

## **PART 1, CHAPTER 4**

# **PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

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## PART 1, CHAPTER 4

# PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

### 4.1 OVERVIEW

Pursuant to **23 United States Code (U.S.C.) § 327** and the implementing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) executed on May 26, 2022, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has assumed and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has assigned its responsibilities under the **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)** for highway projects on the State Highway System (SHS) and Local Agency Program (LAP) projects off the SHS (**NEPA** Assignment). In general, FDOT's assumption includes all highway projects in Florida which source of federal funding comes from FHWA or which constitute a federal action through FHWA. **NEPA** Assignment includes responsibility for environmental review, interagency consultation and other activities pertaining to the review or approval of **NEPA** actions. Consistent with law and the MOU, FDOT will be the Lead Federal Agency for highway projects with approval authority resting in the Office of Environmental Management (OEM).

This chapter provides an overview of the project development and delivery process for transportation projects prepared by FDOT. This chapter is not applicable to Federal Transit Administration (FTA) led or Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) led projects. See [Part 1, Chapter 14, Transit Project Delivery](#) for guidance on how to develop FTA led projects. The project development process for LAP projects should follow the procedure outlined in the [Local Agency Program Manual, Topic No. 525-010-300](#). Environmental review for LAP projects requires preparation of a **NEPA** document and FDOT oversight by the Districts and OEM as appropriate.

The FDOT project development and delivery process is a comprehensive process involving Planning, Project Development and Environment (PD&E), Design, Right of Way (ROW), and Construction phases. It is important to understand the sequence and interrelation between these phases to successfully deliver a project. PD&E is the FDOT process for evaluating potential environmental impacts from transportation projects and complying with the **NEPA** for federal projects and applicable federal and state laws and regulations. Environmental review continues during the Design and Construction phases through project Re-evaluations and permitting. FDOT projects that are Type 1 Categorical Exclusions (Type 1 CEs) or Non-Major State Actions (NMSAs), and even the occasional Type 2 CE do not have a PD&E phase. Environmental evaluations for Type 1 CEs and NMSAs are prepared and approved by the District Environmental Office during the Design phase.

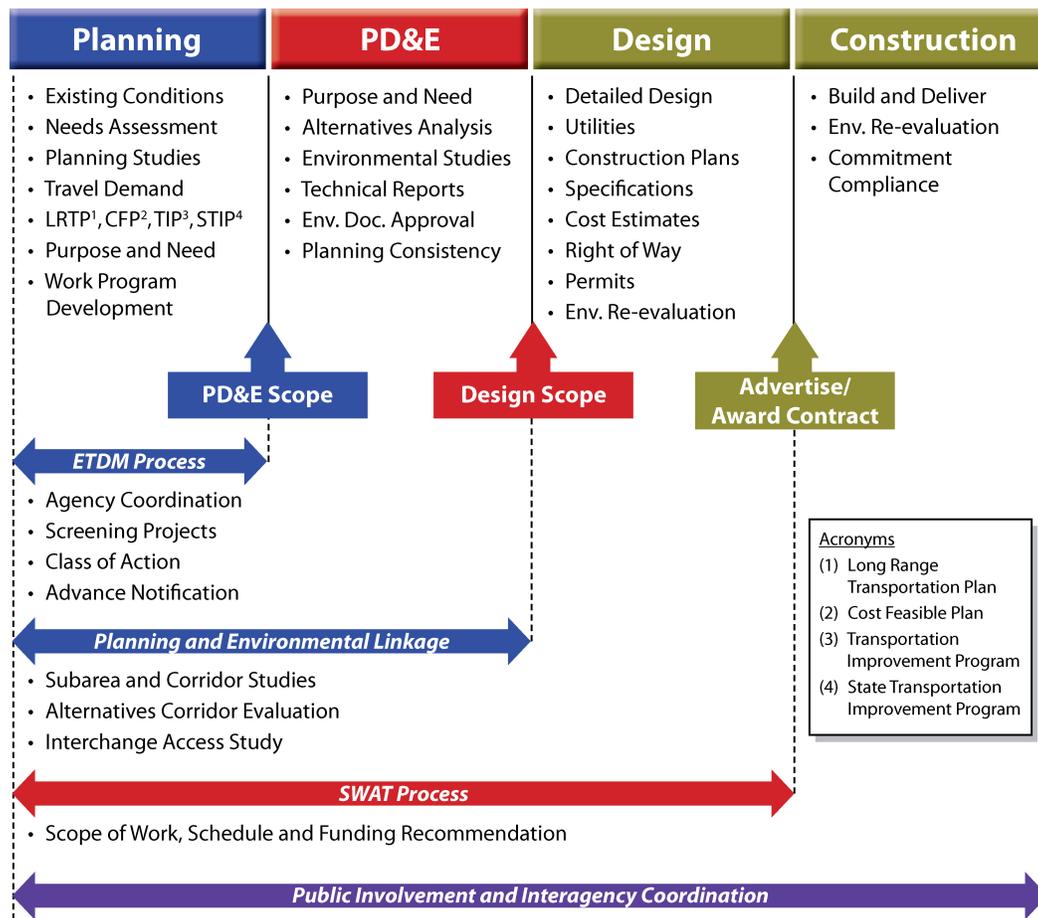
Communication among the various offices involved in the project development and delivery process and coordination between project phases is critical to a project's success. Project Managers are responsible for establishing and maintaining communication and coordination throughout the project development and delivery process. [Figure 4-1](#) shows the project development and delivery process, along with the

building blocks of each phase and how the phases connect with the PD&E process. To deliver transportation projects, FDOT uses a variety of project delivery methods, which range from the traditional Design-Bid-Build to alternative contracting methods such as Design-Build and Public Private Partnership (P3) Concessionaire Agreements. The choice of delivery method depends on a variety of factors such as project context, status, schedule, risk factors, funding availability, level of complexity, and other project-specific factors.

A project begins with the identification of transportation needs or deficiencies through a planning process that prioritizes short and long-range transportation improvements. For qualifying projects, FDOT uses the Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Environmental Screening Tool (EST) to gather project information and coordinate with resource and regulatory agencies, public and other project stakeholders about the project's potential effect on social, cultural, natural, and physical resources. This information is used to develop the scope of services for a feasibility study or PD&E Study. During the PD&E phase, FDOT performs alternatives analyses, conducts environmental and engineering studies, and prepares various technical studies and reports necessary to obtain the project's Location and Design Concept Acceptance (LDCA). Information obtained during the PD&E phase is used to develop the scope of work for the Design phase. The scope of the Design phase also depends on the delivery method chosen for the project. The Design phase includes preparation of final construction plans, specifications, permitting, and final estimates. However, the Design phase does not include final construction plans for projects that use alternative contracting methods. Typically, acquisition of ROW occurs concurrent with, or just after the Design phase before the project moves into construction.

The project development process described in this chapter supports the FDOT Statewide Acceleration Transformation (SWAT) process. The initial evaluation of all projects implements the SWAT process so that appropriate state and federal funding decisions are made. SWAT streamlines project development by following a structured process to develop project scopes and schedules; reducing duplicative work; performing initial data collection and analysis ahead of the PD&E Study, as applicable; and performing design activities concurrent with PD&E when possible.

The Districts have flexibilities to adapt the SWAT process within their existing project selection and programming processes. The SWAT process applies to both state and federal PD&E studies.



**Figure 4-1 Project Development Process**

### 4.1.1 Definitions

**Administrative Record** – Project documents that are submitted by the Lead Agency to the court for a **NEPA** project involving litigation. The Administrative Record is prepared using the StateWide Environmental Project Tracker (SWEPT).

**Build Alternatives** – Project alternatives that require reconstruction or widening of existing facilities or building a new facility in a new location consistent with the project’s purpose and need.

**Cost Feasible Plan (CFP)** – A plan that consists of projects identified in a long range transportation plan that are capable of being funded within the 20-year planning horizon.

**Federal Nexus**– A term used when a project involves federal funding, federal permit, use of federal lands, or a federal program.

**Final Design** – Any design activities following preliminary design and expressly lead to the preparation of final construction plans, detailed specifications, final quantities as defined by **23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 636.103**.

**Lead Agency** – The agency that oversees the preparation of and approves an Environmental Document.

**Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)** – A 20-year transportation plan that identifies current and future transportation needs based on population and employment growth, travel demand, and other considerations for a region.

**Major Project** – A project with a total estimated cost of \$500 million or more that is receiving (federal) financial assistance as defined by **23 U.S.C. § 106**. At its discretion, FHWA can designate a project with a total cost of less than \$500 million as a major project in situations where the projects require a substantial portion of the State Transportation Agency program resources, have a high level of public or congressional interest, are unusually complex, have extraordinary implications for the national transportation system, or are likely to exceed \$500 million in total cost. This is not related to the environmental impacts of a project.

**Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)** – A policy board of an organization created and designated to carry out the metropolitan transportation planning process. MPOs are required to represent localities in all urbanized areas with populations over 50,000, as determined by the U.S. Census. Such board may also be referred to as Transportation Planning Organization (TPO).

**NEPA Process** – A process followed by the project sponsors and Lead Agencies to comply with the procedures and achieve the goals of the **NEPA**. The **NEPA** process, PD&E, and the federal process are used interchangeably throughout this Chapter.

**No-Action or No-Build Alternative** – A project alternative that consists of the existing facility and any minor improvements already programmed that are not specifically tied to the proposed project. This alternative serves as the baseline for comparison against the various build alternatives.

**Planning and Environment Linkages (PEL)** – A collaborative and integrated approach to transportation decision-making that 1) considers environmental, community, and economic goals early in the transportation planning process, and 2) uses the information, analysis, and products developed during planning to inform the environmental review process.

**Planning Product** – A decision, analysis, study, or other documented information that is the result of an evaluation or decision making process carried out by a metropolitan planning organization or a State, as appropriate, during metropolitan or statewide transportation planning under **23 U.S.C. § 134, § 135, or § 168** respectively.

**Preliminary Design** – Activities that define the general project location and design concept. These include, but are not limited to, preliminary engineering and other activities and analysis, such as environmental assessments, topographic surveys, metes and bounds surveys, geotechnical investigations, hydrologic analysis, utility investigation/coordination, traffic studies, financial plans, revenue estimates, hazardous materials assessments, general estimates of the types and quantities of materials, and other work needed to establish parameters for the final design as defined by **23 CFR § 636.103** and **FHWA Order 6640.1A Policy on Permissible Project Related Activities During the NEPA Process**.

**Project File** – A file that documents the decision-making process and technical support during the PD&E Study and serves as the basis for the Administrative Record. The project file is organized in SWEPT.

**Project Scoping** – A project development activity that involves determining and documenting project goals and objectives, tasks, responsibilities, deliverables, schedule, cost and delivery method.

**Rail System Plan (RSP)** – A plan that establishes a vision for passenger and freight rail transportation systems. It identifies an inventory of needs, establishes priorities for investments and sets forth future action steps necessary to implement the plan.

**Reasonable Alternatives** (Only applies to Environmental Impact Statements) – A reasonable range of alternatives that are technically and economically feasible, meet the purpose and need for the proposed action.

**Scope of Services** – An attachment to the contractual agreement between FDOT and the procured consultant that outlines project tasks to be performed by the consultant. Development of a scope of services requires input and coordination with several District offices . FDOT has developed Standard Scopes of Services for procuring PD&E studies and Design services, and guidelines for estimating and negotiating staff hours.

**State Funds Only (SFO) project**– A project that will be funded by state funds only. If it is determined that the project will be state funded only, then this funding method must be maintained throughout all the work program phases, and the District must use the SFO item group identifier in the work program.

**State Highway System (SHS)** – means the interstate system and all other roads within the state which were under the jurisdiction of the state on June 10, 1995, and roads constructed by an agency of the state for the SHS, plus roads transferred to the state’s jurisdiction after that date by mutual consent with another governmental entity, but not including roads so transferred from the state’s jurisdiction. These facilities shall be facilities to which access is regulated as defined in **Section 334.03(24), Florida Statutes (F.S.)**.

**State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)** – a federally mandated document prepared by FDOT which must include a listing of projects planned with federal participation in the next four fiscal years.

**State Process** – FDOT process for environmental evaluation of projects that do not have a federal nexus or do not involve an Interstate Highway, FRA facility or FTA facility.

**Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) Plan** – A plan that sets policies to guide decisions about which facilities are designated as part of the SIS (a high-priority network of transportation facilities critical to Florida’s economic competitiveness and quality of life), where future SIS investments should occur, and how to set priorities among these investments based on funding.

**Transit Development Plan (TDP)** – A 10-year transit plan which is prepared by a transit agency to present the agency’s planning, development and operation of public transit facilities (service or infrastructure). TDPs are required for grant program recipients of Public Transit Block Grant Program **Section 341.052, F.S.**

**Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)** – Is the staged multiyear program of transportation improvement projects developed by a Metropolitan Planning Organization consistent with the LRTP.

## 4.2 PROCEDURE

### 4.2.1 Planning Process

The project planning process begins when MPOs, FDOT, and other authorities identify transportation needs and projects that would meet those needs. The following planning products assist in documenting transportation needs: Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Cost Feasible Plans (CFP), Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) Plans, Transit Development Plans (TDPs), Local Government Comprehensive Plans (LGCP), Municipal or Citywide Transportation Master Plans, and corridor planning studies. At the MPO level, project needs are matched and prioritized to available funding for projects in the MPO/TPO LRTPs. At the state level, FDOT develops CFPs for the SHS and Florida Rail System Plan (RSP). Priority projects are selected annually from CFPs and are presented to the Florida Legislature as a **Tentative Work Program**. Projects included in the Work Program and approved by the legislature may wait for funding for up to five years before significant work can proceed.

FDOT coordinates with the various MPOs/TPOs and local stakeholders throughout the state to develop a vision for the State’s transportation system. This includes the establishment of goals, objectives and policies to sustain and support the growth of the State’s population and economy. Additionally, FDOT provides guidance and technical assistance for transit providers for their TDPs.

During the Planning phase, the purpose and need for the project is established based on identified transportation problems, or deficiencies. Transportation, land use, safety, public and agency involvement, and other planning data are primary sources of information used to establish or define the purpose and need for the project and range of alternatives to analyze.

Technical studies for a project can be performed within the Planning phase to define or refine project parameters; establish the purpose and need for the project; determine funding needs; identify alternatives, including alternative mode(s); and define the concept and scope for transportation improvements, including general location of the proposed improvement. These technical studies inform the development of the scope of work for PD&E studies. Alternatives development may begin during the Planning phase. Project alternatives developed (including those eliminated from further consideration) during the Planning phase may be incorporated directly or by reference into the Environmental Document provided certain conditions are met (see [Section 4.2.2](#)).

## 4.2.2 Linking Planning and Environmental Review

Linking Planning and **NEPA**, also known as Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL), provides a connection between planning-level and environmental review decisions. Planning decisions and the environmental review process should be integrated to eliminate duplication of analysis effort and minimize delays in project delivery. The benefit of linking planning decisions and the PD&E Study is the ability to reuse data gathered, methodology developed, results obtained, and decisions made during the Planning phase to streamline the project delivery. Other benefits include the ability to identify environmental issues before developing the scope of the PD&E Study and focus the analyses and technical studies conducted during the PD&E Study on those issues with potential to impact the project's delivery and recommendations.

Pursuant to **23 U.S.C. § 168**, **23 CFR § 450.212** and **23 CFR § 450.318**, results or decisions from a system-level corridor or subarea planning study may be used in the **NEPA** analysis if they meet certain conditions. **Appendix A** of **23 CFR Part 450 - Linking the Transportation Planning and NEPA Processes** details how to adopt or incorporate by reference information from transportation planning into **NEPA** documents and/or environmental review process under existing laws. **Appendix A** of **23 CFR Part 450** is intended to be non-binding and voluntary.

The following decisions from a planning product for a transportation project, codified in **23 U.S.C. § 168(c)(1)**, may be adopted or incorporated by reference into the **NEPA** process:

1. Whether tolling, private financial assistance, or other special financial measures are necessary to implement the project;
2. A decision with respect to general travel corridor or modal choice, including a decision to implement corridor or subarea study recommendations to advance different modal solutions as separate projects with independent utility;
3. The purpose and need for the proposed action;
4. Preliminary screening of alternatives and elimination of unreasonable alternatives;
5. A basic description of the environmental setting;

6. A decision with respect to methodologies for analysis; and/or,
7. An identification of programmatic level mitigation for potential impacts of a project, including a programmatic mitigation plan developed in accordance with **23 U.S.C. § 169**, that the relevant agency determines are more effectively addressed on a national or regional scale, including:
  - a. Measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts at a national or regional scale of proposed transportation investments on environmental resources, including regional ecosystem and water resources; and
  - b. Potential mitigation activities, locations, and investments.

The following planning analyses from a planning product for a transportation project, codified in **23 U.S.C. § 168(c)(2)**, may be adopted or incorporated by reference into the **NEPA** process:

1. Travel demands;
2. Regional development and growth;
3. Local land use, growth management, and development;
4. Population and employment;
5. Natural and built environmental conditions;
6. Environmental resources and environmentally sensitive areas;
7. Potential environmental effects, including the identification of resources of concern and potential direct, indirect, and cumulative effects on those resources; and,
8. Mitigation needs for a proposed project, or for programmatic level mitigation, for potential effects that the Lead Agency determines are most effectively addressed at a regional or national program level.

The degree to which information, analyses, or decisions from the planning process can be adopted or incorporated by reference into the **NEPA** process depends upon how well the planning products meet standards applicable under the **NEPA** and associated implementing regulations (**23 CFR Part 771** and **40 CFR §§ 1500-1508**). The relevant agency in the environmental review process may adopt or incorporate by reference decisions from a planning product when the Lead Federal Agency determines that the conditions set forth in **23 U.S.C. § 168(d)** and restated below are met:

1. The planning product was developed through a planning process conducted pursuant to applicable federal law.

2. The planning product was developed in consultation with appropriate federal and State resource agencies and Indian Tribes.
3. The planning process included broad multidisciplinary consideration of systems-level or corridor-wide transportation needs and potential effects, including effects on the human and natural environment.
4. The planning process included public notice that the planning products produced in the planning process may be adopted during a subsequent environmental review process in accordance with this section.
5. During the environmental review process, the relevant agency has:
  - a. Made the planning documents available for public review and comment by members of the general public and federal, state, local, and tribal governments that may have an interest in the proposed project;
  - b. Provided notice of the intention of the relevant agency to adopt or incorporate by reference the planning product; and,
  - c. Considered any resulting comments.
6. There is no significant new information or new circumstance that has a reasonable likelihood of affecting the continued validity or appropriateness of the planning product.
7. The planning product has a rational basis and is based on reliable and reasonably current data and reasonable and scientifically acceptable methodologies.
8. The planning product is documented in sufficient detail to support the decision or the results of the analysis and to meet requirements for use of the information in the environmental review process.
9. The planning product is appropriate for adoption or incorporation by reference and use in the environmental review process for the project and is incorporated in accordance with, and is sufficient to meet the requirements of, the **NEPA** and **40 CFR § 1501.12**.
10. The planning product was approved within the 5-year period ending on the date on which the information is adopted or incorporated by reference.

Linking planning and **NEPA** does not necessitate that planning products be prepared to a level comparable to a **NEPA** analysis. Pursuant to **23 U.S.C § 134(q)**, **23 U.S.C. § 135(k)** and **49 U.S.C. § 5303(q)**, and **49 U.S.C. § 5304(j)**, transportation plans and programs are actions which are subject to public comment but exempt from **NEPA** review. Because individual projects will be subject to a more comprehensive review, analysis of transportation plans or programs is not required to consider all regulatory or procedural requirements that should be addressed by the **NEPA** analysis. To ensure that the public

is provided an opportunity for input, proper disclosure that FDOT may adopt a planning product must be made. The following notice must be inserted in the planning products that are to be adopted in a subsequent environmental review process:

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

If the planning product being adopted into the **NEPA** analysis is older than 5 years (from the date the product was approved), the information used to prepare the planning product must be reviewed to check whether conditions or planning context have changed since its approval. If the conditions or planning context have not changed, the PD&E Study may use the information from the planning product and explain why that information is valid to the **NEPA** decision-making process. OEM must be consulted when making this decision.

### 4.2.3 ETDM Screening

The purpose of the ETDM process is to provide early identification of potential environmental considerations in transportation planning to streamline project delivery. This process supports FDOT's environmental policy to "protect and preserve the quality of life, and the natural, physical, social and cultural resources of the state, while expeditiously developing safe, cost effective, and efficient transportation systems" ([Environmental Policy, Topic No. 000-625-001](#)). The ETDM process provides agencies and other stakeholders the opportunity for early input on proposed transportation projects. The objectives of the ETDM process are:

1. Early identification of potential issues for project scope development;
2. Early consideration of environmental issues in the planning process;
3. Full and early public and Environmental Technical Advisory Team (ETAT) member participation;
4. Linkage between Planning and PD&E (including **NEPA**); and,
5. Incorporation of appropriate issue resolution mechanisms during the planning process.

These objectives are accomplished through stakeholder involvement, early consideration of environmental effects, integrating processes which were previously conducted sequentially, using interactive techniques.

The ETDM process facilitates early interaction among transportation planners; federal, state, and local agencies; Federally Recognized Native American Tribes (Tribes); and affected communities. Through this process, FDOT provides the opportunity for early stakeholder input on qualifying transportation projects, which helps support planning decisions and develop the PD&E project scope with a clearer understanding of the environmental setting and potential concerns. The types of transportation projects that qualify for screening are listed in the [ETDM Manual, Topic No. 650-000-002](#).

Intergovernmental coordination is accomplished through an ETAT member assigned to each of the seven FDOT Districts and Florida's Turnpike Enterprise. The ETAT includes representatives from MPOs/TPOs, federal and state agencies, and participating Tribes. Agency agreements between the FDOT and other state and federal agencies document the interagency understandings and agency-specific requirements for participating as an ETAT member in the ETDM process.

ETAT members use the Environmental Screening Tool (EST) to review project information, identify potential project effects, and submit comments to FDOT. This web-based Geographic Information system (GIS) database and mapping tool provides access to project information and data about natural, physical, cultural, and community resources in the project area. The comments and other information are made available to the public on the [ETDM Public Access Site](#). See [ETDM Manual, Topic No. 650-000-002](#) for more information about the EST.

Ideally, the ETDM process consists of the Planning Screen and the Programming Screen. The Planning Screen should occur when considering projects for inclusion or prioritization within a CFP. The Programming Screen should occur to support development of the FDOT's Five Year Work Program. The Programming Screen also should inform development of a scope of services for the PD&E Study. The results of the screening events link the Planning phase and the PD&E phase. Each screening event centers on a project review and includes project preparation activities and follow-up tasks occurring before and after the review.

The ETDM Coordinator for the project sponsor (i.e., FDOT District, Florida's Turnpike Enterprise, or MPO/TPO) uses the EST to notify the ETAT when a project is ready for review. At the same time, the information is published on the [ETDM Public Access Site](#). During the review period, FDOT affords an opportunity for ETAT members and the public to provide input about potential project effects. The project sponsor also begins to identify potential effects on surrounding communities. They seek to receive information on community preferences and concerns, as well as identify potential controversies related to the project. ETAT members perform multidisciplinary reviews specific to their area of expertise within their jurisdictions (e.g., wetlands, land use). These reviews help to:

1. Evaluate the feasibility of a proposed project.
2. Allow for early identification of potential avoidance, minimization, and mitigation opportunities.
3. Identify environmental issues that need focused attention during the PD&E phase.
4. Create documentation and analyses in the PD&E phase. The ETDM process meets the requirements set forth in **23 U.S.C. § 168(d)**, for the adoption of planning products into the PD&E phase.

The Programming Screen provides opportunities for ETAT members and the public to review and comment on qualifying priority projects being considered for inclusion in the TIP, Five Year Work Program or being advanced to the PD&E phase. ETAT members' comments assist with project scoping; and identification of opportunities for avoidance,

minimization, and mitigation of potential project impacts. The **Programming Screen Summary Report** summarizes recommendations and results from the ETAT reviews. FDOT uses the report to advance or focus analyses and studies conducted prior to the PD&E phase (as appropriate), develop the scope of services for the PD&E Study, and assist in determining the appropriate Class of Action (COA) for the project.

The ETDM **Programming Screen Summary Report** also contains screening documentation of project alternatives developed as part of the Planning Screen.

Within the ETDM process, Environmental Scoping Process [as required by **40 CFR § 1501.9**, for Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) only] begins with ETAT reviews during the EST screening events. This process continues throughout the Planning phase and early stages in the preparation of an EIS. Details on the Environmental Scoping Process is in [Part 1, Chapter 8, Draft Environmental Impact Statement](#) and the process to conduct a Scoping meeting is in [Part 1, Chapter 11, Public Involvement](#).

#### 4.2.4 Alternative Corridor Evaluation

FDOT uses the Alternative Corridor Evaluation (ACE) process to identify, evaluate, and eliminate alternatives on qualifying projects prior to the PD&E phase. The decisions made in an ACE can be used to refine the purpose and need for a project; determine the project area; define general travel modes or corridors (including logical termini); describe general environmental setting for a project; identify preliminary environmental impacts and environmental mitigation; develop and evaluate a range of alternatives to be refined in detail during the PD&E Study; and document elimination of alternatives. The ACE process links early planning and **NEPA**. However, adoption and use of ACE decisions in the **NEPA** process is subject to a determination by OEM.

The ACE is typically performed as part of the ETDM screening efforts that precede the PD&E phase. Alternatives should support the purpose and need for a project in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, through the balancing of engineering, environmental, and economic aspects while considering comments received through the ETDM Screening events.

The Districts should use the ACE process to support potential EIS and certain Environmental Assessment (EA) projects. The ACE process may also be used to eliminate corridors that are part of the State Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) when new alignments are under consideration. Projects that qualify for the ACE process include:

1. New alignments – new roadways; new roadway connections or extensions;
2. Major realignments;
3. Major bypasses – truck bypasses, city/town bypasses; and,
4. Other alignments based on consultation with OEM.

Additionally, new alignments or major realignments for freight corridors (that are not bypasses), and bicycle or trail corridors may be evaluated using the ACE process.

The FDOT process for early planning and evaluation of transit projects in Florida is documented in the [Transit Concept and Alternatives Review \(TCAR\) Guidance](#). The TCAR process is a uniform approach for advancing transit projects by linking early planning work to the PD&E and FTA Project Development processes. See [Part 1, Chapter 14, Transit Project Delivery](#), for PD&E guidance on corridor analysis for transit projects.

The ACE process identifies and evaluates corridor alternatives using the **Methodology Memorandum (MM)** agreed upon by the project stakeholders (local, state, tribal and federal agencies). The results of the ACE are documented in the **Alternative Corridor Evaluation Report (ACER)**. The **ACER** may be used in the **NEPA** process to support a decision to eliminate corridors from further study that are not feasible or do not meet the purpose and need for the project. Resource agency coordination in the ACE process is accomplished through the ETDM screening process. The ETDM screening facilitates demonstration and documentation that alternatives considered during the ACE process are reviewed by regulatory and resource agencies and affected stakeholders (see [ETDM Manual, Topic No. 650-000-002](#)). Public input regarding development of the ACE is received through the [ETDM Public Access Site](#), public meetings, and outreach.

The level of detail in the analysis of an ACE is higher than that used to prepare a typical planning product, but less than that of a PD&E Study. The **ACER** must establish, and document criteria and the public involvement process used to evaluate and eliminate alternatives that are not feasible or do not meet the purpose and need for the project. Such documentation is essential to ensure results are incorporated into the **NEPA** process. The cover of the **ACER** must include the public notice provided in [Section 4.2.2](#).

The ACE process varies depending on whether it is started in the Planning Screen or Programming Screen. **Chapter 3** and **Chapter 4** of the [ETDM Manual, Topic No. 650-000-002](#) explain how to conduct an ACE during the Planning Screen and Programming Screen, respectively. The following sections summarize the basic steps of the ACE process.

#### 4.2.4.1 Define the Initial Corridors

Based on the initial data collection effort, the District identifies and defines a reasonable range of initial alternatives (including alternative modes) that would address the project's purpose and need. The District also considers corridor alternatives from previously completed planning activities that may guide the ACE process. The previously completed planning activities may include planning-level corridor/subarea/feasibility studies, multimodal corridor plans, vision plans, or master plans that might inform the ACE process. If no corridor alternatives were previously developed, the District should identify initial corridors within the study area. The initial corridors can range from swaths to broad corridors to narrower alignments. The naming of each corridor or alternative should remain consistent throughout the ACE and be carried through the PD&E phase.

When evaluating major urban corridors, the District must consider the need for public transportation systems, facilities and services, and alternative corridors that will address multimodal transportation needs consistent with [Major Urban Corridor Studies Policy, Topic No. 000-725-010](#). Such consideration can include analysis for reasonable corridors based on the presence of alternative transportation modes and the feasibility of developing an interconnected multimodal transportation system. Multimodal options that must be considered include, but are not limited to, fixed guide way facilities and expanded bus service with supporting facilities. The policy requires each major urban corridor study to determine if there is justification for continued consideration of public transportation systems, and facilities or services in conjunction with the development of the corridor.

Consideration of alternative transportation modes, particularly in urban areas, should also include the need for bicycle and pedestrian facilities. See [Part 2, Chapter 3, Engineering Analysis](#) for more guidance.

#### **4.2.4.2 Decision to Advance Project**

The District considers the involvement and potential impacts to environmental issues/resources and the presence of issues that may prevent development of the project to decide if the project should be advanced. In making decisions, the District may perform GIS analysis and field observations; and consider potential permitting and mitigation options, known environmental issues in the area, and early project stakeholders' comments. Once the decision has been made to advance the project, the District defines the goals for the ACE process (e.g., performing an action plan corridor study or determining reasonable alternatives for the PD&E Study).

#### **4.2.4.3 Develop Methodology Memorandum**

The District develops an **MM** based on stakeholder comments and other information regarding the project' environmental context. The **MM** is a technical memorandum which describes the goals of the ACE, identifies alternative corridors, and details the data and procedure the District will use to develop, evaluate, and screen alternative corridors. The **MM** also details the process, including public involvement, and criteria that form the basis for decision-making. The evaluation criteria may include purpose and need evaluation, engineering feasibility (i.e., traffic operational and safety performance measures, design components, urban design issues and opportunities, constructability, maintainability, utility conflicts), construction costs, avoidance of potential environmental impacts (social-economic, cultural, natural, and physical environmental resources), consistency with and/or impact on adopted plans, and other unique issues specific to the study area.

The **MM** includes the following:

##### **1. Background**

- a. Contact personnel

- b. Basic project information
    - 1. Previous planning studies or relevant information
    - 2. Known project issues of concern
  - c. Project description
  - d. Purpose and need for the project
- 2. Goals and objectives of the ACE**
- a. Provide the status in project delivery
  - b. Define the goals and objectives of the study
  - c. Identify the decision points/milestones
- 3. Methods to analyze the alternative corridors and make decisions**
- a. Describe needs for alternative modes such as transit, freight, or pedestrian/bicycle facilities
  - b. Describe alternative corridors
  - c. Describe data needs
  - d. Describe criteria to evaluate and screen alternative corridors
  - e. Describe the data analysis tools (e.g., EST)

In the following situations, the **MM** may be reviewed by project stakeholders more than once when:

1. There is a change in project termini (expanded);
2. There is a change in purpose and need for the project;
3. There is significant change in project concept(s) (e.g., alignment, typical section, interchange/intersection configuration);
4. There is significant change in alternative mode components such as pedestrian, bicycle, transit, freight facilities;
5. There is a change in supporting data that may affect the methodology and any resulting decisions made from it (e.g., population changes, economic changes, land use changes); and,

6. There are significant revisions (based on stakeholders input) to the methodology to analyze the alternative corridors and make decision.

During the ETDM screening, the ETAT reviews, comments, and agrees on the **MM** in the EST. The OEM reviews the **MM** prior to the ETAT review and approves the **MM** after the ETAT comment period, through the EST. See [ETDM Manual, Topic No. 650-000-002](#) for procedures on how to develop a **MM** using the EST. If there are changes to an approved **MM**, OEM will need to review and update its approval. The updated approval may be processed through the EST or may be documented in an email saved in the project file. When reviewing a request to approve a modified **MM**, OEM will determine whether the changes are significant enough to necessitate review by the ETAT prior to reapproval.

#### 4.2.4.4 Refine Corridors

The District evaluates the corridors using the criteria established and agreed upon in the **MM**. In studying the alternatives and considering input from ETAT and other project stakeholders, the District may refine corridors, eliminate corridors, or develop additional corridors to avoid potential environmental effects. The refinement of corridors to avoid potential environmental effects also considers the corridor vision; purpose and need; public input, and both engineering and economic feasibility. Alternative corridors that do not meet the purpose and need are eliminated from further study through the ACE process and documented in an **ACER**. Alternative corridors that meet the purpose and need are developed to a conceptual planning level sufficient to evaluate their benefits and impacts relative to the purpose and need for the project. Preliminary design for alternative corridors recommended for further studies is done during the PD&E phase.

#### 4.2.4.5 Prepare Alternative Corridor Evaluation Report

The **ACER** summarizes the alternative corridors analysis and documents the alternatives that are eliminated from further study or otherwise carried forward to the PD&E Study (pursuant to **23 U.S.C. § 168** and **Appendix A of 23 CFR Part 450**). The **ACER** documents the basis for eliminating alternatives. Therefore, it is critical to properly document the methodology, data, analysis, public and agency involvement, and resulting planning decisions in the **ACER** to ensure that these analyses meet requirements for use in the **NEPA** process. The **ACER** must document assumptions supporting planning analysis such as travel demand forecast year; forecast method and its rationale, and future year data. Additionally, the **ACER** should document policy assumptions related to land use, socio-economic factors, transportation costs, and the transportation network that were used to develop and evaluate alternatives. The **ACER** should document recent, current or near future planning studies or projects located in the vicinity and discuss their relationship with the ACE. The **ACER** should also document any unresolved project issues with the public, stakeholders or agencies and how they will be addressed in the subsequent phases of project development. An **ACER Template** is available on the [OEM Website](#).

When completed, the **ACER** is uploaded into the EST and sent to the Project Delivery Coordinator (PDC) for a 14-day review period prior to being distributed to the ETAT for review and comment. The ETAT members have 30 days to acknowledge their understanding of the **ACER** and submit comments in the EST. After ETAT review, the **ACER** is submitted to the OEM for approval.

The OEM considers the **ACER** for adoption and reviews the recommendations of the alternatives eliminated from further study or considered for additional study in the subsequent PD&E phase. The District will make a formal request for adoption through either the EST or email. After OEM approval, the EDTM Coordinator publishes the **Planning (or Programming) Screen Summary Report** with the **ACER**.

The **ACER** should be included in the project file as part of the supporting documentation of a PD&E Study and should be summarized in the “Alternatives Development” section of an EA or EIS (see [Part 2, Chapter 3, Engineering Analysis](#)). The Alternatives Considered but Eliminated section of an EA or EIS should include documentation explaining why an eliminated alternative did not meet the purpose and need or was otherwise unreasonable or not feasible. The Alternatives Considered but Eliminated section should also include the coordination supporting the determination with reference to the **ACER**.

#### 4.2.5 Environmental Review for Early Acquisition Projects

**Section 108 of Title 23 U.S.C.** provides that subject to the terms and conditions set forth therein acquisition of ROW, acquired in advance of any federal approval or authorization, including **NEPA** approval, may receive federal aid participation. Early acquisition of property interests for transportation projects may be for purposes such as corridor preservation and access management.

Pursuant to **23 U.S.C. § 108** and **23 CFR § 710.501**, FDOT may:

- Fund early acquisition project costs entirely with State funds with no **Title 23** participation;
- Use State funds initially but seek **Title 23** credit or reimbursement when the acquired property is incorporated into a transportation project eligible for federal surface transportation program funds; or
- Use the normal federal-aid project agreement and reimbursement process to fund an early acquisition project. (Note: any early acquisition of **Section 4(f)** property would disqualify the project from federal eligibility.)

The early acquisition of a real property interest must be carried out in compliance with all requirements applicable to the acquisition of real property interests for federally assisted transportation projects. For additional information review the early acquisition process described in **Chapter 7.1**, of the [Right of Way Procedures Manual, Topic No. 575-000-000](#).

An early acquisition project can consist of the acquisition of a specific parcel(s), a portion of a transportation corridor, or an entire transportation corridor. In pursuing early acquisition of real property interests, the selection of preferred alternatives cannot be impacted. Additionally, once the real property interests have been acquired no activities related to demolition, site preparation, or construction of the related transportation project that is not necessary to protect public health or safety can occur until **NEPA** is completed on that project.

Since the acquisition of real property interests cannot impact future decisions regarding the selection of alternatives of the future transportation project, the District should consider areas for acquisition that are in common to all the proposed alternatives of the future transportation project. Regardless of the funding that will ultimately be used, the area of acquisition will have to be evaluated through the environmental review process, which will have to be completed prior to the acquisition. For additional information, see [Section 4.2.5.3](#).

#### **4.2.5.1 State Funded Early Acquisition of Real Property Interests**

As stated in **23 U.S.C. § 108(c)(1)**, a state may carry out, at the expense of the state, acquisitions of interests in real property before completion of the **NEPA** review process without affecting subsequent approvals required for the transportation project by the state or any federal agency. Although early acquisition can occur prior to the **NEPA** decision on the transportation project, these property interests cannot influence the selection of the preferred alternative.

FDOT must comply with **NEPA** procedures and the terms and conditions described in **23 U.S.C. § 108(c)(2)** and **23 CFR § 710.501** to maintain eligibility for federal aid reimbursement. The request for federal reimbursement of early acquisition costs to the Federal-Aid Office may be approved by FHWA, if the acquisition is consistent with the terms and conditions per **23 U.S.C. § 108(c)(3)** and **23 CFR § 710.501(d)**. For additional information, see **Section 7.1.4, Early Acquisition** in the [Right of Way Procedures Manual, Topic No. 575-000-000](#).

#### **4.2.5.2 Federally Funded Early Acquisition of Real Property Interests**

FHWA may authorize the use of federal funds by the FDOT for the acquisition of a real property interest per **23 U.S.C. § 108(d)** and **23 CFR § 710.501(e)**. When planning to perform early acquisition of real property interests with federal funds, FDOT must document that:

1. The FDOT has the authority to acquire the real property interest under state law; and,
2. The acquisition of the real property interest
  - a. is for a transportation purpose;
  - b. will not cause any significant adverse environmental impact;

- c. will not limit the choice of reasonable alternatives for the project or otherwise influence decisions on any approvals required for the project;
  - d. does not prevent OEM from making an impartial decision to accept an alternative that is being considered in the environmental review process;
  - e. is consistent with the state transportation planning process under **23 U.S.C. § 135**;
  - f. complies with other applicable federal laws and regulations;
  - g. will be acquired through negotiation, without the threat of condemnation; and,
  - h. will not result in a reduction or elimination of benefits or assistance to a displaced person required to move by the **Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (42 U.S.C. § 4601 et seq.)** and **Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq.)**.
3. The early acquisition project is included as a project in an applicable transportation improvement program under **23 U.S.C. § 134 and § 135** and **49 U.S.C. § 5303 and § 5304**.
  4. The environmental review process for the early acquisition project is complete and the project is treated as having an independent utility pursuant to **23 U.S.C. § 108(d)(4)(B)**.

#### 4.2.5.3 Documentation of Early Acquisition Projects

Typically, the environmental review for early acquisition projects can be accomplished by completing a **Type 1 Categorical Exclusion Checklist**. This activity meets the criteria of **23 CFR § 771.117(d)(12)**. See [Part 1, Chapter 2, Class of Action Determination for Federal Projects](#), for more details. Coordination with OEM is needed before District approval of a Type 1 CE to verify that the acquisition project:

- Will not limit the choice of reasonable alternatives for the project or otherwise influence the decision on any approval required for the transportation project, and
- Does not prevent OEM from making an impartial decision as to whether to accept an alternative that is being considered in the environmental review process for the transportation project.

#### 4.2.6 Approval of Interchange Access Requests

The approval of an Interchange Access Request (IAR) on interstate highways is a two-part process. The first part is the determination of safety, operational and engineering (SO&E) acceptability for the request met by satisfying and documenting the requirements of the **FHWA's Policy on Access to the Interstate System** and **FDOT's Procedure No. 525-030-160, New or Modified Interchanges**. The first part (SO&E acceptability) may precede or occur concurrently with the PD&E Study. The second part is the approval of the **NEPA** document (completion of the PD&E Study or Type 1 CE). The affirmative determination constitutes the final approval of an IAR by FHWA and cannot proceed until

the completion of the **NEPA** document. The IAR process is discussed in detail in the [Interchange Access Request User's Guide](#). IAR documentation is included in SWEPT.

The **2017 FHWA's Policy on Access to the Interstate System** focuses on the technical feasibility of access request proposals to support the FHWA's determination of SO&E acceptability. To streamline project reviews, the 2017 Policy requires environmental impacts evaluation, and planning considerations of IAR proposals be addressed through the **NEPA** review process. FDOT addresses and documents environmental impacts evaluation and planning considerations in the PD&E Study.

The FDOT State Interchange Review Coordinator will request final approval of an IAR by submitting a letter to FHWA notifying that the SO&E and LDCA (or completion of the Type 1 CE) are complete. The letter also confirms that the recommended alternative concept is the same in the SO&E and the **NEPA** documents (see [Figure 4-2](#)).

#### 4.2.7 Scoping a PD&E Study

The project scoping process in this chapter builds on the information obtained from the ETDM screening and the SWAT process. Project scoping is a project development activity that identifies and considers various project related issues which may affect cost and schedule; determines work activities to be performed for the project; and develops or refines key project parameters and requirements sufficient to define the project. The project scoping process outlined in this chapter is applicable to both state and federally funded projects.

The project scoping process discussed in this section is not the Environmental Scoping Process required by **23 CFR Part 771** for preparation of an EIS. For the Environmental Scoping Process, see [Part 1, Chapter 8, Draft Environmental Impact Statement](#).

Project scoping of a PD&E Study is used to build the PD&E scope of services and starts towards the end of the planning process as the project transitions to the PD&E phase. Project scoping helps to focus specific project activities toward issues that may have a potential to impact the project delivery. Project scoping also helps to identify actions needed during the PD&E phase to avoid, minimize or mitigate a project's potential impacts. Additionally, project scoping provides the foundation to begin a PD&E Study. Scoping requires coordination of project stakeholders within and outside the District to realize best options to deliver the project.

The PD&E scope of services documents the project parameters and the level of engineering and environmental analyses required to develop a project solution that will meet the purpose and need. The level of engineering and environmental analyses is commensurate with the project type and its context, and the significance of potential project impacts. A well-prepared PD&E scope produces a foundation upon which the project development occurs. Additionally, a well-prepared scope sets expectation for project management and performance, supports development of a realistic project delivery schedule, and provides a basis for managing project change and risk.

The PD&E Project Manager is responsible for scoping the PD&E Study. The PD&E

Project Manager should use the guidance in this section to identify work activities and deliverables, and then prepare the preliminary schedule to deliver the project. During project scoping, the Project Manager should work collaboratively with District staff from relevant functional offices to identify or verify project needs and potential issues that will be addressed by the PD&E Study. Early input from the various District offices and subject matter experts is essential to develop effective project scopes that focus on project issues.

#### 4.2.7.1 SWAT Process

The SWAT process is a project management approach that streamlines FDOT's project delivery process through early coordination and communication among the different functional offices within the District when identifying projects for funding and scoping in the planning process. **All state and federally funded projects are recommended to be evaluated through the SWAT Process to determine project parameters for funding, scope of work, programming, and scheduling.** The SWAT process promotes and enhances communication and collaboration within District offices when projects are evaluated for inclusion in the *Tentative Work Program*.

The Districts can adapt the SWAT process to their planning, programming, and project scoping processes. See the [FDOT SWAT Training Workbook](#) for more guidance.

Each District has an established SWAT team composed of cross-functional, multi-disciplinary staff experienced in project delivery. SWAT team members are experts who are involved at key milestones during project planning, prior to development of the PD&E Scope of Services to ensure that project decisions get broad input and early support. Members of the SWAT team typically include representatives from Work Program, Production/Scheduling, Intermodal Systems Development (ISD)/Planning, Design, ROW, Traffic Operations, and Environmental Management. Other staff from relevant District functional offices may be invited to participate in the SWAT team meetings. The SWAT team actively engages with the Project Manager, SIS Coordinator, MPO Liaisons, ETDM Coordinator and Environmental Office staff to evaluate the projects.

SWAT consists of planning, strategy, and kickoff team meetings. The purpose of these meetings is to plan and review the preliminary scope, schedule and funding of the projects. The SWAT team meetings should use the *FDOT SWAT Scoping Guide* and other SWAT guide materials, which are available from FDOT's [SWAT Website](#).

The Districts may combine the SWAT team meetings with other related meetings such as scope team meeting, priority projects programming meeting, or project planning meeting, that are used to evaluate candidate projects in the District.

##### 4.2.7.1.1 SWAT Planning Meeting

Each District's SWAT team should hold an annual planning meeting to review potential projects that will be included in the *Tentative Work Program*. The SWAT team should meet with District management prior to the planning meeting to obtain their input on

projects being considered in the ***Tentative Work Program***.

During the planning meeting, the SWAT team reviews and discusses each candidate project's description, purpose and need, context classification, risk, and cost estimate. The outcome of the SWAT planning meeting is a list of funding recommendations for each candidate project; anticipated COA assigned to each project; and a list of projects to be screened through the ETDM process.

During the SWAT planning meeting, each project is recommended as either a state or federal project. When programmed, an SFO identifier is assigned to projects that are recommended to use only state funds. To recommend the use of federal funds on a project, the SWAT team considers factors such as environmental considerations, anticipated permits, [Work Program Instructions](#), and a comparison of projected time savings using a state-funded project delivery process. Projects that must follow the federal process or must stay federalized are listed in [Work Program Instructions, Part III - Chapter 24, Project Development and Environment \(PD&E\)](#).

During the SWAT planning meeting, the SWAT team should complete **Section A** of the ***FDOT SWAT Scoping Guide*** based on the District's knowledge of project scope and potential project impacts. The District should complete **Section B** during the SWAT Strategy Meeting. The results of the SWAT planning meeting should be used by Work Program staff when developing the ***Tentative Work Program***.

#### **4.2.7.1.2 SWAT Strategy Meeting**

The SWAT team should hold a strategy meeting annually to discuss each PD&E project identified in the ***Tentative Work Program*** to strategically define (or refine) the scope of work, review funding, create a baseline schedule (which includes pre-PD&E activities and project delivery milestones), and confirm the advertisement date and initial construction cost estimate are realistic.

Project evaluation during the SWAT strategy meeting should revisit **Section A** of the ***FDOT SWAT Scoping Guide***, which was completed during the SWAT planning meeting. The SWAT team should also complete **Section B** during the strategy meeting, based on available project information at the time of the meeting. It is recommended that during the strategy meeting, the SWAT team:

- Evaluate project scope, cost estimate, and baseline schedule to determine if adequate time and funding are available to address the project objectives;
- Recommend planning activities (such as ETDM Programming Screening, ACE, corridor feasibility studies) that may be performed to support development of the project;
- Explore options for, and recommend project activities that may start ahead of the PD&E Study for each project;
- Explore opportunities to overlap PD&E and Design phases (when appropriate) by considering complexity in cost, design, schedule constraints, and potential

environmental issues. Environmental complexity is estimated based on the likelihood of encountering substantial environmental issues on the project, and the design complexity is a function of how quickly a preferred alternative can be determined in the PD&E process.

- Create baseline project schedules that include project milestones such as scope development, project advertisement, PD&E phase contract execution, LDCA, and other project phases (Design, ROW, Construction) that will be programmed.

During the SWAT strategy meeting, the District SWAT team lead is responsible for gathering and disseminating available project data; identifying and inviting additional team members from other District functional offices; planning, leading and facilitating the meeting; communicating and coordinating with other District's functional offices regarding potential project issues; documenting decisions made in the meeting; and transmitting the ***FDOT SWAT Scoping Guide*** to the Project Managers of upcoming PD&E projects.

#### **4.2.7.1.3 Activities that May Advance Prior to PD&E**

As part of the SWAT process, the Districts should explore options to collect data and conduct technical studies and surveys ahead of the PD&E Study. Ideally, these activities should start before the SWAT kickoff meeting to assist in clarifying the project scope of work. Advancing project activities ahead of the PD&E Study can be accomplished using District staff, districtwide or continuing services consultant contracts, Phase 12 (Planning) funds, or phase 22 (PD&E phase) funds. Phase 22 funds can be used for PD&E activities prior to initiation of the PD&E Study, as per the [Work Program Instructions](#).

Examples of project activities that may start ahead of a PD&E Study include:

1. Design survey;
2. Traffic data collection and traffic forecast;
3. Preliminary geotechnical investigation;
4. Existing condition analysis;
5. Public Involvement Plan, including public outreach;
6. Long lead species surveys, if the time of year is right such that doing the species survey earlier prevents delays during PD&E or otherwise helps to clarify or remove the risk of species impact avoidance measures;
7. Cultural resources assessment survey;
8. Contamination screening; and,
9. Other technical studies or coordination as project characteristics allow.

#### **4.2.7.1.4 SWAT Kickoff Meeting**

Each project that has a PD&E phase should hold a SWAT kickoff meeting at least one year before the start of the PD&E Study. Districts have the flexibility to adapt or combine the SWAT kickoff meeting with existing District's scope team meetings (inter-disciplinary team meetings).

The purpose of the kickoff meeting is to evaluate the preliminary project scope by:

- Understanding the project objectives and purpose and need;
- Discussing, confirming or refining the project limits;
- Reviewing context classification;
- Reviewing and verifying the status of project planning activities (e.g., ETDM Programming Screen, ACE, or corridor feasibility study) that are performed to support the PD&E Study;
- Recommending project activities that may start ahead of the PD&E Study;
- Reviewing and discussing environmental issues and special designs or standards that may affect the project delivery schedule;
- Determining how the Design phase can be advanced concurrent with PD&E, if appropriate—the decision to perform the PD&E Study concurrent with Design is made in the SWAT strategy meeting;
- Discussing and recommending the delivery method for the project—Design-Bid-Build, Design Build or other innovative delivery methods;
- Evaluating identified potential risks (including threats and opportunities) and developing a risk mitigation plan;
- Discussing schedule effects of any adjacent on-going (or planned) projects and required coordination;
- Reviewing initial (stage I) project's scope of services;
- Preparing for field review and scheduling additional project scope meetings; and
- Discussing and refining the initial project schedule to ensure appropriate critical tasks (with planned durations) for the project development are included.

The SWAT kickoff meeting typically includes members of the SWAT team, PD&E Project Manager, Design Project Manager, subject matter experts, and staff from Environmental Management, Environmental Permitting, Design, Program Management, and Planning offices. Staff from the Professional Services Unit and Work Program should also attend the SWAT kickoff meeting, as contracting and funding issues may be discussed. The PD&E Project Manager's role in the kickoff meeting is to plan, lead and facilitate the meeting; gather technical information necessary to scope the project; identify the subject matter experts that should attend the meeting; and monitor completion of pre-PD&E tasks in the schedule and update members of the team members accordingly, as the project

progresses through the consultant acquisition process. The role of subject matter experts in the SWAT kickoff meeting is to provide technical and analytical inputs within their areas of technical expertise.

Project scope evaluation by the SWAT team starts by revisiting the **FDOT SWAT Scoping Guide** prepared during the SWAT planning and strategy meetings. The project scope evaluation further uses the **Programming Screen Summary Report**, and SWAT tools and templates to finalize the initial (stage I) scope of services. See [FDOT SWAT Training Workbook](#) for available tools.

#### 4.2.7.1.5 Project Schedule

To streamline development of PD&E schedules, FDOT has developed project schedule templates for PD&E studies (by Environmental Document type) to support sequencing, implementation and execution of the Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) or task list. The project schedule templates provide consistent activity names at the deliverable level. The templates can be customized to meet the complexity and context of the project. The WBS provides an activity/task coding structure that is used in the Production Schedule and Management (PSM) system. It also identifies the project milestones, activities and activity durations to successfully deliver the project. Approved Environmental PSM codes can be downloaded from FDOT's [PSM Codes and Schedule Templates Website](#). Entering the PD&E phase is defined as work occurring on the project after the official start date of the PD&E Study represented by PSM codes (Type 2 CE Start = 706, EA Start = 707, NOI-EIS Start = 708, or SEIR Start = 709). For an EIS, Notice of Intent (NOI) serves as the official start date.

The responsibility for developing the schedule typically lies with the Project Manager. The PD&E Project Manager should work with the District Program Management Office to create a detailed schedule that uses PSM codes. As referenced in [Section 4.2.7.1.2](#), the Project Manager should develop a project schedule, using information discussed in the SWAT kickoff meeting, and convey the project schedule to the District Program Management Office Scheduler. The Scheduler should enter identified schedule milestones in the PSM with corresponding codes prior to advertisement for consultant acquisition. Importantly, the Project Manager and Scheduler should ensure the project schedule has realistic timeframes and project work activities proceed in a logical order. The project schedule should include time required for document reviews by the District, OEM and Cooperating Agencies, as appropriate. If the consultant is under contract for the project, the Project Manager should also communicate the expectation of the project schedule to ensure the consultant meets the schedule demands. Scheduling guidance and recommended practices for both FDOT and consultant project managers can be found at FDOT's [Project Management Resource Page](#).

#### 4.2.7.2 Level of Engineering Detail

Engineering activities for a PD&E Study are performed to a level of detail necessary to analyze and compare the effects of the project alternatives on the social, natural, cultural, and physical environment. The level of engineering detail required for a PD&E Study

should be sufficient to establish preliminary geometry (i.e., typical section, preliminary horizontal and vertical alignments, and ROW needs) for the preferred alternative. Depending on the context and schedule of the project being studied under the **NEPA** process, PD&E Study and Design phase can begin concurrently provided that the preliminary design activities comply with **23 CFR Part 771** and **40 CFR §§ 1500-1508**. Essentially, the preliminary engineering activities must not limit the choice of reasonable alternatives [**40 CFR §1506.1(a) and (b)**]. Projects that follow the state process have more flexibility in advancing Design phase activities concurrent with the PD&E phase (see [Part 1, Chapter 10, State, Local, or Privately Funded Project Delivery](#)).

#### 4.2.7.2.1 Permissible Project Related Activities During NEPA

**FHWA Order 6640.1A, Policy on Permissible Project Related Activities during the NEPA Process**, clarifies the level of design detail allowed in PD&E studies. To comply with and utilize the flexibility provided in the FHWA directive, the Districts may perform preliminary design activities prior to a **NEPA** decision regardless of the project delivery method that is used. However, final design activities may not be advanced until a **NEPA** decision has been issued [**23 CFR § 771.113(a)**]. Preliminary design activities to be completed by FDOT in the PD&E process are listed as “preliminary” (or “P”) in the [FDOT Design Manual \(FDM\), Part 3, Chapter 301, Topic No. 625-000-002](#). Most items are in the preliminary status through Phase II Plans (60%) of the Design Phase. Design items that are not listed in the Sequence of Plans Preparation chapter, but are identified in Appendix A of the **FHWA Order 6640.1A**, such as noise wall justification, can be advanced to preliminary design levels. Preliminary design is further discussed in [FDM, Part 1, Chapter 110, Topic No. 625-000-002](#). The District shall coordinate with OEM to determine whether advancing preliminary design activities (that are not listed in the definition of preliminary design or **Appendix A of FHWA Order 6640.1A**), is appropriate. Concurrence from OEM shall be obtained in writing. In accordance with the **Guidance on Preliminary Engineering Authorizations in FMIS**, the activities are eligible for Federal-Aid reimbursement once they are approved by FHWA, but until a project is authorized in the Fiscal Management Information System (FMIS) and federal funds obligated, there is no guarantee of federal funding for any pre-authorization preliminary work.

For Design Build Projects, other activities necessary to establish the final design parameters, (as defined at **23 CFR § 636.103**) may proceed as preliminary design so long as those activities do not materially affect the objective consideration of alternatives in the **NEPA** process or have an adverse environmental impact.

#### 4.2.7.2.2 Overlapping PD&E and Design Phases

The Project Manager should be familiar with and consider the risks associated with overlapping preliminary design activities with PD&E. First, there is always the possibility that the No-Action (No-Build) Alternative could be chosen as the preferred alternative. Second, preliminary design activities must be equally performed for all Build Alternatives. These risks include performing additional engineering analysis that would not be needed for alternatives which do not move forward. Third, the District should refrain from performing any preliminary design activity that will materially affect the objective consideration of alternatives or cause an adverse environmental impact. See [Section](#)

[4.2.7.2.1](#) for the level of preliminary design detail allowed in PD&E studies. To mitigate the risk, only PD&E studies for some Type 2 CEs may be procured concurrently with the Design phase. Type 2 CEs with complex scopes that may require evaluation of multiple alternatives should not be procured concurrently with the Design phase.

There are three contracting options for dual procurement of PD&E and Design phases that the District may consider. These options are:

1. One contract for both PD&E and Design funded together;
2. One contract for PD&E with an option for Design; and,
3. Two overlapping contracts procured simultaneously or separately.

The Project Manager should work closely with the SWAT team, District Environmental Office, District Design Office and District Professional Services Unit when deciding the appropriate dual procurement option such that the consultant procurement process is vetted for issues that may prevent the project from moving forward.

Final design activities for federal projects should proceed beyond Phase II Plans only after OEM approval of the Environmental Document. Contract agreement, scope of services and schedules for projects with overlapping PD&E and Design phases should include this requirement. There is no limitation to the level of design plans which may be completed concurrently with a SEIR. However, the SWAT team and Project Manager must be mindful of alternatives analysis considerations and other risks associated with advancing final design activities with a SEIR particularly if a federal permit is involved.

### 4.2.7.3 Scope of Services

The Project Manager reviews the ***Programming Screen Summary Report*** before advancing the project to PD&E. The report helps the Project Manager to become familiar with the existing environmental setting and helps with the understanding of the environmental or social resources that may be impacted by the project. By reviewing the ***Programming Screen Summary Report***, the Project Manager will also understand project needs and objectives as well as the level of analysis and documentation required to accomplish the project objectives. The Project Manager gathers other technical information needed to scope the project in addition to the ***Programming Screen Summary Report***. This may include field visits and results of technical studies that were conducted prior to project scoping.

When technical studies and surveys were completed prior to PD&E, the Project Manager must review the reports and adjust the scope of work by eliminating the activities or tasks that were previously completed and are still current or valid. Additionally, the Project Manager should explore opportunities to adopt or incorporate by reference planning analyses (such as interchange access request studies, traffic models, corridor studies, multimodal corridor studies, transit alternatives analysis, bicycle plans, feasibility studies, freight corridor studies) for the PD&E Study. See [Section 4.2.2](#) for guidance on how to use planning products in the PD&E Study.

The Project Manager consults with the District Environmental Office staff for input regarding project activities and/or impacts. The Project Manager must work in concert with an interdisciplinary project team, largely composed of members from the District SWAT team, (from Planning, Environmental Management, Design, ROW, Construction) to complete the PD&E Study scope of services. The team uses the recommendations from the District SWAT kickoff meeting and any new information to complete the scope of services for the PD&E Study. The Project Manager must use the ***PD&E Study Standard Scope of Services*** development tool to prepare the scope of services for the project. The Project Manager must have a SWEPT account to access the scope of services development tool.

#### **4.2.7.4 Alternative Project Delivery Methods**

The procurement process for alternative project delivery methods such as Design-Build and contract administration processes follow standard FDOT practices as specified in the [\*\*\*Design-Build Procurement and Administration, Procedure No. 625-020-010\*\*\*](#). Districts are responsible for conducting the design-build procurement and contract administration processes for projects within their jurisdictions. The Project Finance Office in the Office of Comptroller provides support, coordination, and oversight for P3 projects that involve Design-Build-Finance or Design-Build-Finance-Operate-Maintain. Florida's Turnpike Enterprise is responsible for conducting traffic and revenue studies for District projects that involve tolling.

For Design-Build projects and other projects that follow the alternative delivery methods, FDOT ensures that the requirements set by **23 CFR Part 636** are met, which include those imposed to protect the objectivity and integrity of the **NEPA** process. The [\*\*\*Design-Build Procurement and Administration, Procedure No. 625-020-010\*\*\*](#) provides flexibility by allowing projects to be advertised and selected while the **NEPA** process is being concluded. This means the Design-Build firm may proceed with certain preliminary engineering activities while the **NEPA** process is being concluded. This procedure recognizes the requirement for obtaining **NEPA** approval pursuant to **23 CFR § 771.113**, before a District can issue the notice to commence construction. Additionally, the procedure requires a Design-Build contract to have a termination clause, if the No-Build Alternative is selected when the preliminary design phases are authorized in the Design-Build contract prior to completion of the **NEPA** document. Pursuant to **23 CFR § 636.109(b)(6)**, the Design-Build firm must not prepare the **NEPA** document or have decision-making responsibility with respect to the **NEPA** process but can assist in preparation of information to support **NEPA** activities under the supervision of the District Environmental Office.

#### **4.2.7.5 Project Management Plan and Financial Plan for Major Projects**

Pursuant to **23 U.S.C. § 106(h)**, Major Projects, estimated at \$500 million or more, are required to have an FHWA approved Project Management Plan (PMP) and an annual Financial Plan, including a phasing plan when applicable. The PMP for Major Projects must document procedures and processes in effect to provide timely information to the project decision makers to successfully manage the scope, costs, schedules, and quality

of and the federal requirements applicable to the project. The PMP also includes the role of the agency leadership and management team in the delivery of the project. The PMP is prepared in accordance with ***FHWA Project Management Plan Guidance for Major Projects***. The Project Manager should work with the District Production Office to prepare the draft PMP prior to submitting to FHWA.

It is generally recommended that a draft PMP be submitted to FHWA Florida Division Office at least 60 days prior to OEM approval of ***NEPA*** document for Major Projects. The FHWA Florida Division Office will coordinate with the FHWA Major Projects Team in the Office of Infrastructure to review all project management plans and any subsequent updates that require FHWA review or approval.

The Financial Plan for a Major Project is coordinated by the Project Finance Office in the Office of Comptroller and must be based on detailed estimates of project costs and the programmed funding for the project. The Initial Financial Plan and subsequent annual updates are prepared in accordance with FHWA guidance. The Financial Plans include an assessment of the appropriateness of the project delivery method. Visit the Project Finance Office SharePoint site on Major Project Financial Plans for more information.

#### **4.2.7.6 Quality Control**

The Project Manager is responsible for the quality and technical accuracy of the Environmental Document and supporting technical studies. To achieve quality objectives, each project must establish and follow Quality Assurance (QA) and Quality Control (QC) protocols. The Project Manager must make a conscious effort to maximize quality for every project.

All work associated with a PD&E Study must adhere to a project specific QC Plan which will ensure that project deliverables conform to applicable laws, regulations and FDOT procedures. The QC Plan must address the internal QC process performed by the PD&E Study team. The Plan must ensure that quality is achieved through checking, reviewing, and oversight of work activities and deliverables by objective and qualified individuals who were not directly responsible for performing the initial work. The QC Plan must also include processes and procedures for QA measures to evaluate and document compliance of the QC process. OEM has prepared a QC Plan template and associated checklists for PD&E studies. The template can be downloaded from FDOT's [QC Plan for PD&E Studies Website](#). Additional information on the development of QC Plans can be found in FDOT's [Project Management Resource Page](#).

#### **4.2.7.7 Risk Management**

Project risk management is the systematic process of identifying, analyzing, planning for, responding to, and monitoring project risk. It involves processes, tools, and techniques that help the Project Manager minimize the probability and consequences of adverse events by developing and following a risk management plan, which should identify the risks that need to be managed (the highest priority risks and possibly some or all intermediate priority risks) and the selected risk response strategy for each. The risk

management plan should address technical, external (i.e., funding and political risks), environmental, and organizational resources that may prevent the project from reaching its objectives.

Risk management is most effective when performed early in the project and assessed continuously throughout the project. ETDM screening events ([Section 4.2.3](#)) and SWAT kickoff meetings ([Section 4.2.7.1](#)) are examples of project activities that are used to manage risk for PD&E projects.

When a formal risk analysis is performed for the project, its outcome is documented in a risk register. The risk register is a document that identifies and quantifies risks and is tracked and passed from one phase of the project development process to another. Risk analysis can be qualitative or quantitative depending on the complexity of the project and information that is known at the time of analysis. In many situations, risk analysis performed during PD&E is qualitative where risk trigger features are identified and their impact to the scope, schedule, budget, or quality are analyzed and prioritized for further action.

Since risk management and analysis is an on-going process throughout the life of the project, Project Managers must continuously monitor and control, and identify and analyze new risks for their projects. This can be achieved by adding project risk to the agenda of project meetings. Additional information for identifying and managing project risks can be found in FDOT's [Project Management Resource Page](#).

## 4.2.8 PD&E Phase

The PD&E phase builds on the outcome of the ETDM screening, SWAT team meetings, prior planning products and ACE, as applicable, to further refine the project's purpose and need. The PD&E phase may also identify project alternatives that satisfy the purpose and need for the project. Alternatives may include alignments, alternative modes, and typical sections that avoid or minimize environmental impacts. See [Part 1, Chapter 14, Transit Project Delivery](#) and [Part 2, Chapter 3, Engineering Analysis](#) for more information on alternatives analysis. Environmental analyses performed during PD&E evaluate the project's effect on social, cultural, natural, and physical issues/resources. During the environmental analysis, potential mitigation options may be developed based on unavoidable impacts. See [Part 2, Chapter 4 through Chapter 23](#), for procedures on how to perform and document analyses for environmental issues/resources. Technical reports documenting the results of this analysis are included in [Section 4.2.8.2](#).

Throughout the PD&E process, interagency coordination is conducted to consider project impacts, permitting requirements, project commitments, and funding sources. Commitments established as a result of the PD&E Study and/or agency coordination/consultation must be documented as described in [Procedure No. 650-000-003, Project Commitment Tracking](#). See [Part 2, Chapter 22, Commitments](#) for more information on commitments during the PD&E phase.

### 4.2.8.1 Environmental Documents

The COA for federal projects is typically determined after the ETDM Programming Screen review and prior to publishing the final **Programming Screen Summary Report**, but at times additional study may be needed during the PD&E phase before a COA determination can be made. Federal projects may proceed as a CE, EA, or EIS. If the project is state funded, it may proceed as a SEIR.

## Processing

Federal projects must meet planning consistency requirements outlined in **23 CFR Part 450** prior to being submitted to OEM for LDCA. EAs and EISs submitted to OEM for approval must include the appropriate planning consistency documentation. It is recommended that this information be included in the EA or EIS in the form of a table. See [Figure 4-3](#) and [Figure 4-4](#) for sample tables. The sample in [Figure 4-4](#) is for projects with segmented (phased) implementation. For Type 2 CEs planning consistency information is included as a section in the **Type 2 Categorical Exclusion Determination Form**. The LRTP, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and current State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) pages should be included in the Appendix of the Environmental Document. For information on documenting planning consistency in the Environmental Document, see [Part 2, Chapter 1, Project Description and Purpose and Need](#) and [FDOT/FHWA Consistency Guidance](#), respectively.

## Type 2 Categorical Exclusions

Type 2 CEs are projects without significant impacts, but which may require more detailed analysis of relevant issues and public involvement than Type 1 CEs. These projects typically go through a PD&E phase before advancing into the Design phase. The document of record for LDCA is the signed **Type 2 Categorical Exclusion Determination Form**. The **Type 2 Categorical Exclusion Determination Form** is prepared using SWEPT. The technical reports or documents prepared to support Type 2 CE projects must be uploaded into the SWEPT project file and appropriately summarized or referenced in the **Type 2 Categorical Exclusion Determination Form**. The processing and documentation of Type 2 CEs is discussed in [Part 1, Chapter 5, Type 2 Categorical Exclusion](#).

## Environmental Assessments

An EA is prepared for actions in which the significance of the environmental impact is unknown. Depending on the significance of the impacts, an EA may result in a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) where the analysis of the technical studies indicates that no significant environmental impact will result from the proposed project or an EIS if the analysis indicates significant environmental impacts will result. In either case, these projects will require environmental technical studies to comply with **NEPA**, address agency comments, or investigate potential impacts as necessary. The processing, review, and approval of an EA and a FONSI are discussed in [Part 1, Chapter 6, Environmental Assessment](#) and [Part 1, Chapter 7, Finding of No Significant Impact](#).

## Environmental Impact Statements

All projects with a significant environmental impact require an EIS and should address environmental issues identified during the Programming Screen and PD&E phase. An EIS receives LDCA once the Record of Decision (ROD) is approved by OEM. The processing, review, and approval of the DEIS is described in [Part 1, Chapter 8, Draft Environmental Impact Statement](#) and the FEIS and FEIS/ROD in [Part 1, Chapter 9, Final Environmental Impact Statement](#).

### State Funded Projects

Transportation projects qualifying for EST screening, without federal involvement require a SEIR. When a Local Agency or other entity is the Lead Agency, a Project Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) may be prepared. PEIRs are typically used by non-FDOT entities when state funds are used or the project lies on a SIS, SHS facility, or a project advanced through other unique funding mechanisms. The processing, review, and approval of non-federal projects are described in [Part 1, Chapter 10, State, Local, or Privately Funded Project Delivery](#).

#### 4.2.8.2 Project Reports and Documentation

Documentation for a PD&E Study includes the Environmental Document, technical reports, as well as other data, memoranda, maps, meeting summaries, comment/response matrices and other materials developed to support the study. The PD&E Project Manager is responsible for collecting, maintaining, and filing documentation for a PD&E Study in the SWEPT project file. SWEPT maintains the official project file for PD&E Studies. It is recommended that documents be placed within the applicable folder in SWEPT according to FDOT's [SWEPT Spreadsheet Tool: Where to Upload Documents in SWEPT](#). The project file provides the rationale and technical documentation supporting the PD&E Study's decision-making process. The Project Manager should begin compiling the project file at the start of the PD&E Study, continue to add documents throughout the study, and complete the file when a final decision is made. Complete and accurate documentation of the project file is needed to ensure decisions made during PD&E are passed to the next phase of the project development process. Additionally, a complete project file is essential to preparing and compiling an adequate administrative record for the project when required.

All project documents will be filed/stored in accordance with [Records Management, Procedure No. 050-020-025](#) utilizing the process outlined in [Part 1, Chapter 15, Project File and Records Management](#).

Below is a list of reports and design information the Project Manager should maintain in the project file if completed in the PD&E phase. Additional environmental and technical reports (including planning products), which are the basis of PD&E decisions, must also be kept in the project file.

1. Draft Environmental Documents (Type 2 CE, EA, DEIS, SEIR)

2. Approved Final Environmental Document (Type 2 CE, EA with FONSI, FEIS/ROD, FEIS, ROD, or SEIR)
3. **Comments and Coordination Report**
4. **Public Involvement Plan (PIP)**
5. **Navigation Impact Report**
6. **United States Coast Guard (USCG) Bridge Questionnaire**
7. **Project Traffic Analysis Report (PTAR)**
8. **Bridge Development Report (BDR)**
9. **Bridge Replacement Report** (if applicable)
10. Draft **Bridge Hydraulic Report (BHR)** for the preferred alternative (if applicable)
11. Preliminary bridge analysis with supporting location and design recommendations for each viable structure alternative (if applicable)
12. Preliminary scour analysis (if applicable)
13. Conceptual Transportation Management Plan (TMP)
14. Design Exceptions/Variation package (if applicable)
15. Financial Plan (if applicable)
16. Geotechnical report (Signed by a PE)
17. **Interchange Access Request (IAR)** (if applicable) and associated documents (**Methodology Letter of Understanding** and FHWA's SO&E Affirmative Determination Letter)
18. **Intersection Control Evaluation (ICE) Forms** (if applicable)
19. **Location Hydraulics Report (LHR)**
20. **Preliminary Engineering Report (PER)** (Signed by a PE)
21. Preliminary plans for preferred alternative with ROW dimensions
22. Preliminary stormwater design (including any drainage reports, preliminary drainage design, **Pond Siting Report (PSR)** and/or **Conceptual Drainage Design Report**)
23. **Preliminary System Engineering Management Plan (PSEMP)** (if applicable)

24. Project Management Plan (if applicable)
25. Risk Management Plan (if applicable)
26. **Typical Section Package** (Signed by a PE)
27. **Value Engineering Study Report** (if applicable) (Signed by a PE)
28. **Sociocultural Effects (SCE) Evaluation Technical Memorandum**
29. **Conceptual Stage Relocation Plan (CSRP)** (if applicable)
30. **Farmland Conversion Impact Rating Form**
31. **Section 4(f) Evaluation** (if applicable)
32. **Cultural Resource Assessment Survey (CRAS) Report**
33. **Section 106 Case Report**
34. **Natural Resources Evaluation (NRE)** (wetlands, protected species and habitat, Essential Fish Habitat)
35. **Water Quality Impact Evaluation Checklist (WQIE)**
36. **Sea Level Impact Projection (SLIP) Study**
37. **Sea Level Rise Analysis**
38. **Noise Study Report (NSR)**
39. **Air Quality Technical Memorandum**
40. **Contamination Screening Evaluation Report (CSER) or Level I Evaluation Report**
41. **Utility Assessment Package**

#### **4.2.9 Design and Construction**

The purpose of the Design phase is to prepare the detailed engineering design, contract plans, specifications, and estimates for the project. FDOT's design process follows the design criteria and procedures established in the [FDM, Part 2, Topic No. 625-000-002](#) and the requirements for preparation and assembly of contract plans established in [FDM, Part 3, Topic No. 625-000-002](#).

The review of design and construction plans for design-bid-build projects (conventional projects) typically follows a standard four-phase submittal approach to facilitate review of the projects. The four submittal phases are Phase I, Phase II, Phase III, and Phase IV.

Projects that are Type 1 CE or NMSA, typically have two phase reviews. The appropriate number of submittal phases for projects is determined when developing the scope of services. Design-Build projects have three standard submittal phases, namely Technical Proposal, 90% Component Plans and Final Component Plans. [FDM, Part 3, Chapter 301, Topic No. 625-000-002](#) identifies phase submittal requirements for both conventional and non-conventional projects.

Phase I plans submittal allows for the establishment and review of preliminary geometry and grades, drainage design, traffic control, and ROW. Most projects with an estimated total cost of \$25 million or more must have a Value Engineering (VE) study performed during the development of the project and prior to the final design. A VE study may occur after the alternative analysis is complete. If the VE is performed during the PD&E phase, it must be completed prior to the public hearing so the public can be aware of the related enhancements. See [Procedure No 625-030-002, Value Engineering Program](#) for further details on VE requirements.

Phase II plans submittal includes the proposed plan and profile with complete drainage design. Preliminary design of the plans themselves is complete at the completion of Phase II. Typically, with completion of Phase II plans, sufficient information exists for permit application submittal and ROW acquisition to start. Throughout the remainder of the design process continued agency coordination should take place to address permitting requirements, address additional avoidance and minimization measures that can be taken, and develop mitigation plans.

Phase III plans submittal includes completion of all plan sheets and quantity calculations. Phase IV is the final submittal of the project contract plans where specifications are complete, and all corrections noted in the Phase III plans are addressed.

During the Design phase, new or updated surveys may be needed to confirm impacts. Additionally, mitigation requirements should be reconciled with actual impacts based on the final design features of the project. Prior to authorization to advertise the project for construction, the project must undergo a Re-evaluation to ensure that there are no conditions in place that would alter the original approval of the decision and commitments made during the PD&E Study. Changes in design, environment, or laws which may have occurred since the approval of the final Environmental Document or any previous Re-evaluations are addressed. [Part 1, Chapter 13, Re-evaluations](#) explains the required Re-evaluation process.

#### **4.2.10 Interagency Coordination and Public Involvement**

Public involvement, which provides opportunity for input from interested and affected members of the public, local governments, and environmental, regulatory, and resource agencies, is required by both federal and state laws, as well as FDOT procedure (see [Public Involvement Opportunities, Topic No. 000-525-050](#)). Public involvement is required in all phases of a transportation project. The public involvement effort should be scaled to match the magnitude or complexity of the project and should consider the potential for controversy, project issues or challenges, ROW acquisition, relocations, and

access modifications. See [Public Involvement Handbook](#) for guidance on developing and implementing effective public involvement for transportation projects.

During the ETDM Planning and Programming screens, regulatory and resource agencies and interested project stakeholders review and comment on a project's potential effects on the natural and human environment. MPOs can input public comments from LRTP outreach activities into the EST during the ETDM Planning or Programming Screen. PD&E Project Managers use information from the EDTM **Planning** or **Programming Screen Summary Report** to plan and implement public involvement activities during the PD&E phase.

Public involvement during the PD&E phase begins with the preparation of a **PIP**. The purpose of a **PIP** is to identify the potentially affected people in a community, identify special community needs to support the SCE evaluation and define the outreach methods and schedule to involve and gain community input. Depending on the Environmental Document prepared for the project, different public involvement actions are used to meet federal and state requirements. See [Part 1, Chapter 11, Public Involvement](#) and [Part 2, Chapter 4, Sociocultural Effects Evaluation](#) for more information.

Public involvement activities during the Design phase typically begin by preparing a **Community Awareness Plan (CAP)** and may involve activities such as public information meetings or a design public hearing. See [FDM, Part 2, Section 201, Topic No. 625-000-002](#) for more information. For projects that have completed a PD&E phase, the Design phase public involvement is built upon the public involvement activities conducted during the PD&E phase.

Public involvement during construction involves responding to public requests for information regarding construction activities and informing the public about construction activities such as lane closures, median changes, business access impacts, work hours, work zones, detours, temporary access, and grand openings. Through public involvement, FDOT provides up-to-date information and solicits public input related to the project.

### 4.3 EMERGENCY RELIEF

When the President of the United States signs an emergency declaration, the cost of debris removal from federal aid roads will be reimbursable from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), **not** FHWA. Other damages are eligible for reimbursement from FHWA. Federal aid roads in Florida are all roadways except those classified as local roads or rural minor collectors.

Each damage site with an estimated cost of repair exceeding \$5,000 will be eligible for FHWA reimbursement under the Emergency Relief Program. Each damage location will require documentation on a **Detailed Damage Inspection Report (DDIR)**. Pictures of the damage should be included to support the **DDIR** description and estimated cost of repair.

There are two types of repairs under the Emergency Relief Program, emergency repairs

and permanent repairs. Emergency repairs are those performed to restore essential traffic, to minimize the extent of damage, or to protect the remaining facilities. Repairs that go beyond these three objectives are permanent repairs.

Emergency repairs are eligible for 100 percent federal share if they are made during or right after a disaster (within 180 days). The 180-day period for 100 percent eligibility of emergency repairs may be extended if a District cannot access a site to evaluate damages and the cost of repair. FDOT will request, and the FHWA Division Office will approve and document, extensions on a case-by-case basis for specific locations that cannot be accessed. Emergency repairs do not need an approved federal authorization in place prior to the work being done. The federal authorization can be processed after the repair work is completed.

Emergency repair projects under the Emergency Relief Program must comply with **NEPA** requirements. Environmental review process for emergency repair projects can be conducted during or after the project is completed (only if the emergency repair is within the existing ROW). Typically, Type 1 CE documentation for emergency repairs is completed pursuant to **Title 23 U.S.C. § 125**. Emergency repair projects to permanently restore the existing facility in-kind at the existing location also qualify and Type 1 CE documents are used. However, if impacts to protected or otherwise sensitive resources are anticipated, advance coordination with the appropriate resource agencies should be performed to ensure those impacts are adequately addressed. For emergency repairs that do not qualify for a Type 1 CE, coordinate with OEM for documentation required in accordance with the **CEQ-NEPA-2020-01, Emergencies and National Environmental Policy Act Guidance**.

Permanent repairs must have an approved federal authorization in place before any repair work is done to maintain eligibility for emergency relief federal funding. Permanent repairs are treated just like any ordinary federally funded highway or bridge project. All permanent repair projects shall comply with the environmental clearance requirements prior to FHWA initial authorization. The District Federal Aid Coordinator should be contacted for additional information on the prerequisites needed to obtain an approved federal authorization.

A copy of all **DDIRs** should be provided to the District Federal Aid Coordinator as soon as possible, even if they have not been signed by an FHWA engineer. Eventually **DDIRs** with all necessary signatures will be needed, but it is essential for the District Federal Aid Coordinator to obtain the initial unsigned copies as soon as possible to perform a preliminary assessment of the damage statewide. Additional information on the Emergency Relief Program, including **FHWA's Emergency Relief Manual**, can be found at FHWA's Emergency Relief Program website.

In cases where emergency actions may affect federally listed species and/or critical habitats, emergency consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or National Marine Fisheries Service is required by **Section 7** of the **Endangered Species Act**, as amended (**50 CFR § 402.05**). See [Part 2, Chapter 16, Protected Species and Habitat](#) for guidance on emergency consultation. Emergency consultation procedures allow

federal agencies to incorporate endangered species concerns into their response actions- they are not intended to interfere with emergency response efforts.

See [Part 2, Chapter 8, Archaeological and Historical Resources](#) for guidelines on complying with **Section 106, Chapter 267, F.S.**, and **Section 4(f)** where emergency action may affect historic and **Section 4(f)** resources.

See [FDOT Environmental Review Guidance for Emergency Relief Projects](#) for more information on emergency relief projects.

#### 4.4 REFERENCES

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First Renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding Between FHWA and FDOT Concerning the State of Florida's Participation in the Surface Transportation Project Delivery Program Pursuant to 23 U.S.C. § 327, May 26, 20122. [https://fdotwww.blob.core.windows.net/sitefinity/docs/default-source/environment/pubs/nepa\\_assign/fdot-327-first-renewal-mou-for-comment.pdf?sfvrsn=202c70b4\\_2](https://fdotwww.blob.core.windows.net/sitefinity/docs/default-source/environment/pubs/nepa_assign/fdot-327-first-renewal-mou-for-comment.pdf?sfvrsn=202c70b4_2)

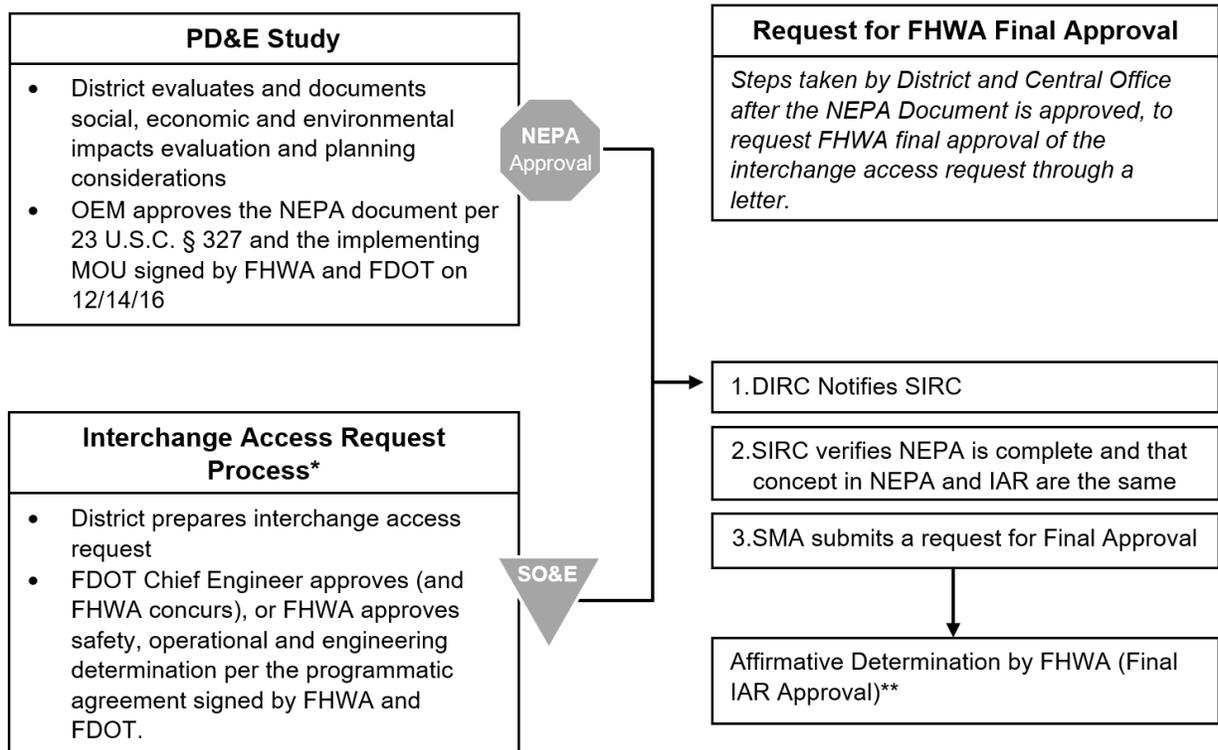
Section 335.065, F.S. Bicycle and pedestrian ways along state roads and transportation facilities. [http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App\\_mode=Display\\_Statute&Search\\_String=&URL=0300-0399/0335/Sections/0335.065.html](http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=0300-0399/0335/Sections/0335.065.html)

Title 23 CFR § 636.103

Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (42 U.S.C. § 4601 et seq.)

## **4.5 HISTORY**

1/12/2000, 5/20/2008, 1/21/2011, 3/30/2015, 8/18/2016, 6/14/2017: NEPA Assignment, 1/14/2019, 7/1/2020



DIRC = District Interchange Review Coordinator SIRC = State Interchange Review Coordinator SMA= System Management Administrator

\*Determination of safety, operation and engineering acceptability of the interchange access request may precede the PD&E study, or occur concurrent with the PD&E Study.  
 \*\*FHWA approves the access request by signing the letter of request from FDOT.

**Figure 4-2 Final Approval of Interchange Access Requests and the PD&E Study**



