole source aquifer determinations
- New Emergency Response Tool
- Cultural Resources Data Report enhancements
- Sociocultural Data Report enhancements
- New tools allowing the formal adoption of Alternative Corridor Evaluation (ACE) Methodology Memorandums and other planning products
- Environmental summary added to Class of Action determination review form
- New user interface and framework designed to operate with current GIS and web browser technology (the first module, Agency Invoicing, was released in 2018)
- New data added to support Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC) program considerations

In addition to these enhancements, other ongoing activities include: maintaining and supporting the EST, enabling ETAT members to recommend permits and technical studies, and upgrading the EST to use current GIS and web browser technology. This upgrade brings simplification of forms, customized organization of data on the map viewer, and other user-friendly enhancements to the EST in response to user feedback.

Future initiatives include adding data analyses and reports to support the ARC program, strengthening linkages among project phases by cascading more information from ETDM to subsequent phases, expanding public awareness of ETDM projects, and implementing new technologies for the EST.

## 1 Purpose

This report serves as the 7<sup>th</sup> Progress Report of the ETDM program. The purpose is to provide an update on the program during the reporting period including NEPA Assignment implications, Performance Survey results, outcomes, findings, benefits, opportunities, and recommendations; and provides a status on the ETDM program elements, existing agency agreements, ongoing activities, and future initiatives. This document is the seventh in a series of progress reports that covers the period from **January 2016 through December 2017** (referred to as the “reporting period”).

## 2 NEPA Assignment

The Surface Transportation Project Delivery Program (or NEPA Assignment Program) allows a State to assume FHWA’s environmental responsibilities for review, consultation, and compliance for Federal highway projects. This provision has been codified at 23 U.S.C. 327. When a State assumes these Federal responsibilities, the State becomes solely responsible and liable for carrying out the responsibilities, in lieu of FHWA. The FDOT published in the Florida Administrative Register its application for assumption under the NEPA Assignment Program on April 15, 2016, and made it available for public comment for 30 days. After considering public comments, FDOT submitted its application to FHWA on May 31, 2016. The application served as the basis for developing the memorandum of understanding (MOU) that identifies the responsibilities and obligations FDOT would assume. The FHWA published a notice of the draft MOU in the Federal Register on November 1, 2016, with a 30-day comment period to solicit the views of the public and Federal agencies. After the end of the comment period, FHWA and FDOT considered comments and proceeded to execute the MOU. Effective December 14, 2016, FDOT assumed FHWA’s responsibilities under NEPA, and the responsibilities for reviews under other Federal environmental requirements. This assumption resulted in FDOT replacing FHWA as the lead agency for ETDM as found in Sections 3.2.1 and 4.2.4 of the MOU, excerpted below.

In Section 3.2.1 of the executed MOU, “Pursuant to 23 U.S.C. § 327(a)(2)(B), on the Effective Date of this MOU, FHWA assigns and FDOT assumes, subject to the terms and conditions set forth in this MOU, all of the USDOT Secretary’s responsibilities for environmental review, reevaluation, consultation, or other action pertaining to the review or approval of highway projects specified under subpart 3.3 of this MOU, required under the following federal environmental laws:

- Planning and Environmental Linkages, 23 U.S.C. § 168, with the exception of those FHWA responsibilities associated with 23 U.S.C. §§ 134 and 135
- Efficient Project Reviews for Environmental Decision Making 23 U.S.C. § 139”

**Note:** Only the ETDM program relevant federal laws are identified. ETDM is a Department implementation of 23 U.S.C. § 139 and 23 U.S.C. § 168. Please review [the executed MOU](#) for the complete listing of responsibilities assumed by FDOT through execution of the MOU.

Another requirement from Section 4.2.4 of the MOU, “As part of its commitment of resources, FDOT will continue to develop, implement and update its Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) and Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Manuals and procedures, which are not subject to FHWA review or approval unless required by statute or regulation, to support appropriate environmental analysis and decision-making under NEPA and associated laws and regulations. FDOT recognizes it is solely responsible for the ETDM and the PD&E Manuals and procedures for compliance with responsibilities assigned in this MOU and for establishing policy and guidance to implement its program. Within six (6) months of the Effective

Date of this MOU, FDOT will update the ETDM and PD&E manuals for the responsibilities assigned to FDOT in this MOU. FDOT will provide notification to FHWA when the ETDM and the PD&E Manuals are revised.”

The ETDM Manual (and PD&E Manual) was updated and FHWA was notified upon completion within 6 months of the execution of the MOU.

Pursuant to Section 5.1.4 of the MOU;

“Within six (6) of the Effective Date of this MOU, FDOT will work with FHWA and the agencies to modify existing interagency agreements. Such actions may include:

- A. Obtaining written consent to the continuation of the interagency agreement in its existing form, but with the substitution of FDOT for FHWA; or
- B. Amending the interagency agreement as needed so that the interagency agreement continues but that FDOT assumes FHWA's responsibilities.

If an affected agency does not agree to modify the interagency agreement, then to the extent permitted by applicable law and regulation, FDOT will carry out the assumed environmental review, consultation, or other related activity in accordance with applicable laws and regulations but without the benefit of the provisions of the interagency agreement.”

All [ETAT interagency agreements were modified and executed](#) to remove FHWA as a signatory to the agreement and shift their responsibilities, with the exception of those outlined in the executed amendment, to FDOT. These amendments were completed within the required 6 months and FHWA was notified.

With execution of the MOU, during the reporting period considerable effort has been made to update, not only the ETDM process, but also to alter the EST to shift existing FHWA responsibilities to FDOT and create additional functions to facilitate OEM's transition of responsibilities. These EST updates are described in Section 4.5 of this progress report.

### 3 ETDM Survey Results

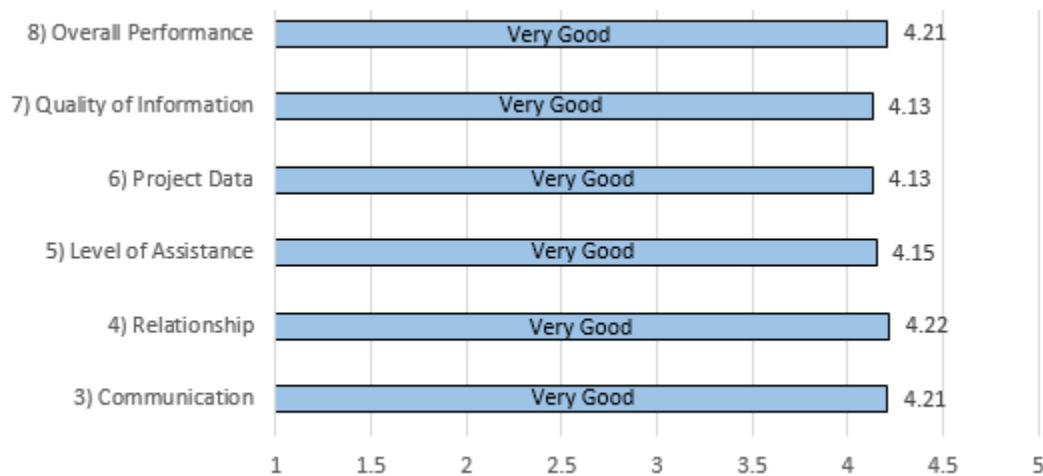
This section summarizes the results of the ETDM Survey covering the reporting period. Enhancements referenced in Sections 3.2 and 3.3 are District and/or Agency perceptions of benefits of current FDOT activities and processes, not new initiatives or system upgrades.

#### 3.1 Outcomes

Interaction between the FDOT Districts/Turnpike and the ETAT agencies are shown below.

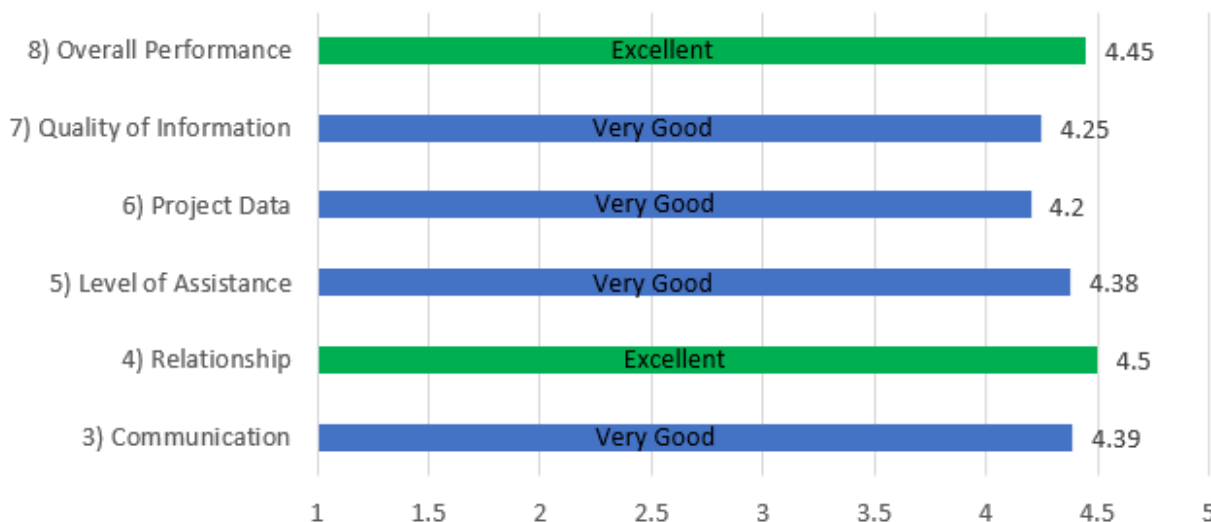
- Average Districts/Turnpike Ratings of their Interaction with the ETAT Agencies – **Very Good (4.18)**

**Average District/Turnpike Ratings of ETAT Agencies for Questions 3 – 8**



- Average ETAT Agencies Ratings of their Interaction with the Districts/Turnpike – **Very Good (4.36)**

**Average ETAT Ratings of Districts/Turnpike for Questions 3 – 8**



- OEM Support
  - Training – **Beneficial (4.44)**
  - OEM Manuals and Handbooks – **Very Good (4.15)**
  - Technical Assistance – **Strongly Agree (4.83)**

Notably, OEMs technical assistance provided by the Help Desk and by OEM staff received the highest possible rating (Excellent) from the Districts and Turnpike in every category.

Type of Support	Agency Average	District Average	Overall Average
Technical Assistance	Strongly Agree (4.68)	Strongly Agree (4.97)	Strongly Agree (4.83)
Classroom Training	Beneficial (4.07)	Very Beneficial (4.81)	Beneficial (4.44)
Documents	Very Good (3.91)	Very Good (4.38)	Very Good (4.15)

### 3.2 Findings

Based on the responses provided by the 2017 ETDM survey, it is clear that the ETDM process continues to meet its objectives:

- Early identification of potential issues for project scope development
- Timely decision making that includes consideration of environmental quality
- Full and early public and Environmental Technical Advisory Team (ETAT) member participation
- Linkage of planning and Project Development and Environment (PD&E) [including National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)] processes
- Incorporation of appropriate dispute resolution mechanisms during the planning process

Regarding dispute resolution, there were no formal disputes during the reporting period.

Overall, participants indicated that the ETDM process is working well to incorporate environmental considerations into transportation planning. The information, decisions, and products from the ETDM process support efficient project delivery as projects move forward to design and permitting phases. Project examples illustrate continued cost and time savings realized through implementation of the ETDM process.

In addition to recognizing these achievements, the surveys identified some enhancements to tools, data and communication techniques to help FDOT realize additional benefits. OEM has begun acting on these recommendations. OEM appreciates the feedback received from ETDM participants and will continue to monitor the process and seek opportunities for continual improvement (updated language from 2017 ETDM Results Report).

### 3.3 District and Agency Identified Benefits

The ETDM Surveys include comment sections for the Districts to share specifics about their ratings. During the full 2017 survey (administered in 2018), Districts indicated key benefits of the ETDM process continue to result in cost and time savings. Below are some excerpts from the FDOT District or responding Agency surveys:



- The identification and resolution of significant issues before a project enters the production pipeline has resulted in cost savings for projects that otherwise may not have been permitted. Specifically, the identification of issues requiring additional study during the Project Development phase has improved PD&E Study scope development and has allowed for the refinement of technical studies for the scope.
- Early agreement on project Purpose & Need Statements has resulted in time savings during the Project Development phase. This early agreement has also helped to better determine the appropriate project Class of Action. Having general agreement on the Purpose and Need Statement and Class of Action before the initiation of the PD&E Study has reduced a project schedule by several months.
- Increased agency collaboration has provided a mutual understanding of the responsibilities and activities required across the transportation planning, project development, and regulatory processes.
- ETDM helps to identify special permitting needs (i.e., additional costs) that may be associated with certain projects contributing to a more accurate estimate of anticipated costs.
- ETDM allows potential agency concerns to be addressed prior to permitting, which decreases time and effort associated with obtaining the necessary environmental permits during the Project Development phase.

Districts indicated other examples of benefits included ETDM linkages with NEPA:

- ETDM Manual and PD&E Manual have been updated to incorporate each other. FDOT's environmental process links planning and NEPA and products produced in ETDM are used for NEPA.
- ETDM connects to EDMS and SWEPT - project activities are consistently documented throughout the FDOT system.
- The ETDM process has strengthened our communication with the resource agencies and it helps us to identify environmental issues earlier so they can be addressed more effectively during PD&E.

Agencies also indicated benefits of ETDM included early coordination, communication with FDOT, and agency engagement in providing specialized data and resources. Here are a few examples from agencies that are generally representative of agency feedback:

- **National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)** – The ETDM process has allowed NMFS to be more engaged in providing input to FDOT with regard to NMFS trust resources. The funded positions ensure that NMFS will be there to review FDOT projects early in the planning process, offer timely input, and work with FDOT to find solutions that help maintain the integrity of Florida's ecosystems while meeting the State's transportation infrastructure needs.
- **St Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD)** – The ETDM Process provides the SJRWMD with an opportunity for coordination and input earlier in the project planning process. The benefits to our agency include promoting greater awareness of the regulatory requirements related to permitting through our agency, earlier identification of potential issues that will need to be addressed in project planning, earlier identification of potential stormwater harvesting and mitigation opportunities, and streamlining of the permitting process.

- **US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)** – Opportunity to provide guidance and recommendations in a pre-application process; provides the Corps with a better understanding of the anticipated projects/applications, which would be submitted to the Corps in the future, and the approximate timeframes.
- **US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)** – The ETDM process allows USEPA to begin to review readily available environmental and social information related to proposed transportation projects. This information is primarily contained in the EST tool, which helps to streamline our reviews. The EST is a great repository as it stores some of the agencies’ history with the project. One of key benefits of using the EST and having a set process in place is that there is a virtual/online record of the communication between agencies. This is helpful so that the EPA can review the comments that other agencies have made on the same projects. Overall, the ETDM process helps the EPA in early engagement and understanding of key environmental issues prior to the issuance of a NEPA document.

### 3.4 ETDM 2017 Survey Responses Identified as Benefits

The following process benefit averages are ranked from highest to lowest and reflect combined and averaged District and Agency responses, which are delineated in the tables below:

- Strengthened interagency coordination and communication – **Strongly Agree (4.72)**
- Increased the awareness of environmental resources – **Strongly Agree (4.57)**
- Promoted better decision making for transportation projects – **Agree (4.30)**
- Established lasting efficiencies in the environmental review process – **Agree (4.29)**
- Improved project permitting – **Agree (4.23)**
- Increased the protection of environmental resources – **Agree (4.15)**
- Increased public access to project information – **Agree (4.10)**
- Saved money and reduced project costs – **Agree (4.07)**
- Reduced interagency conflicts – **Agree (4.04)**

Average District/Turnpike Ratings of ETDM Process Benefits		
Statements about the ETDM Process	Numerical Rating	Likert Rating
Strengthened interagency coordination and communication	4.88	Strongly Agree
Increased the awareness of environmental resources	4.63	Strongly Agree
Promoted better decision making for transportation projects	4.38	Agree
Improved project permitting	4.33	Agree
Established lasting efficiencies in the environmental review process	4.25	Agree
Increased the protection of environmental resources	4.13	Agree
Saved money and reduced project costs	4.13	Agree

Average District/Turnpike Ratings of ETDM Process Benefits		
Statements about the ETDM Process	Numerical Rating	Likert Rating
Increased public access to project information	4.13	Agree
Reduced interagency conflicts	4.00	Agree

Average ETAT Agency Ratings of ETDM Process Benefits		
Statements about the ETDM Process	Numerical Rating	Likert Rating
Strengthened interagency coordination and communication	4.56	Strongly Agree
Increased the awareness of environmental resources	4.50	Strongly Agree
Established lasting efficiencies in the environmental review process	4.33	Agree
Promoted better decision making for transportation projects	4.22	Agree
Increased the protection of environmental resources	4.17	Agree
Improved project permitting	4.13	Agree
Reduced interagency conflicts	4.07	Agree
Increased public access to project information	4.06	Agree
Saved money and reduced project costs	4.00	Agree

ETAT agencies and FDOT Districts/Turnpike described a number of accomplishments in the 2017 survey. Accomplishments are considered as any positive outcome resulting from the ETDM process that is documented by the survey respondent. Key accomplishments are summarized in Subsections 3.4.1 – 3.4.7 below.

### 3.4.1 Improved environmental review process

The ETDM process provides opportunities for agencies to review FDOT projects during the planning phase. This allows early identification of environmental concerns so that solutions can be attempted before permitting, when changes during the design phase are more costly.

The process also gives the agencies a better idea of what major transportation projects are proposed for a specific region in Florida. This allows agencies to coordinate internally within their various divisions and provides information to help with plans for the resources they manage or regulate. In some instances, mitigation for a number of ETDM projects can be combined into a single larger mitigation project that maximizes ecosystem benefits.

The Environmental Screening Tool (EST) helps agencies and FDOT Districts identify resources in proximity to the projects. For example, during this reporting period, an analysis was added to the Standard GIS Analysis Report that helped the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) identify potential impacts to Important Farmlands more efficiently. NMFS and Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) commented on how the ETDM process allowed potential issues to be identified well ahead of permitting stages. USCG

mentioned how this early identification of issues allowed them to determine permitting jurisdiction and request requisite navigation studies when appropriate. SWFWMD discussed how the process allowed other Departments and Bureaus within the district to share information with FDOT that would be helpful to both agencies during the subsequent project phases. District 7 and Turnpike reported improvements in the environmental review process by discussing how ETDM allowed for better PD&E scopes and establishment of the appropriate class of action.

### **3.4.2 Strengthened interagency coordination and communication**

Several agencies noted that the ETDM process has improved coordination and communication within their own organizations, as well as between FDOT and other agencies. NMFS commented on how the ETDM process provided a consistent, transparent process and ample opportunities for ETDM participants to engage and interact, which builds lasting, positive, trusting relationships. The NPS described how the ETDM process strengthened the coordination and communication early in the process so that adjustments were made to avoid sensitive resources.

Comments were also provided by the Districts/Turnpike that supported this accomplishment. For example, District 5 used Area of Influence evaluations for minor projects not subject to Planning or Programming screens and worked with the MPOs/TPOs in the District to assist with environmental evaluations, starting with the Preliminary Environmental Discussion (PED). District 5 also used the ETAT review comments, related summary degrees of effect, and other aspects of the process to appropriately scope the PD&E Study.

### **3.4.3 Increased the awareness of environmental resources**

Many of the agencies provided comments that support how the ETDM process increased the awareness of environmental resources. FDEP noted how early knowledge of issues of concern helped minimize potential adverse impacts to state resources. USEPA mentioned how the process allowed the agency to engage early and understand key environmental issues prior to the issuance of a NEPA document. SRWMD mentioned how GIS layers such as habitat and wetlands improved the quality of their review process.

### **3.4.4 Promoted better decision making for transportation projects**

FDOT uses the ETDM process for early consideration of potential environmental effects to help support decision making as projects move through the project delivery process.

FDOT Districts also use the EST to help with early identification of resources on other projects, including minor projects. District 1 mentioned how their strong working relationship with ETAT agency members has contributed to early problem solving on projects and early concurrence on Purpose and Need, helping projects to stay on schedule.

Agencies provided comments indicating the process has promoted better decision making for transportation projects as well. For example, NMFS mentioned how funded positions ensure that NMFS will review FDOT projects early in the planning process, offer timely input, and work with FDOT to find solutions that help maintain the integrity of Florida's ecosystems, while meeting the State's transportation infrastructure needs.

### **3.4.5 Established lasting efficiencies in the environmental review process**

The ETDM process provides opportunities for agencies to review projects during the planning phase and allows for early identification of environmental concerns so that solutions can be attempted before permitting. The process also helps FDOT identify which studies and reports

are needed during PD&E and which are unnecessary. FDOT is always looking for ways to continually improve the process and make it more efficient. District 2 mentioned the process helped establish the appropriate class of action and was useful in developing a better PD&E scope. National Park Service (NPS) mentioned how GIS was used early in the ETDM process to share information concerning locations of sensitive areas. The State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) commented on how the ETDM process provided excellent project tracking and allowed the agency to more effectively fulfill their review obligations.

### **3.4.6 Improved project permitting**

According to feedback received in the survey, the ETDM process appears to have improved the project permitting process. SJRWMD discussed how the ETDM process has improved project permitting by providing an opportunity to bring awareness to potential concerns and design requirements early in the planning process. They mentioned how this opportunity for early input and coordination minimized the need for significant design changes and expedited the review and permitting process. SJRWMD also mentioned ETDM benefited their agency by promoting greater awareness of regulatory requirements related to permitting. An example of this was earlier identification of potential stormwater harvesting and mitigation opportunities.

District 1 commented on how documenting interagency coordination provided evidence that avoidance and minimization measures were addressed, which reduce the time and effort required to obtain environmental permits.

### **3.4.7 Increased the consideration of environmental resources**

The ETDM process appears to have improved the consideration of environmental resources. FWC says the ETDM process resulted in improved wildlife impact evaluation in planning, which led to an improved project design with appropriate fish and wildlife impact avoidance, as well as minimization and mitigation measures. The USFWS mentioned how the ETDM process provided the ability to identify significant adverse impacts to Federally listed species and other fish and wildlife resources early in the planning process. The USFWS also provided another example (Eastern Section of the Central Polk County Parkway) where the ETDM process allowed the service to dispute the project that would have resulted in significant adverse impacts to the threatened sand skink and the threatened blue-tailed mole skink, as well as other fish and wildlife resources in the project area. This portion of the project was subsequently withdrawn for further consideration by the FDOT.

Also, SWFWMD explained how the process allowed FDOT to know the current status of the latest watershed/floodplain studies that may have affected the design of upcoming projects.

## **3.5 Project Specific Benefits**

Several Districts and Agencies identified specific examples that highlighted how the ETDM process provided benefits leading to the success of the project.

**District 4 – I-95 @ Broward Blvd. (Woodlawn Cemetery).** This project proposed a major interchange improvement in central Broward County requiring additional right of way. Woodlawn Cemetery not only abuts I-95, but also encroaches FDOT on the east side. Woodlawn Cemetery is historical (dating back to the 1920s) and was the only cemetery for African-Americans until 1964. This cemetery was identified in the PSR as a resource with potential impacts if widening were to occur. Early and extensive coordination efforts were required not only with SHPO, but with the community as well. A Cultural Resource Committee was formed with members of the community, FDOT, our consultant project team, and SHPO to minimize and ultimately avoid

impacts to this valuable resource. As a result, not only did FDOT hold the existing eastern edge of pavement limit but also surplused the property to the cemetery (in which 80 burials were identified by GPR). Furthermore, FDOT assisted the community in registering the cemetery on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and receiving a historical marker. SHPO was extremely instrumental in the coordination efforts to make this project a success!

**District 5** – The Pioneer Trail interchange PD&E Study, which is evaluating a new interchange between State Road 44 and Dunlawton Avenue, is being fast-tracked through an accelerated schedule. The scoping portion of this project and the requisite path forward started with ETDM and resulted in fast-tracked negotiations and project schedule, in part based on the ETAT comments received through the ETDM process.

**Turnpike** – Colonial Parkway from Woodbury Road to SR 520 serves as a solid example of environmental streamlining. The screening event assisted with the refinement of the project limits and clarified the level of effort required for the PD&E phase. The screening event also documented the vast history of the project and previous coordination efforts, essentially serving as a "one-stop-shop" for project information.

**SHPO** – The Tampa Bay Next project (FPID 258337) is an excellent example of streamlining environmental review under ETDM. There has been interagency consultation between FDOT, FHWA, and SHPO over several years, including execution of an MOA in 2002. In 2017 the project consultation resumed, allowing for additional input from agencies, the public, and various stakeholders. FHWA invited SHPO to be a participating agency in the project. Since October 2017, SHPO has attended a public meeting, conducted field visits, and attended a formal coordination meeting regarding survey methodology. Additionally, this office reviewed via the EST, the Draft Schedule TIS Supplemental Impact Statement, and Tampa Interstate Study (TIS) Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) Preliminary Alternatives Screening Technical Memorandum. The early coordination with SHPO and use of ETDM provided this office with an opportunity to provide comments that will help streamline the project consultation.

**Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC)** – ETDM 4390 for SR-40 through a sizable area of the Ocala National Forest in Marion and Lake Counties is a good example of interagency cooperation over more than a 7-year period as the final environmental documents were reviewed and approved. FDOT D-5 also addressed habitat loss and listed species protection on the Ocala National Forest, and planned and designed numerous wildlife underpasses, culverts, animal-proof fencing, and a land acquisition plan directed to replace the unavoidable loss of public lands at the location of Drainage Retention Areas and highway right-of-way expansion. Another example is the Suncoast 2 project in Hernando and Citrus Counties where wildlife underpasses and culverts were constructed for habitat connectivity. Approximately 1,400 acres of land within three counties representing a wide range of habitat types, which were currently on DEP's approved acquisition list, will be acquired and managed as mitigation to offset project impacts. The Turnpike will also install permanent electronic signage on the roadway to reduce vehicle speed during controlled burns on state lands. In addition, over 600 gopher tortoises were re-located to state lands in the region adjacent to the impact areas.

**NMFS** – First Coast Expressway, FDOT District 2. This is one of the largest and most impactful projects in District 2's recent history. This project was screened as an Advance Notification (AN) in Oct 2005, followed by EST screening in June 2006. There was extensive communication between NMFS and FDOT throughout the project development including field reviews, EIS reviews, tide gauge and wetland delineation studies and options for mitigation. Wetland and EFH issues were identified early and addressed by the multi-agency ETAT as the project was designed. EFH consultation was completed in September 2017 (with a CR outstanding for a

mitigation plan). This project had a long and complicated history and was actually reviewed by three different EFH specialists throughout the timeline. As a result of using the ETDM process, the project history was clearly articulated and wetland/EFH concerns were identified and addressed early so that consultation was not unnecessarily delayed.

**USEPA** – The Gulf Coast Parkway exemplifies the appropriate use of the conflict resolution process, which enabled EPA to amend its rating (improvement). EPA reviewed the Gulf Coast Parkway Dispute Resolution Briefing Paper and Action Plan regarding Indirect and Cumulative Effects. In an effort to complete the dispute resolution process, FDOT coordinated meetings with involved agencies (including EPA), developed methodologies for the analysis of direct and cumulative effects, and presented the results of the PD&E study analysis of the proposed alternative's effects. As a result of these actions, the project's potential indirect and cumulative effects were better ascertained. Therefore, the EPA agreed that the degree of effect should be changed from "Dispute Resolution" to "Substantial" for the proposed project.

**USFWS** – The Eastern Section of the Central Polk County Parkway. Through the ETDM process the Service was allowed to dispute the project that would have resulted in significant adverse impacts to the threatened sand skink and the threatened blue-tailed mole skink, as well as fish and wildlife resources in the project area. This portion of the project was subsequently withdrawn for further consideration by the FDOT.

## 3.6 Opportunities and Recommendations

### 3.6.1 ETDM Process

- Several Districts commented about difficulties with obtaining project-specific public involvement during the ETDM process. District 5, on the other hand, noted an improvement in this area when their Corridor Development Group undertakes Planning and Feasibility studies. During an upcoming ETDM Coordinator's meeting, OEM will provide an opportunity for District 5 to share their approaches with the other Districts.
- Coordinate and publish schedules for pending ETDM reviews for all seven FDOT Districts and Turnpike.
- Consider a potential modification to performance measures of the dispute resolution process that reflects efficiency and responsiveness for complex issues that cannot be resolved in 120 days.
- Discuss opportunities with the Office of Policy Planning for MPOs to consistently play a more active role in coordinating with the Districts to develop Planning Screens.

### 3.6.2 Training and Guidance

- Continue to provide ETDM, EST, and PD&E training to incorporate new guidance and procedures. The input provided in the surveys helps to identify areas where updates or additional training is needed. (Ongoing)
- Continue to notify ETAT members and District teams when new training opportunities are available. Send occasional reminders about the training opportunities on the OEM website and the EST. (Ongoing)
- Develop a quick reference guide to identify key on-demand videos that provide a refresher for project reviews.

### 3.6.3 EST Enhancements

- Data Enhancements:
  - Update the Land and Water Conservation Sites data layer when it becomes available from the National Park Service.
  - Identify federal data layers available on USEPA websites that may be useful in the EST.
  - Add a link to the NMFS Southeast Regional Office's point of contact in the metadata file for NMFS data layers.
  - Consider including 1-mile buffer distances in the GIS analyses for USEPA contaminated sites.
  - Follow-up with DEO about removing the 2008 "Future" land use data layer from the EST and remove it, if appropriate.
  - Add the Florida Parks and Recreational Facilities to the Section 4(f) Potential maps and GIS analysis.
- Provide links to related tools available on other websites:
  - SWFWMD's Floodplain Map Viewer into the EST - <http://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/projects/wmp/index.php>
  - FDEP's TMDL Dashboard into the EST - <http://webapps.dep.state.fl.us/DearTmdl/dashboardAction.do?method=dashboard>
- Enhancements to support project screening events:
  - Allow agencies to select the required technical studies and permits needed for a project as part of their commenting abilities. (In Progress)
  - Add a tab to the Projects Needing Review page that identifies pending Participating and Cooperating Agency invitations sent to ETAT members. (Complete)
  - Include agency comments in the 10-day reminder emails sent from the EST.
  - Notify the ETDM Coordination team about incomplete Summary Reports or Summary Reports needing to be republished.
- Continue exploring new technologies for the EST and looking for ways to improve overall site design, usability, and navigation. (In Progress)

### 3.6.4 Communication and Meetings

- Continue quarterly FDOT ETDM Coordinator meetings. (On-going)
- Provide opportunities for more frequent face-to-face interagency ETAT meetings. (In Progress)
- Follow-up with survey participants. (Complete)



## 4 Status

This section provides a status of the ETDM program.

### 4.1 ETDM Screenings

During the reporting period, a total of 77 screening events were completed. **Table 1** shows the number and type of screening events completed by each FDOT District during the reporting period and since 10/1/2004.

**Table 1 Number of ETDM Planning and Programming Screens**

District	Reporting Period (1/1/2016 – 12/31/2017)			Since Implementation (10/1/2004 – 12/31/2017)		
	Planning Screens	Programming Screens	Total	Planning Screens	Programming Screens	Total
District 1	0	11	11	32	73	105
District 2	0	10	10	21	49	70
District 3	9	11	20	53	54	107
District 4	0	7	7	18	82	100
District 5	1	6	7	22	53	75
District 6	1	9	10	19	52	71
District 7	0	2	2	38	36	74
Turnpike	0	10	10	2	27	29
<b>Statewide Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>631</b>

Note: Some projects had multiple screenings during the reporting period.

### 4.2 Existing Agency Agreements

**Table 2** shows the status of existing agreements with agencies engaged in the ETDM process.

**Table 2 ETDM Agency Agreement Status**

Agency	Agreement Dates	Funding
Federal Highway Administration	01/03/2016-11/02/2021	Non-Funded
FL Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services	3/27/12-Indefinite (AOA only)	Non-Funded
FL Department of Economic Opportunities	4/15/2015-4/14/2020	\$25,999
FL Department of Environmental Protection	N/A	Non-Funded
FL Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission	02/01/2018-01/31/2023	\$1,464,045
FL Department of State	04/15/2018-04/14/2023	\$1,240,750
National Marine Fishery Service	07/25/2018-07/24/2023	\$2,252,354

Agency	Agreement Dates	Funding
National Park Service	8/11/2005-Indefinite (MA and AOA only)	Non-Funded
Northwest Florida Water Management District	6/6/2011-6/5/2020	\$673,617
South Florida Water Management District	5/15/2007-5/14/2020	\$250,000
Southwest Florida Water Management District	6/1/2015-5/31/2020	\$1,000,000
Suwannee River Water Management District	10/1/2011-9/30/2019	\$340,884
US Army Corp of Engineers	6/30/2015-6/30/2020	\$2,914,100
US Coast Guard	N/A	Non-Funded
Natural Resources Conservation Service	N/A	Non-Funded
US Environmental Protection Agency	1/30/2015-1/29/2020	\$1,750,000
US Fish and Wildlife Service	5/1/2015-4/30/2020	\$3,837,889
US Forest Service	8/8/2006-8/8/2019	\$194,938

Note: When funded, the value of the current funding agreement is provided (rounded to the nearest whole dollar).

### 4.3 Monitoring Performance

#### 4.3.1 ETAT Feedback Report

ETAT Feedback Reports (EFR) are used to actively monitor, identify, and address performance. EFRs are produced every quarter for all agencies participating in the ETDM process and sent individually to each ETAT agency and their management along with any notes to convey regarding participation. The EFR itself provides performance data for current quarter and three most recent quarters to help with providing a more complete picture on performance and identify trends. EFRs relate information on Project Level Participation, Purpose and Need Participation, Project Effects Participation, and Complete Project Participation. Timeliness of agency comment submission is also covered. If an agency is hitting all its marks and operating at peak performance, the agency commended. If an agency misses one or more performance targets, the agency is notified along with the quarterly report and, if a pattern develops or if management decides, a meeting is arranged with agency to discuss performance and agree on needed actions.

During this reporting period ETAT Participation remains at an all-time high. Only observed slides in performance encountered by an agency during the evaluation period are if there has been a structural change in their organization, the resource(s) assigned to the program shift and the person needs to come up to speed on program requirements or for unfunded agencies, a temporary shift in priorities. In all instances, OEM has reached out to the agency to discuss the unique circumstances.

#### 4.3.2 ETAT Feedback Report

The biannual ETDM Survey is conducted to assess agency evaluations of FDOT Districts and District evaluations of agencies. A trend analysis is also provided to compare performance over time. After the Survey results are compiled and Survey reports are prepared for every District and every agency, individual meetings are held with very District and every agency to discuss Survey results and receive direct feedback about the status of the program and any

opportunities for improvements needed. For the 2017 Survey, opportunities included enhancements to and training for ETDM map viewer, and a need for more face-to-face agency meetings at the state and district levels.

#### **4.3.3 FHWA ETDM Financial Program Review**

During the reporting period FHWA conducted an ETDM Financial program review, which began in August 2016 and was completed in March 2017. FHWA wanted to look at how the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) through the Office of Environmental Management (OEM) has been managing the Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) program and the associated federal funding. ETDM is FDOT's environmental streamlining initiative that was established per 23 USC 139(j) under the Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21) Section 1309. FHWA noted that it had been 16 years since the establishment of the ETDM Process in Florida (2000). In that 16 years, FHWA had proactively funded the ETDM process in the amount of \$46,341,509 and had not conducted a review of the program, although FHWA has been integral to the development of associated interagency agreements.

Before the NEPA Assignment MOU was executed shifting Section 139 and 168 responsibilities to FDOT and consistent with FHWA's Stewardship and Oversight role per 23 U.S.C. 106, FHWA conducted this program review to examine FDOT's management of the ETDM program including elements of funding, program and oversight management, performance measures, and products/services rendered by and to FDOT as established by interagency agreements consistent with streamlining requirements found in 23 USC 139(j). FHWA's review also assessed the current state-of-practice of the OEM in implementing the ETDM process as established in FDOT Program and Financial protocols and on-line invoicing system through a review of three (3) Environmental Technical Advisory Team (ETAT) agencies based on their executed individual interagency agreements with FDOT and FHWA. In accordance with 2 CFR 200, the review assessed program funding, financial internal controls, program management and oversight, performance measures, and products/services rendered by FDOT and the agencies to assist in program management. The selected agreements were based on criteria such as dollar amount of the agreement, number of funded positions, percentage of dollars expended, etc.

The review found that FDOT's ETDM Program is operating in a very efficient and effective manner and through the Environmental Screening Tool (EST) provides a full tracking of projects, critical milestones, performance measures and invoicing within the EST. The overall program, on-line invoicing system, and recorded training are all noted as best practices.

Noteworthy observation from the FHWA process review: "*Observation 5: This review was the first FHWA review of the ETDM program since its inception. Due to the results of this review and the processes FDOT has in place, the oversight risk to FHWA of this program is confirmed as a low risk and frequent interaction is not required.*"

#### 4.3.3.1 FHWA 2017 Process Review Recommendations

The FHWA Review Team identified a few recommendations that FHWA believes will help strengthen FDOT's program including the procedural side of the finance program and made recommendations for improving communication, guidelines, and reporting mechanisms for the program side of ETDM. FDOT greatly appreciates FHWA's feedback. The recommendations are cited below with a current FDOT status on the recommendation.

**Recommendation 1:** *The ETDM Program would benefit from capturing its entire invoicing and reimbursement process into a consolidated, written guidance to ensure continued strong billing controls. Adding this information to existing ETDM procedures manuals would also be effective.*

**Status:** In response to this recommendation, FDOT created the ETDM Agreement Administrative Handbook which serves as the companion guide to the Funded Positions Reference Guide. The ETDM Agreement Administrative Handbook consolidated agreement management procedures into a single document. This handbook was provided to FHWA in May 2017. **Complete**

**Recommendation 2:** *We recommend OEM document their informal QA/QC process for invoicing. This is an effective process that could also be documented in the ETDM procedures as a control measure.*

**Status:** The ETDM Agreement Administrative Handbook documents the informal and formal QA/QC processes. **Complete**

**Recommendation 3:** *FHWA observations are intended to strengthen these program components. The handful of critical comments that were identified in Appendix B pertain to the use of federal funds and need to be addressed by FDOT. We also recommend the enhancements FHWA identified in Appendix B be considered as they should help strengthen these program documents.*

**Status:** The Funded Position Reference Handbook and ETDM Agreement Administrative Handbook were both clarified to resolve the FHWA comments. Both revised handbooks have been delivered to FHWA. **Complete**

**Recommendation 4:** *To help improve ETDM program management and financial management, including the use of the on-line invoicing system, OEM should hold a statewide meeting periodically, we recommend every three years at a minimum, of the ETDM Program. There should also be proactive brainstorming about solutions to problems identified, innovations recommended, and discussions on the future of the program itself. The outcomes of this statewide meeting should be captured and would then guide ETDM Program efficiencies into the future.*

**Status:** FDOT scheduled a statewide ETAT Meeting during October 2017, but needed to cancel due the impacts of Hurricane Michael in the meeting area. The meeting has been rescheduled to occur in Tallahassee, Florida in March 2019. **In Progress**

**Recommendation 5:** *Whenever a Progress Report is published, FHWA requests that a copy be provided as part of our stewardship and oversight of the federal funds expended. It would be*

very helpful for OEM to meet with FHWA to discuss the elements of the report to help facilitate FHWA's understanding of FDOT program implementation.

**Status:** This document is Progress Report #7 and a copy will be provided to FHWA. If further coordination is desired, FHWA is invited to contact OEM to discuss. **Complete**

**Recommendation 6:** *We recommend FDOT provide an ETDM status every two years detailing the financial elements, program benefits and efficiencies realized. Earlier publications of the Progress Report could serve as examples of content. FHWA is available and we offer OEM the opportunity to meet to discuss this recommendation. The meeting would be to discuss the scope of and how the information sought by FHWA could be accomplished efficiently with minimal effort by FDOT. Understanding the program components, benefits, current issues and on-going and future program initiatives would help FDOT to ensure future FHWA funding and support.*

**Status:** This document is Progress Report #7 and a copy will be provided to FHWA. If further coordination is desired, FHWA is invited to contact OEM to discuss. Under the executed NEPA Assignment MOU, Section 139 and 168 became the sole responsibility of FDOT. As such, FDOT will determine the value of continued development of ongoing progress reports for a program over 15 years into implementation. If FHWA has a specific information need, a request can be made to OEM for response. **Complete**

**Recommendation 7:** *We recommend that FHWA provides oversight of the ETDM program through periodic process reviews, reviews of the Progress Reports and the status information to ensure continued support of the federal investment. We recommend the next review also look at the individual agreement provisions and how those agreements/provisions are being implemented.*

**Status:** This is a recommendation to FHWA. **Complete**

#### **4.3.3.2 FHWA Process Review Conclusions**

FDOT's ETDM program has satisfactory financial guidelines and procedures in place to ensure payments are properly supported and documented. The processes and documentation required for all aspects of the reimbursement from beginning to end, to include, payments, records retention, quality control, and authorization were in very good order.

The results of the financial review disclosed no instances of noncompliance or other findings that are required to be reported under FHWA standards or policies. Furthermore, we have reasonable assurance that ETDM's financial processes and internal controls are compliant with applicable laws, regulations, policies and agreements.

The overall program, on-line invoicing system, and recorded training are all noted as best practices. The Review Team identified a few recommendations to help strengthen both the program side and financial side of ETDM implementation, but in general OEM has done a very good job in establishing and managing the program overall.

The recommendations will help strengthen the FDOT and FHWA working relationship, enhance a continued understanding of the program, will help to strengthen the ETDM program, and will support continued federal funding for the program and any initiatives FDOT may be pursuing

related to the program. OEM staff have a very thorough knowledge and handle on the ETDM and Financial program elements.

This program is still a national model for program development, operation and management for environmental streamlining substantially meeting the federal program and financial requirements of 23 USC 139(j) and 2 CFR 200.

## **4.4 Procedure Updates**

### **4.4.1 ETDM Manual**

The ETDM Manual is the Department procedure to streamline environmental processes and link planning and environmental activities. It provides transportation planners, project analysts, project engineers, project managers, and other practitioners with sufficient information to consider as they review qualifying transportation projects during the Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Process Planning and Programming Screens. The ETDM Manual provides the procedure for screening qualifying projects through the ETDM process. This Manual also provides guidance for involving potentially affected communities and stakeholders in the project's transportation planning phase. During the reporting period, an update to the [ETDM Manual](#) was published on May 18, 2017, which revised the manual throughout to shift activities, responsibilities, and approvals previously assigned to FHWA over to the OEM. This manual is reviewed and updated biannually.

### **4.4.2 Funded Position Reference Handbook**

OEM provides procedural guidance and oversight to ensure consistency, quality, and adherence to state and federal requirements through the Funded Positions Handbook and the ETDM Manual. The Funded Positions Handbook provides an overview of funded position requirements, as established through the ETDM Process Funding Agreements and invoicing procedures. The Handbook includes step-by-step guidance to develop, process, review, and submit invoices. It also describes the purpose and content of the ETDM agency agreements, funding requirements and provisions, and policy decisions relating to funded positions. The Funded Positions Handbook was last updated October 2018.

### **4.4.3 ETDM Agreement Administrative Handbook**

This handbook is a companion document designed to go along with the Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Funded Position Reference Handbook. This handbook was developed to support FHWA's recommendations to consolidate QA/QC processes and agreement processes. This handbook provides the administrative details necessary for Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) positions to create, manage, and monitor ETDM agreements. The information contained within this handbook provides an overview of the ETDM agreement development process, describes the Office of Environmental Management (OEM) Invoice Administrator and Reviewer role requirements, and discusses agency invoicing and internal audit functions supporting the internal management of the executed Agency Operating and Funding Agreements (AOFA) and Funding Agreements (FA). The agreement administrative functions within the Environmental Screening Tool (EST) some of which occur within this system, such as storing, managing and track agreements, including submission and review process on invoices submitted by the funded agency.

## 4.5 Environmental Screening Tool Enhancements

OEM continually builds on the success of the EST by adding new tools and features to support efficient transportation project delivery. Since the ETDM Progress Report #6, the following major enhancements were implemented:

- **Enhancements supporting NEPA assignment**
  - Support for lead agency action by OEM - As the Districts prepare their ETDM project information and screening schedules, they begin coordinating with the OEM Project Delivery Coordinators. After the District completes their internal QA/QC, OEM reviews the project description, purpose and need, and preliminary environmental discussion (PED). During these reviews, OEM project development coordinators develop an understanding of the proposed project and provide comments to the Districts. As projects move through the ETDM process, OEM serves as Lead Agency for the following actions:
    - Accept Purpose & Need Statements
    - Determine Class of Action
    - Invite Cooperating and Participating Agencies
    - Adopt Planning Products
    - Approve Eliminated Alternatives
    - Concur with Alternative Corridor Evaluation (ACE) reports and recommendations
  - Support for performance monitoring required under the NEPA Assignment MOU – Provides information and tools to assist with monitoring specific performance metrics. Enhancements include:
    - Annual stakeholder communication survey
    - Federal dashboard-monitoring project schedules
- **Enhancements supporting ETDM process improvements**
  - Cooperating Agencies must concur with eliminated alternatives – Allows Cooperating Agencies to review alternatives recommended for elimination and indicate whether they agree.
  - Formal adoption of planning products, including ACE Methodology Memorandum – Documents approval from the Lead Agency allowing planning products to be used in subsequent environmental documents.
  - ETAT Feedback Report enhancements - Adds Advance Notification reviews to report to provide additional performance feedback to the ETAT agencies.
- **EST Upgrade**
  - New EST website framework – Provides a new design and foundation for the EST website using current browser technology. The current EST user interface was initially developed in 2005 and was targeted for Internet Explorer (IE) 6. This prevents it from taking advantage of technology advances available in modern browsers. Upgrading the EST allows for better performance and stability. It also allows us to design modern, responsive web pages to work well across a wide array of devices and screen sizes, such as tablets and smart phones.

- New map service concepts tested – Completes research and development needed to begin converting the GIS data and map viewer to new technology. The current EST map viewer and standard GIS analysis were developed with software that is no longer supported by the vendor. Upgrading the map viewer and services allows the EST to take advantage of more powerful, responsive GIS capabilities that are currently available. It will be further customized to provide additional capabilities, such as enhanced search functions and customizable maps. Currently there are over 300 different data sets (layers) available. Choosing which data layers to view depends on the project context, the resources of concern, and the focus of the specific user. For example, ETAT members from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service typically refer to different data layers than an ETAT member from the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity. Currently the EST uses a standard set of issue maps to organize the data in categories. Each issue map has many layers and users choose which ones to view. This enhancement will allow the users to add, remove, and organize data layers to make it easier for them to select which layers to view.
- **Enhancements supporting reviews**
  - United States Coast Guard (USCG) determination – Improves early interaction on bridge navigational determination for water crossings per project and alternatives. The enhancement enables the USCG to identify if a project is in USCG jurisdiction, needs a permit, needs a lighting plan, or if it is eligible for Exceptions to Bridge Permits (23 U.S.C 144, 1982 Coast Guard Authorization Act, Advanced Approval Waterway).
  - United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) sole source aquifer determinations – Provides additional information to USEPA when projects are in proximity to sole source aquifers in order to expedite the USEPA sole source determination letter, when required.
  - Class of Action recommendation form – Adds an environmental summary to the form indicating whether there is a potential for significant impacts, a question of significance, no significance, or no involvement for each environmental topic.
  - Emergency Response Tool – Supports quick, easy access to critical preliminary information for the emergency response team.
  - Cultural Resources Data Report – Aggregates information regarding historical and cultural resources to assist with preliminary reviews of these resources.
  - Sociocultural Data Report updates - User defined communities, census places, and counties have been updated with the latest 2016 American Community Survey (ACS) data
- **GIS Data Updates**
  - Ongoing updates to existing data – The EST currently has over 300 data sets available through the Florida Geographic Data Library. These are updated on a monthly, quarterly, or annual basis according to schedules developed with the source agencies.
  - Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC) program – New data has been added to the EST to help identify State Conservation Lands adjacent to a project corridor.



## 4.6 Ongoing Activities

Ongoing activities supporting the ETDM Process include:

- EST Maintenance and Support – technical support staff respond to user requests for assistance with the EST, provide online and hands-on training, monitor the system, and work on programming tasks to improve the performance and operation of the EST.
- EST Upgrade – In 2018, OEM began implementing upgrades with the release of the new Agency Invoicing module. Conversion of the map viewer, GIS data services, and OEM pre-screening tools and reports are underway. Future phases will see the release of tools and reports supporting the screening events.
- Statewide ETDM Coordination – OEM continues to conduct quarterly ETDM Coordinator meetings with FDOT Districts. A Statewide meeting with ETAT members was planned for October 2018, but was postponed to March 2019 due to Hurricane Michael. OEM also encourages District ETDM Coordinators to sponsor District-wide ETAT webinars and regional face-to-face meetings (gathering one or more District ETAT members together).
- ETDM Manual Updates – The ETDM Manual was last updated in 2017 and is reviewed annually for potential revisions.
- Performance Monitoring – OEM reviews ETAT performance each quarter, distributes feedback reports, and follows up with agencies with low or declining performance results.

## 4.7 Future Initiatives

Through the ETDM Surveys and discussions with ETAT agencies and District ETDM teams, OEM has identified a number of initiatives to support future process improvements. These include:

- Improving public involvement during the ETDM process. Receiving project-specific input from the public is a challenge during ETDM and the planning phase in general. District 5 has been successful when their Corridor Development Group undertakes Planning and Feasibility studies. Opportunities may also exist for Districts to increase public awareness of the ETDM public website. OEM will initiate a working group to exchange successful practices and explore new ideas for involving the public during the ETDM process.
- Creating an ARC report that pulls together maps and results of GIS analyses to support coordination and impact analysis of State Conservation Lands.
- Strengthening linkages from planning and PD&E to environmental permitting by cascading information from ETDM screening events and PD&E studies to permit coordinators. ETAT agencies should be able to identify potential permits and technical studies in the EST in such a way that the information is easily transferred, updated, and tracked as the project moves to subsequent phases.
- Continuing to implement new technologies for the EST and improve overall site design, usability, and navigation based on feedback from users and successful information technology practices.