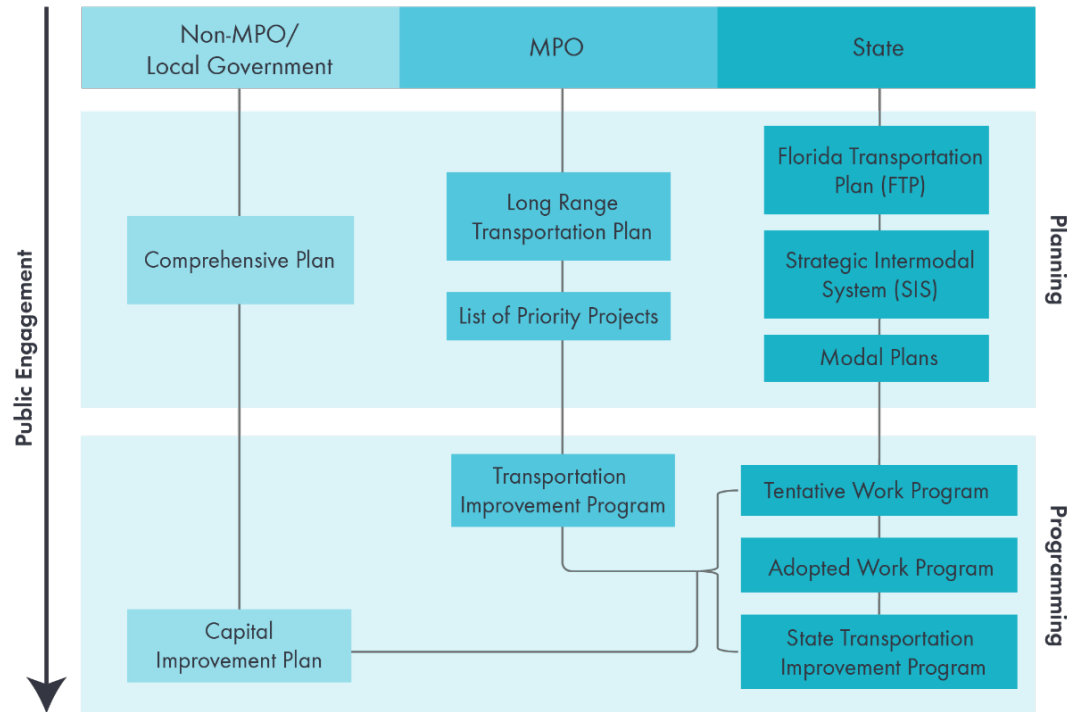


## 106 Outreach During Planning

Transportation planning helps the Department make decisions about how to prioritize funding, implement transportation policy, and design projects. Planning also helps develop policy and projects that achieve outcomes consistent with statewide, regional, and local visions. Community engagement during planning brings diverse viewpoints and values to the surface early in the decision-making process and consists of activities and actions that both inform and involve the public so they can help influence decisions that affect their lives. Certain federal and state requirements require public input and stakeholder coordination during transportation planning.



### Statewide Policy Plans



Policy planning is the first step in the statewide transportation decision-making process and can involve a wide range of planning, policy, and research-related activities. The Office of Policy Planning (OPP) oversees a variety of these activities to advance Florida's statewide transportation system. These activities include the developing the Florida Transportation Plan (FTP) and the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) Strategic Plan and collecting information and

# Public Engagement Resource Guide

data about trends and conditions that may influence future transportation efforts.

Statewide policy plans developed by the Department set overarching vision, policy, goals, priorities, and strategies to plan and implement transportation programs and projects throughout Florida. The following describes how the Department may engage partners and the public to develop these plans and the notification requirements in law.

## Florida Transportation Plan

The state transportation plan, known as the Florida Transportation Plan (FTP), establishes a policy framework for spending federal and state transportation funds in Florida. It is a policy-driven document and not project-specific. Every five years FDOT updates this plan to meet the future mobility needs of Florida's residents, visitors, and businesses. FDOT works with partners and the public to develop the plan, including a steering committee, subcommittees, and regional and local groups. The community engagement activities used to develop the FTP include:

- Regular meetings of a steering committee and subcommittees
- Statewide events
- Regional workshops
- Briefings at regularly scheduled meetings of transportation partners
- Social media outreach
- Brochures, fact sheets, infographics, and videos

Requirements for public involvement during the development of the FTP are found in 23 CFR 450.208, 23 CFR 450.210, and Section 339.155 F.S.

- An interactive website to gather public comments and suggestions
- Informal advisory groups
- A Public comment period on the draft plan

These activities are documented in a Partner and Public Involvement Plan, which can be found on the FTP [website](#).



## Strategic Intermodal System Plan

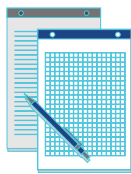
The SIS is the state's highest priority for transportation capacity investments and a primary focus for implementing the Florida Transportation Plan (FTP), the state's long-range

transportation vision and policy plan. The SIS Policy Plan identifies objectives and approaches to address changing trends and position the SIS for future opportunities. The plan defines policies to guide planning and investment decisions for the next five years. Florida Statutes require FDOT to develop and regularly update a SIS Plan with input from transportation partners and the public. The community engagement activities used to develop the SIS Policy Plan typically include:

- Regular steering committee meetings
- Advisory groups
- Partner briefings
- A Public comment period on the draft plan

Requirements for public involvement during the development of the SIS Plan are found in Section 339.64 F.S.

## Systemwide Plans



Transportation issues represent a significant component of planning at all levels, including the state, regional, and county level. Systemwide planning is a way to approach and study a transportation problem or issue in advance of any funding decisions, helping to link visions to financially realistic plans for multimodal transportation systems. It also provides strategic direction for investment decisions when examining transportation improvements and usually involves many different local and regional units of government. Systems planning can be

applied to a variety of different geographies and a variety of different transportation modes.

## Modal Plans

The Office of Modal Development facilitates and promotes the safe and efficient movement of people and goods by rail, sea, air, aerospace, and road. This is carried out through five divisions: Aviation, Public Transit, Spaceport, Freight and Rail, and Seaport. Some division develop a modal plan, such as the Aviation System Plan or Florida Freight and Mobility Plan. Community engagement activities and stakeholder coordination are part of the planning process.

## Regional Plans

Federal and state regulations also require metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) and local governments to seek public input and coordinate stakeholder in the development of transportation plans. These plans set local vision and priorities.

### Long Range Transportation Plan

MPOs are required to develop a long range transportation plan (LRTP) that addresses the expenditure of federal, state, and local transportation funds over a 20-year period. MPOs must allow public review and comment on the LRTP during development of the plan.

Most community engagement activities during planning are conducted by the MPO in accordance with their adopted Public Participation Plan. The MPO Program Management Handbook, found on this [website](#) provides guidance on the community engagement requirements for LRTPs.

Requirements for the development of a LRTP are found in 23 USC 134, 49 USC 5303, 23 CFR 450.322, 23 CFR 450.324, and Section 339.175 F.S.

# Public Engagement Resource Guide

Agencies and groups that are typically involved represent land use, natural resources, environmental protection, historic preservation, neighborhood associations, transit riders, residents, business groups, public agencies, etc. Everyone within the MPO's jurisdiction should have the opportunity to participate in the transportation planning process.

A variety of methods can be used to inform the public that a long-range planning effort is underway. These include, but are not limited to:

- Agency and project-specific websites (such as the MPO and LRTP websites)
- Social media
- Flyers, brochures, and advertisements
- Newsletters
- Community events
- Outreach to the traditionally underserved/underrepresented
- "Before and After" ("Today and Tomorrow") photo simulations and visualizations
- Radio, television, and video

In addition to getting the word out about the development of a LRTP, a variety of public participation opportunities may be employed for persons to get involved and have their voices heard. Some examples include:

- Advisory committees
- Public surveys and comment cards
- Community meetings and presentations
- Open houses
- Telephone/electronic/televised "Town Hall" meetings
- Advertised public hearing

## Transportation Improvement Program

Requirements for the development of a TIP are found in 23 USC 134, 23 CFR 450.326, and Section 339.175 F.S.

MPOs develop a five-year transportation improvement program (TIP) that identifies, prioritizes, and allocates funding for transportation projects. The TIP is updated annually, with adoption

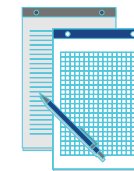
by the MPO Board in June of each year. The TIP is incorporated into the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) to ensure continued federal funding for the metropolitan area.

## Comprehensive Plans

In areas where an MPO is not established, transportation planning may be conducted through the comprehensive planning process. The transportation element of a comprehensive plan sets the local vision and policies for transportation, and the local government may identify transportation projects in the capital improvements plan. Public input and stakeholder coordinated are key steps in the development of local comprehensive plans.

Requirements for the development of a comprehensive plans are found in Section 163.3177 F.S.

## FDOT Work Program



### Statewide Transportation Improvement Program

The STIP is a federally mandated document that includes a listing of projects planned with federal, state, and local funding in the next four fiscal years. The STIP includes priority projects from TIPs and local government projects



Requirements for the STIP are found in 23 USC 135, 49 USC 5304, 23 CFR 450.210, 23 CFR 450.216, 23 CFR 450.218, and Section 339.135 F.S.

included in the STIP are generally conducted by the MPOs during development of the LRTP. For non-MPO areas, community engagement activities for these projects are conducted by the local government that identified the project. The STIP Public Involvement process is described in detail on the STIP [website](#).

## FDOT Five Year Work Program

In the development of the FDOT Five-Year Work Program, the MPO provides its priority list of projects, which feeds the creation of the FDOT Work Program (fifth year). In addition, projects come from non-MPO areas to create the FDOT Five-Year Work Program.

Each District is required to hold a public hearing regarding the Five-Year Work Program in at least one urbanized area within its jurisdiction. Non-MPO counties are also invited to these public hearings. The District must also provide a virtual component to the public hearing. The statewide Work Program Public Hearing [website](#) links to District Work Program information, a comment form, and an interactive GIS map.

These hearings provide an opportunity for the public to be involved in the transportation decision-making process, and are typically attended by local government officials, transportation professionals, and persons with land development interests in the area.

from non-MPO areas. The projects in the STIP are a subset of the first four years of the Adopted Work Program.

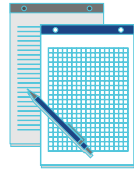
The community engagement activities for the MPO projects

Requirements for the Work Program are found in Section 339.135 F.S. and Section 339.175 F.S.

In addition to the public hearing, each District office makes a presentation at a meeting of each MPO in the district to determine if changes (additions, deletions, or revisions) are necessary to projects contained within the District Work Program. This provides an opportunity for the District to update attendees about other District projects and activities.

The Florida Transportation Commission conducts an annual public hearing on the preliminary Tentative Work Program. FDOT submits the final Tentative Work Program to the Governor and Legislature for approval.

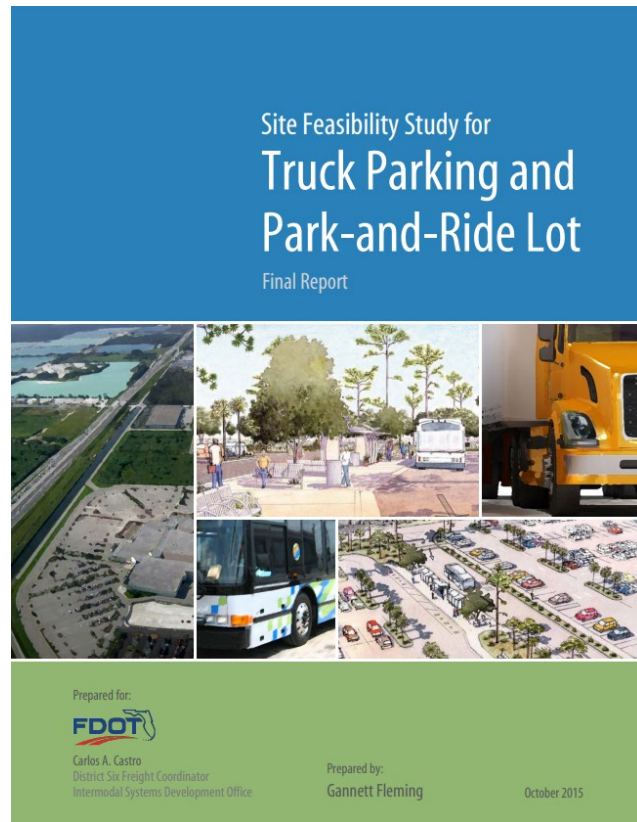
## Feasibility and Corridor Plans



### Feasibility Studies

The FDOT, MPO, or a local government may conduct a feasibility study to evaluate aspects of a transportation project and understand the constructability of a project concept. This allows for early identification of project complexities that could be minimized, avoided, or

mitigated throughout the project development process. A feasibility study helps determine if a project development and environment (PD&E) study needs to be conducted and to what level of detail. During a feasibility study, community engagement should be included and documented (through public workshops, small group meetings, etc.). This helps determine the type of community engagement activities that may be needed in future phases of the project. Results of a feasibility study may feed back into the LRTP Cost Feasible Plan in order to be programmed.



### Corridor Plans

While systemwide plans focus on an entire city, county, region, or state, corridor plans are more narrowly focused on either a specific facility, such as a roadway, or the transportation needs for a defined area, such as a corridor, street, or neighborhood. This is typically the step between a systemwide plan and the more detailed evaluation done during the PD&E phase. The focus is to identify the transportation needs and potential solutions. The solutions are further developed through an appropriate mechanism, such as a PD&E study, or completed in the design phase.

Corridor planning has two different meanings. In one sense it is the planning of new corridors to provide for the future mobility needs of a region or community. Alternatively, it is the identification of improvements to existing corridors for them to continue to serve as vital elements of a community's transportation system. Corridors may be identified for further study from plans created during systemwide planning. Examples of corridor planning include comprehensive/master plans for a street or corridor, congestion management plans, and needs plans.

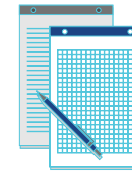


For corridor-specific studies and plans, small-scale meetings, and informal public meetings at the beginning (to identify stakeholders) and end (to share findings) of the study may be the most effective. Similarly, the creation of technical and citizen advisory groups can help ensure that a broader range of individuals is included and a variety of issues are covered. If technical and citizens advisory groups are already in place, the formation of specific stakeholder and citizen forums can help ensure an explicit need or concern is covered. Examples include forums or groups focused on economic development, land use, environment, or other special interests that may have surfaced at the beginning of the study.

Throughout corridor planning, extensive effort should be made to reach out to as many groups as possible to receive comments directly from the people who will benefit from and be impacted by the transportation project or system in the future. These opportunities offer the public and interested stakeholders a chance to learn about the planning process, possible outcomes, and project milestones, as well as provide an opportunity to form relationships and show members of the public the importance of their participation.

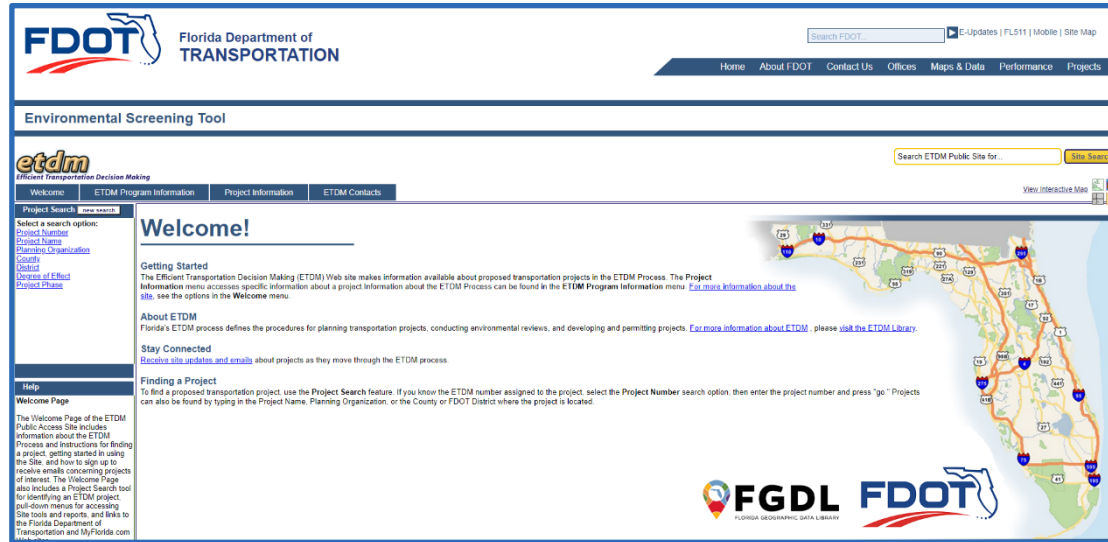
It can be challenging to engage the public in planning-level studies that are either not scheduled for implementation within a short time frame (five to 10 years) or that are system-level plans that do not directly impact a specific area and therefore do not directly affect them. It can be more effective to utilize community engagement activities that are easy for people to access, such as information available in locations where people already are. Engagement and involvement activities that encourage in-person dialogue and that are held outside formally scheduled public meetings and online activities can offer quality interactions and foster long-lasting relationships between citizens and practitioners.

## Efficient Transportation Decision Making Planning and Programming Screens



The Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) process is Florida's method for providing planning-phase review of transportation projects to identify potential environmental effects. State and federal resource and regulatory agencies review proposed projects and comment on potential effects. The ETDM process is consistent with the streamlining objectives of federal transportation legislation. The ETDM process connects the planning and PD&E phases by carrying forward planning products, previous analyses, and decisions supporting transportation project implementation during subsequent project phases. More information about the ETDM process is available [online](#).

A key component of the ETDM process is the Environmental Screening Tool (EST), an internet-accessible interactive database and mapping application. The EST allows participating agencies (known as the Environmental Technical Advisory Team, or ETAT) the opportunity to provide input on proposed projects. Project information is available to the public through the ETDM Public Access [website](#).



The public cannot submit project comments directly through the public access site. Comments are submitted through traditional community engagement activities. Summarized public comments can be uploaded to the EST, which are available on the public site. The public can sign up to receive emails concerning projects of interest.

## ETDM Planning Screen

ETDM-qualifying projects are screened prior to being considered for inclusion in the LRTP. District offices support ETDM project screenings in non-MPO areas. Comments provided through the Planning Screen inform decisions during a PD&E study to ensure consistency with community needs and concerns.

## ETDM Programming Screen

The ETDM Programming Screen builds upon the Planning Screen evaluation, if conducted, to further understand project issues and inform project scoping prior to being considered for adoption in the FDOT Five-Year Work Program and initiation of the PD&E study.