

# **Monitoring, Analyzing, and Reporting on the Environmental Streamlining Pilot Projects**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This report presents the results of the monitoring and assessment of ten environmental streamlining Pilot Projects selected in 1999 by a joint AASHTO, FHWA, and EPA pilot program for environmental streamlining. The objective of this research project was to use the experiences of the Pilot Projects to identify effective ways to improve efficiency and reduce the time frame of the project development process while ensuring environmental protection and to judge their applicability beyond the Pilot Project settings. Research approaches included development of performance measures and project baselines for each Pilot Project, quarterly monitoring via a Web-based reporting system, and interviews with Pilot Project participants.

The findings of the study showed that the most effective streamlining approaches stressed promoting early consultation between Federal, State, and local government entities; used concurrent, rather than sequential, review of plans and projects; fostered stakeholder participation; and worked to provide adequate levels of information, funding, and staff for environmental review. Analysis of the results or outcomes of the Pilot Projects also showed that streamlining is hard work, time consuming, labor-intensive, and expensive.

Several of the streamlining measures employed by the Pilot Projects could be successfully applied to other locales. These include partnership agreements between State DOTs, FHWA, and EPA; position funding agreements between State DOTs and federal and state transportation and environmental review agencies; integrating regional transportation and environmental planning processes; and centralized, concurrent review practices.

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## **CHAPTER 1: Introduction**

The single biggest challenge to environmentally sound Federal-aid transportation project development is related to the amount of time it takes to advance a project through the project development process (*i.e.*, from the planning phase through the environmental review and approval process through final design and then through construction).

Planning major transportation projects is extremely complex because of the varying legal, technical, and analytical requirements needed to meet all relevant National and State legal mandates for planning such projects. At the Federal level, the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and its accompanying regulations are a means to consider the effects of a wide range of human and natural environmental issues. Meanwhile, single-focus regulations such as Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, Section 4(f) of the DOT Act of 1966, and the Endangered Species Act also must be addressed. Each state also has its own set of environmental laws and regulations that apply to transportation projects. (A more detailed description of the project development process is included in Appendix A.)

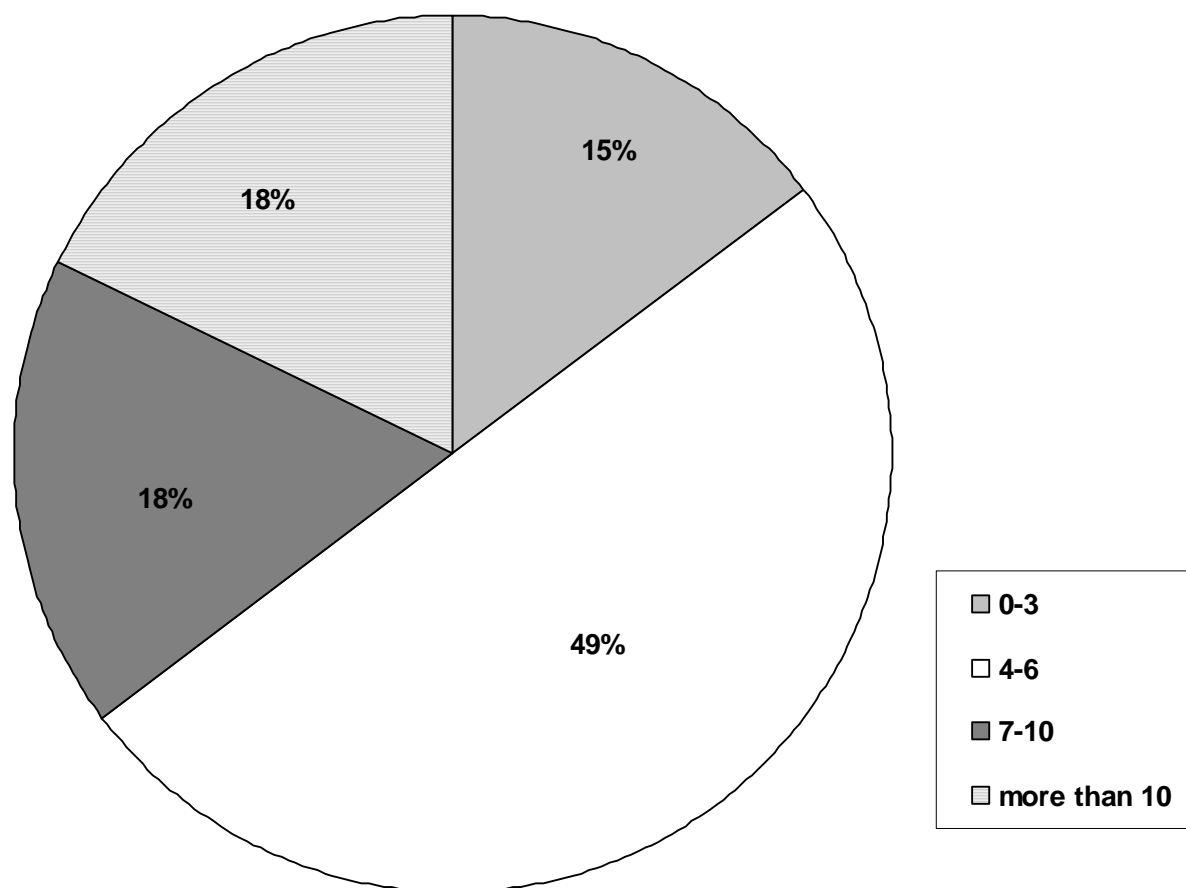
Meeting environmental and planning requirements requires finding ways to promote dialogue and bargaining between the many governmental institutions with oversight responsibilities, interest groups with different and often conflicting values about development, environmental resource and review agencies, and the public. Unless successfully handled, the planning process can encounter endless delays, consume excessive resources in duplicate and competing analytical studies, generate previously unidentified environmental or planning issues further delaying the process, and erode public interest and support for project implementation.



It is common for major projects to take 10 years or more to advance from the planning phase to completion of construction and 20 years is a common time frame for complex, controversial projects. The transportation community and segments of the public were frustrated by the inordinate length of time required for a transportation project to advance through the project development process. Many factors affect project development, both internal to State transportation agencies (*e.g.*, project priorities, staffing, funding, and communication), and external (*e.g.*, public opposition, resource agency staffing, interagency communication, and conflicting review procedures). However, the focus of attention of the transportation community was primarily on the time and cost requirements connected with environmental review and approval processes.

While the actual effects of the environmental review and approval processes on transportation project development are difficult to quantify and vary by project, the effects are significant based on reported experiences. The NEPA process is an example. According to a compilation presented on the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA's) environmental streamlining Web site, the agency examined 34 Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) that had a Record of Decision in Fiscal Year (FY) 2004. Of these projects, 18 percent took 10 or more years to complete NEPA (from the time of the filing of the Notice of Intent); 18 percent were completed in 7 to 10 years; and 15 percent were finished in 3 years or less. The majority of the projects (49 percent) took 4 to 6 years to complete the NEPA process. Figure 1 presents a pie chart with these percentages. Based on the same examination of EISs, FHWA reported that, between FY 1999 and FY 2001, the average length of time to process EISs decreased approximately eight months (from five years ten months to five years three months); and

Figure 1  
Years to Complete a Project Through the NEPA Process



This chart shows the percentage of years it took projects, which had a Record of Decision in FY2004, to complete the NEPA process.

Source: FHWA, 2004.

that the median time decreased by one year (from five and a half years to four and a half years). Between FY 2001 and FY 2004, however, the average length of time to process EISs increased by more than one year (from five years three months to six years, four months) and the median time increased nearly the same amount (from four years six months to five years seven months) (1). According to a FHWA report on baselines for the NEPA process, over the past 30 years, the NEPA process for major projects has accounted for approximately 27 percent of the total time required for project development. (2)

Parties such as the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) member departments, the U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT), other Federal agencies and Congress were concerned about the delays, unnecessary duplication of effort, and added costs often associated with the environmental review and approval processes for transportation projects. For purposes of this study, delay is defined as occurring when the actual amount of time for an action to occur takes longer than the amount of time expected for the action to occur. As a formula,  $\text{Delay} = \text{Actual Time Frame of the Action} - \text{Expected Time Frame of the Action}$ . Delay can be in terms of overall project time frames or incremental actions within an overall project time frame.

The concept of “environmental streamlining” arose in 1998 during the congressional reauthorization of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act. Environmental streamlining involves reengineering the environmental review and approval process portions of the project development process to shorten their time frames. Congressional deliberations resulted in the environmental streamlining provisions

in Section 1309 of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) (3). Section 1309 of TEA-21 requires the Secretary of Transportation to develop a “coordinated environmental review process” whereby “all environmental reviews, analyses, opinions, and any permits, licenses, or approvals that must be issued or made by any Federal agency...shall be conducted concurrently and completed within a cooperatively determined time period.” The challenge is to integrate the requirements of the single-resource regulations with the intent of the NEPA regulations so that agencies can reach a timely consensus on the appropriate transportation solution.

### **Research Project Objectives**

With environmental streamlining a high priority, in April 1999, the AASHTO Board of Directors approved establishment of a joint AASHTO, FHWA, and EPA pilot program for environmental streamlining. Ten projects were selected the same year to be included in the Pilot Program. These Pilot Projects involve seven states: California, Florida, Georgia, New Jersey, Oregon, Texas, and Wisconsin. The Pilot Projects were:

- The Riverside County Integrated Project in California
- The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)/FHWA/EPA Partnership Effort
- The Caltrans/State and Federal Agency Position Funding Effort
- Developing an Environmental Streamlining Process for Use in Florida (The Efficient Transportation Decision-Making (ETDM) Process)
- Environmental Streamlining for the Georgia Rail Passenger Program

- The Portway Program in New Jersey
- Parallel Processing of Section 106 and Section 4(f) Requirements in New Jersey
- Integrating NEPA and Statewide Planning in Oregon
- The Loop 12/IH 35E Corridor Major Investment Study and Environmental Assessment Project in Texas
- EIS Screening Worksheets in Wisconsin

These ten environmental streamlining Pilot Projects involved various aspects of the environmental review process and test a variety of streamlining measures, such as early and more effective coordination with other agencies, integration of environmental concerns into the planning process, and establishment of project-specific time frames. As a group, they focus on improving relationships among parties to the project development process; improving procedures within the existing regulatory scheme; and rationalizing the procedures and substantive requirements of multiple reviewing agencies, reshaping the system where necessary.

In October 2000, the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) released a Research Problem Statement for Project 25-24: Monitoring, Analyzing, and Reporting on the Environmental Streamlining Pilot Projects (Research Project). Investigation of the Research Project began in July 2001 with an anticipated completion date of January 2003. Reporting on the results of the Research Project was anticipated by January 2004.

In keeping with the above definitions of environmental streamlining, the objective of this Research Project was to use the experiences of the Pilot Projects to identify

effective ways to improve efficiency and reduce the time frame of the project development process while ensuring environmental protection and to judge their applicability beyond the Pilot Project settings. For purposes of this study, “environmental protection” refers to historic, cultural, and natural aspects of the environment consistent with the definitions in NEPA.

This analysis was performed through the use of quantitative and qualitative measures to evaluate the success of each Pilot Project in saving funding and staffing resources and time, and to evaluate the quality of environmental impact avoidance in each Pilot Project. While process improvements and performance measures were the focus of the research, the Research Team considered overall activities as well, so that unexpected issues or results could be discussed.

The Research Project was designed to create a knowledge base that the transportation community could easily draw upon to improve practices around the country. In addition, the Research Project results may serve as a stimulus for further discussion and decision-making in the environmental streamlining field. Monitoring and analyzing the ten Pilot Projects in the AASHTO/FHWA/EPA pilot program accomplished these objectives.

## **Research Project Approach**

This section discusses the means and methods the Research Team used to obtain data, information, and input from the Pilot Project participants on each of the Pilot Projects. The following sections describe the Pilot Project records review; the first round of Pilot Project visits; development of performance measures and project baselines; the Research Project Web Site and Web-based quarterly reporting system; the second round of Pilot Project visits, and contact with the Pilot Project participants by way of electronic mail, individual telephone contacts, and correspondence. This process was used to develop the necessary supplemental information for the Pilot Project profiles in Appendix C (Also, see the Pilot Project narratives in Appendix B for detailed information on these projects).

### *Pilot Projects Records Review*

One of the first steps of the research was for the Research Team to familiarize itself as much as possible about past Pilot Project activities. While the application materials to the Pilot Program were the first source of information, the Pilot Project participants were also requested to provide the Research Team with written Pilot Project information and records. In addition, many Pilot Projects involve efforts to create new evaluation and documentation methods. The Research Team attempted to obtain and review the hard copy products of those efforts.

The list of information that was requested included the following:

- Project Maps or Plans
- Project History (*e.g.*, triggering events, project milestones completed, and dates)
- Current Project Schedule of Key Activities (particularly, project milestones expected over next 30 months (the original length of the Research Project))
- Description or Flow Chart of Typical State DOT Project Development Procedures and Agency Review Processes (*i.e.*, from transportation systems planning to letting of construction contract)
- Historical Baseline Information About State DOT Project Development Time Frames
- Project Web Site URL (if applicable)
- Products of Project Streamlining Effort (*e.g.*, new forms developed, new process flow charts, or existing summaries of Pilot Project results to date)
- Stakeholder Contact List
- NEPA Documentation for Project (if applicable)
- Description of Stakeholder/Public Participation Process Used for Project
- Environmental Permits and Approvals Needed (if applicable)
- Other Pilot Project Written Records Deemed Appropriate

Before the first meeting with the Pilot Project participants, the Research Team performed an initial review and analysis of the records that were obtained so that it had a solid foundation from which to discuss the Pilot Projects.



### *First Round of Pilot Project Visits*

After an initial review and analysis of Pilot Project information and records, the Research Team visited each of the states in which the Pilot Projects are located. These visits occurred between November 2001 and March 2002. The purpose of this site visit was to conduct personal interviews with the primary Pilot Project participants to generate the information needed for the initial project tasks and to nurture a working relationship and confidence between the Research Team and participants of the Pilot Projects.

At these meetings, the Research Team worked with the Pilot Project participants to better define the data to be gathered during the research, define appropriate performance measures, and establish project baselines. These meetings also allowed the Research Team to identify special concerns or needs that might affect the research work, including any confidentiality issues. The Research Team performed a second round of site visits to each of the Pilot Projects later in the research period.

### *Development of Performance Measures*

Development of performance measures for the Pilot Projects proved to be a challenging task. The Research Team provided draft performance measures to the Pilot Project sponsoring agencies before the initial site visit for each Pilot Project. After these initial visits, the Research Team revised the draft performance measures based on criteria described in the AASHTO Pilot Program Applications, the information obtained at the initial Pilot Project visits and the evaluative questions outlined in Task 7 of the Research Problem Statement. (These evaluative questions are discussed in Chapter 2, *Interpretation of Results*, in the section titled *Pilot Project Performance and Results*).

Additional inquiries that the Research Team believed would help monitoring produce the desired research results included:

- Pilot Project Participant Reporter views on what was a success, what was not, and the underlying causes of each.
- Pilot Project Participant ideas for improvement or other methods they would like to try based upon their Pilot Project experience (*i.e.*, How would you do it next time?).
- Perceived constraints on adaptation of practices to other settings or modes.
- Administrative and legislative changes that Pilot Project participants think would make the process work better.

To avoid overwhelming the Pilot Project participants with data collection requirements, the Research Team's goal was to select a maximum of three to five performance measures (inputs and outputs) per Pilot Project. Several Pilot Projects use similar performance measures to facilitate comparison of results.

After the Research Team completed preparing the draft performance measures, they were submitted electronically to the participants of each Pilot Project for review and acceptance. Upon acceptance of the performance measures by the Pilot Project participants, the Research Team then submitted them electronically to NCHRP Panel for review and acceptance. The final performance measures appear in Appendix D. The Research Team evaluated the performance of the process improvements, in part, against these selected measures.

The Research Team also coordinated with the Pilot Project State DOTs in an iterative process to identify a list of participant reporters (also called stakeholders) likely

to be both knowledgeable about the Pilot Project and to be responsive to reporting requests. Each Pilot Project had a participant reporters group to provide feedback on the performance of the Pilot Projects. Participant reporter tables that included the sponsoring state and one or more primary stakeholders were developed for each Pilot Project. For each participant reporter, these tables included agency, name, e-mail address, telephone number, and user ID and password for Research Project Web Site use). The Research Team sent e-mails to each of the participant reporters inviting them to participate in the Research Project along with instructions on how to use the Web-based reporting system.

#### *Development of Project Baselines and Review*

Along with the performance measures, the Research Team had to establish baselines from which progress will be measured. These baselines include both historical performance and the expectations of Pilot Project performance in each of the selected performance and results measures. As a part of the initial collaborative process for the research, the Research Team and the participants of each Pilot Project determined the best method for creating the baselines for measurement for each Pilot Project.

For some performance measures, there was not sufficient verifiable data available from Pilot Project participants to create a historical baseline. In such cases, the Research Team and the Pilot Project participants determined whether the baseline should be established through participant expectations based on their experience, or by using national averages determined by FHWA in its recent environmental streamlining efforts.

In some instances, such as expected Pilot Project results, the baseline began with the Pilot Project itself.

#### *Research Project Web Site and Web-based Quarterly Reporting System*

In 2002, the Research Team launched the Research Project Web Site, [www.TransStreamNet.org](http://www.TransStreamNet.org). The site was designed to accommodate research activities and to serve as a streamlining information resource for the public. The features of the Web Site include:

- A Home Page that welcomes users to the site and provides information about the research program. The page also displays a definition of transportation environmental streamlining by using a mouse roll-over.
- Pilot Projects Pages, linked from the Home Page. This area contains links to the password-protected reporting center for Pilot Projects, as well as links for the publicly available information on the Pilot Projects and their progress.
- Information and Resources pages that provide brief summaries of activities in the environmental streamlining field, as well as links to more information on specific state practices and other streamlining activities. A separate Links page contains connections to Pilot Project Web Sites, other streamlining initiatives and related topics, the agency Web Sites for the Pilot Project states, and other relevant transportation organizations.
- A Contacts Page to provide users with information on how to reach the Research Team and representatives of TRB and the Pilot Projects.

- A Site Map that graphically informs users of the location of specific types of information within the navigation structure of the Web Site.

The Research Team distributed information on the availability of the Web Site through the CTE's Web Site and its widely circulated *New and Notes* newsletter. A reference to the Web Site appeared in an article on streamlining in the *Engineering News-Record*, and there were links from the TRB E-Research Newsletter, dated September 5, 2002. Appendix E includes screen shots to present the appearance of the Research Project Web Site.

Development of the Web Site involved a number of tasks. Working with a graphic designer, the Research Team selected a graphic identity that reflects the multifaceted nature of transportation environmental streamlining. The Research Team chose a URL for the Web Site that it felt would be easy for users to remember. Most importantly, the Research Team worked to develop a Web Site architecture that could accommodate the need to provide a secure reporting system for Pilot Project participants.

The reporting system proved to be the most significant challenge because of the use of multiple reporters for each Pilot Project and the adoption of project-specific performance measures, rather than one standardized set. This represented a significant computer programming challenge. The resulting need to display for each participant reporter only specified measures from within their Pilot Project's individualized performance measures packet dictated the development of a complex database system. This database system is described in the next section of the report, *Research Project Database*.

The reporting system called for data submission in two parts. The first was a quarterly progress report, designed to provide a basic level of standardization in format and content among the various Pilot Projects to meet research requirements and to enhance the quality of the resulting analysis. Appendix F presents the content of the standardized questions. The Research Team also asked the sponsoring agencies and other participant reporters for each Pilot Project to file quarterly reports on the performance measures for the Pilot Projects. The Research Team reviewed the information submitted by the sponsors and participant reporters, and created a summary progress report for posting on the public section of the Pilot Projects Web Site. To encourage reporting, the Research Team provided e-mail reminders when the reports were due.

The survey format was a simple, engaging method for participants of each Pilot Project to submit the information needed about their Pilot Project. The survey form was easy-to-use and maximized the use of a point-and-click format (*e.g.*, dropdown menus and checkboxes), yet allowed ample opportunity for narrative comments to clarify or expand upon an answer. This latter characteristic was an important tool for tailoring reports to meet conditions unique to particular Pilot Projects. The system captured responses in ASCII delimited text form, so that the information could be downloaded into a project database for analysis and research reporting purposes. The reporting form was password-protected, so that only Pilot Project participants could submit a report. This kept the identities of survey respondents confidential and encouraged open communication.

The time needed for a Pilot Project participant to produce the information was short. The reporting system required only 15 to 30 minutes per quarter for a participant to

complete. Nevertheless, telephone reporting was also an option for participants having problems with electronic reporting. The quarterly mechanism also helped participants recognize and take advantage of the opportunity that periodic reporting created for reflection and planning.

### *Research Project Database*

The Research Team designed a Research Project database to house the collected data and information gathered from the Pilot Projects through quarterly progress reports and performance measure reports. This database facilitated analysis and reporting activities by ensuring logical and structured queries. The database also provided flexibility in reporting format and content through multiple methods of displaying and comparing the Pilot Project information.

The Research Project database proved helpful in analyzing Pilot Project performance measure reports and assessing final performance results for each project. The Research Team assigned a number value to each standardized performance measure response, which the database used to calculate average responses to each performance measure question. The database also kept track of whether responses were submitted by environmental or transportation-related participant reporters and calculated average responses among the two groups for comparison purposes.

### *Data*

The question of data reliability was addressed in several ways. Existing data sources were used to the greatest extent practical. Much of the research data was

collected through standardized questions in interview and survey formats. Respondent groups included a range of participants, providing a crosscheck on responses within a given Pilot Project. The Research Project database housed the collected data. The Research Team tested the data in the database periodically to verify that the analysis and reporting system were functioning as planned.

### *Revised Research Approach*

Several factors necessitated a revision of the original Research Approach in the spring of 2003. These included a reduction in the number of Pilot Projects active in the Research Project and difficulties in obtaining feedback from active Pilot Project participants.

Three of the original ten Pilot Projects were withdrawn from the Research Project or became inactive by the spring of 2003. The New Jersey Department of Transportation withdrew the Portway Program Pilot Project from the Research Project, as the character of the program had changed substantially from its initial scope. In addition, the Parallel Processing of Section 106 and Section 4(f) Requirements in New Jersey became inactive in late 2002. The Loop 12/IH 35E Corridor Major Investment Study and Environmental Assessment Project was effectively completed with the issuance of a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) by FHWA on December 11, 2002. Therefore, as of March 2003, there were seven active remaining Pilot Projects.

At that time, there was sustained feedback from Pilot Project participants on only three Pilot Projects. Furthermore, there were only three reports on Pilot Project performance measures that were submitted on the Research Project Web Site out of a



total of sixteen requested reports. As a result, the Research Team developed an alternative plan, with input from the Research Panel, as an attempt to improve feedback from the Pilot Project participants on the Pilot Projects and to improve the research results.

First, AASHTO, FHWA and EPA sent letters to their staff identified as reporters on the Pilot Projects stressing the importance of this monitoring effort and encouraging them to provide input. Second, the Research Team circulated the appropriate segments of the Project Narratives shown in Appendix B and the draft Research Findings presented in Chapter 4 of the Interim Report in .pdf format to State DOT sponsors and to stakeholders (except to those who declined to participate) and asked them to review and provide feedback.

Third, in mid-July 2003 and for each quarter thereafter, the Research Team circulated State DOT's online quarterly progress reports via e-mail to stakeholders (except to those who declined to participate) and asked the Pilot Project sponsors and stakeholders to comment on these reports. The Research Team did not believe it would be reasonable to ask the stakeholders both to comment on the online quarterly progress reports and to report on the performance measures. Performance measure reporting by stakeholders other than State DOT representatives, FHWA, and EPA was therefore dropped. State DOT representatives, FHWA, and EPA continued to be asked to submit reports on Pilot Project performance measures via the Research Project Web Site.

Fourth, shortly after the end of each quarter, where necessary, the Research Team sent e-mails to the State DOT, FHWA and EPA contacts to remind them to submit a Progress Report and to report on the Pilot Project's performance measures. Each quarter,

the Research Team conducted telephone interviews to gather information from the State DOT contacts only (not the other Pilot Project participant reporters) that had not submitted a quarterly Progress Report via the Web.

In October 2003, the Research Team reevaluated the response rates on State DOT, FHWA and EPA reporting and reevaluated stakeholder participation. That reevaluation showed that there had been very little increase in feedback as a result of sending e-mails to the State DOT, FHWA and EPA contacts to remind them to submit quarterly Progress Reports. The approximate response rate at that time was only 10 percent. The Research Team continued to make telephone conference calls to State DOT sponsors in order to determine the latest status, schedule, and issues of the Pilot Projects, to supplement the quarterly Progress Reports.

The Research Team, in consultation with the Research Panel decided to schedule a second round of travel to the Pilot Project states during the summer of 2004 for the purpose of meeting with various stakeholders to obtain more feedback on the Pilot Projects. Because several of the Pilot Projects were continuing their processes into 2004 and because additional time beyond the research period for the Research Project would be necessary to allow for the second round of Pilot Project site visits, the research period was extended by one year to January 2005. The research period was extended a second time to April 2005 to allow for completion of this Research Report.

#### *Second Round of Pilot Project Site Visits*

Because of a poor response rate among State DOT, FHWA and EPA participant reporters on Pilot Project progress reports and performance measures, a second round of

travel to the Pilot Project states was scheduled. This second round of Pilot Project visits occurred in July and August 2004. The meetings were designed to help meet the research requirements, to reflect a range of perspectives, and to enhance the quality of the research analysis. Because of the number of stakeholders, the Research Team could not meet with each of the stakeholders individually. For efficiency purposes, the meetings were held with the stakeholders in appropriate groups, typically according to agency affiliation (transportation-related or environmental).

Between July and August 2004, the Research Team met with stakeholders for the Florida ETDM Process, Environmental Streamlining for the Georgia Rail Passenger Program, Caltrans/FHWA/EPA Partnership, Riverside County Integrated Project, Integrating NEPA and Statewide Planning in Oregon, and the Caltrans/State and Federal Agency Position Funding Effort. In total, the Research Team ended up meeting with 36 of the 74 possible stakeholders (49 percent) for these projects. The Research Team was not able to meet with stakeholders for the EIS Screening Worksheets in Wisconsin Pilot Project. Because the Loop 12/IH 35E Corridor Major Investment Study and Environmental Assessment Project in Texas was effectively completed in December 2002 and the Parallel Processing of Section 106 and Section 4(f) Requirements in New Jersey was inactive, the Research Team did not meet with stakeholders for these Pilot Projects. The evaluative questions posed to stakeholders in interviews during the second round of Pilot Project site visits are presented in Appendix G.

The Research Team brought hard copies of the performance measure survey forms for the specific Pilot Project for the stakeholders to manually complete at the meeting. Stakeholders provided numeric ratings for each of the specific Pilot Project

performance measures for use in analysis. The Research Team followed up the field effort by sending a hard copy of the appropriate Performance Measure Form to the 38 stakeholders with whom the Team could not meet. The Research Team received another seven responses as a result of that effort. In total, the Research Team obtained feedback from 43 out of the 74 stakeholders (58 percent) as a result of these efforts, which is a considerable improvement over the 10 percent rate of response before the second round of Pilot Project site visits.

## **CHAPTER 2: Interpretation of Results**

The section of the report titled *Research Project Approach* explains the approach the Research Team used to evaluate the performance of the process improvements in the Pilot Projects. The evaluation period for this research project generally began in November 2002 after the performance measures for the Pilot Projects were finalized, the reporting system on the Pilot Project and performance measures were placed on the Research Project Web Site, and the Pilot Project sponsors agreed to and provided contact information for the Pilot Project participant reporters (also called stakeholders in this report). The delay in beginning the evaluation effort was caused by the Research Team encountering more difficulty than expected in preparing the performance measures and by some of the Pilot Projects being slow in either starting or progressing.

The Research Plan objective for the performance measures was to measure Pilot Project results (outcomes) as well as agency and process performance. Collectively, the development of performance measures illustrated two important lessons about the difficulty of attaining that objective:

- The measurement of actual time savings was limited and difficult because of the discomfort of the states with comparing their Pilot Projects to other projects (substantial differences in structure and subject) and because of the absence of good ways to capture reliable data about previous processes/projects and the Pilot Projects (both types of data being difficult to capture without a significant burden on the State Departments of Transportation (DOTs)). As a result, most of the performance measures for the research are qualitative and deal with the perceptions of the Pilot Project participants about past and present performance.

- Measuring the results of process change typically requires tracking performance over long periods of time. The life of the Pilot Projects that involve significant process reengineering, such as Integrating the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Statewide Planning in Oregon and the Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Process in Florida, exceeds the relatively short research period and limits the usefulness of outcome-oriented performance measures. For at least one Pilot Project (the Loop 12/IH 35E Corridor Major Investment Study and Environmental Assessment Project in Texas), the reverse issue arose. The project was nearly completed before the evaluation period began, leaving only a brief window for data-gathering. In some cases, the Research Project assessment of performance and results produced intermediate, rather than final, results.
- State-specific differences in the nature, purpose, and scope of the Pilot Projects mitigate against the use of generally-applicable performance measures. While some of the Pilot Projects are using the same measures, this is the exception rather than the rule. As a result, strict Pilot Project-to-Pilot Project comparisons of performance were problematic.

Pilot Project performance measures and Pilot Project baselines are included in Appendix D.

## **Pilot Project Performance and Results**

This section briefly describes the Pilot Projects, presents the results of Performance Measure Reports submitted by respondents for each Pilot Project, assesses the level to which each Pilot Project achieved stated expectations, and reports the results of Research Project evaluative questions posed to Pilot Project participants. The evaluative questions posed in participant interviews were taken from the NCHRP Research Problem Statement, Task 7, which outlined the questions to be addressed in tracking the progress and success of each Pilot Project. The responses to evaluative questions presented in this section supplement Performance Measure Reports by combining responses from the second round of Pilot Project site visits and provide a method of comparison between Pilot Projects on a standardized set of evaluative criteria.

### *Developing an Environmental Streamlining Process for Use in Florida (The Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Process)*

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) developed the ETDM process to address problematic characteristics with the Department's previous transportation planning and project development process. Under the previous FDOT process, environmental issues were given only minimal consideration in the transportation planning phase, resulting in substantial mitigation and unexpected project changes in the project development and environmental review phases. The most notable problems identified with the previous FDOT transportation planning and project development process included the reliance of the process on sequential, dependent actions; a long

process timeline with gaps; late agency involvement in the process; and a high risk of late project changes.

The ETDM process was designed to bring review agencies into the early stages of transportation planning, make adjustments in project design concepts to satisfy permitting requirements before the NEPA process, and identify avoidance and minimization strategies earlier. The ETDM process uses agency agreements, environmental technical advisory teams (ETATs), an interactive database system called the Environmental Screening Tool, and public involvement with local transportation and planning entities to meet process objectives. For more detailed information on the ETDM process, refer to the project narrative in Appendix B.

FDOT submitted the names of seventeen Pilot Project stakeholders to the Pilot Project study to serve as participant-reporters. From October 2001 to August 2004, there were 21 Performance Measure Reports for the ETDM Process submitted by thirteen Pilot Project participant-reporters, resulting in a response rate of 76 percent. The thirteen participant-reporters were from eight different Federal, State, and local transportation and environmental agencies. Several Pilot Project respondents filed more than one report, and not every respondent answered every question. A total of 14 reports were from transportation-related agencies (*i.e.*, Departments of Transportation (DOTs) or Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)) and 7 were from environmental agencies.

Originally, the ETDM process was to be evaluated on four Performance Measures: Project Time and Cost Savings (#1), Consultant Cost Savings (#2), Improved Environmental Protection and Improved Transportation System (#3), and Improved Transportation Decision-making (#4). FDOT wished to eliminate the originally proposed



Performance Measures #1 and #2. The original Performance Measure #1 would have compared the average duration and cost for Type 2 Categorical Exclusion projects in FDOT's Long Range Transportation Plan and in the Transportation Improvement Program before implementation of the ETDM process and to the duration and cost of these types of projects after implementation of ETDM. The original Performance Measure #2 was to measure the ETDM process effects on project consultant costs to FDOT Districts and Florida Metropolitan Planning Organizations.

The reason for FDOT's desire to eliminate original Performance Measures #1 and #2 is that full implementation of the ETDM Process did not begin until July 1, 2003. FDOT did not believe that data to address original Performance Measures #1 and #2 would be available until 24 months after (*i.e.*, in July 2005). With these two performance measures eliminated, there are still two performance measures, among other parameters, upon which to measure this Pilot Project during the research period.

Performance Measure #3 (renamed Performance Measure #1) measures labor and processing time requirements and Performance Measure #4 (now designated Performance Measure #2) measures environmental protection.

**Performance Measure #1: Improved Environmental Protection and Improved Transportation System.** This performance measure evaluates whether the ETDM process improves environmental and transportation system results through its integrated planning process by comparing the ETDM process to the previous FDOT transportation planning and project development process. The questions associated with the performance measure address the effectiveness of each process in avoiding redundant evaluations and decision-making processes, in producing efficient and effective

transportation systems, and in protecting the natural and human environments. Most respondents to the performance measure questions commented that the projects screened with the ETDM process had not yet been fully evaluated and that respondents' answers to the questions regarding that process were somewhat speculative and based on expected outcomes.

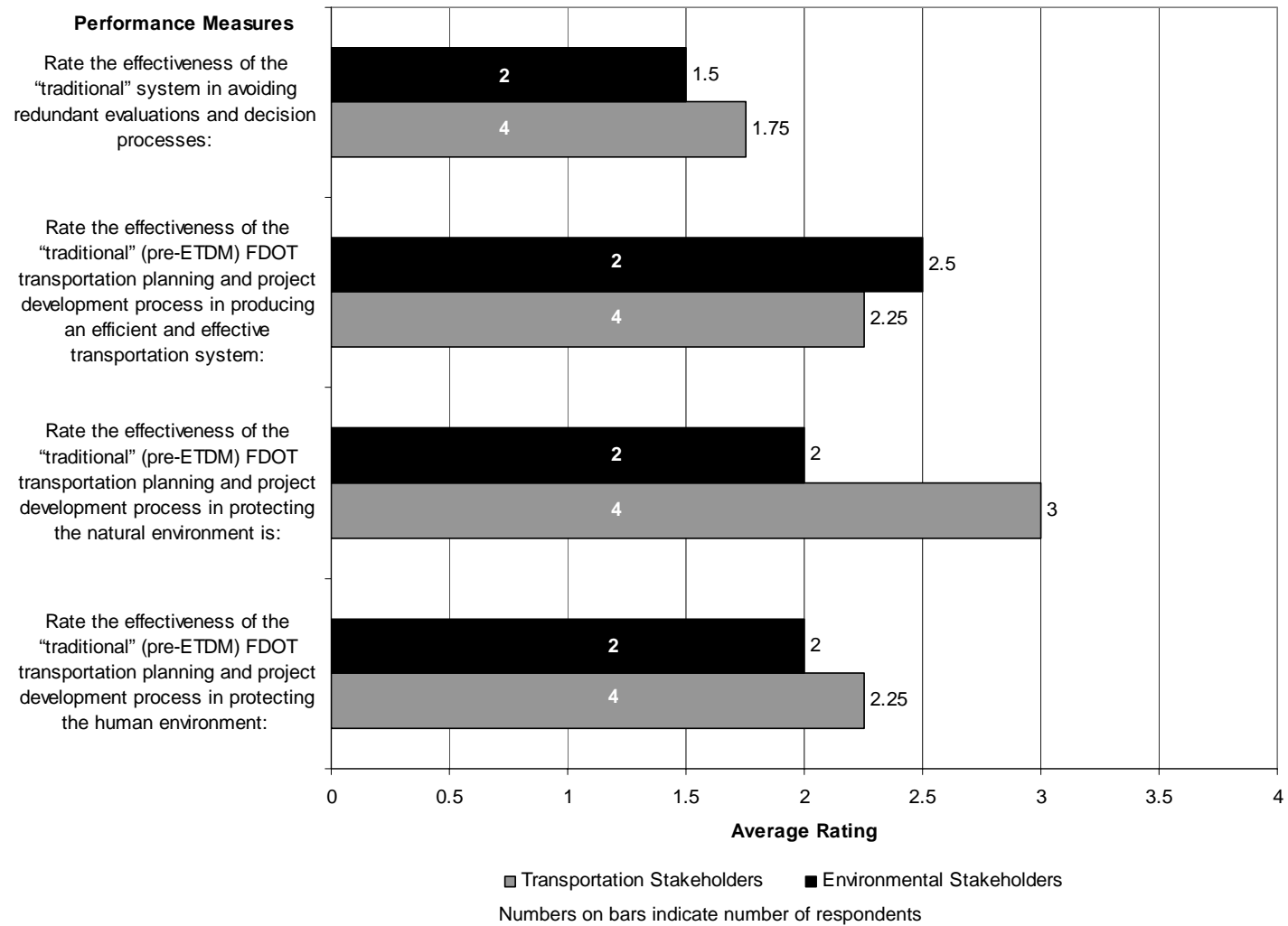
Overall, respondents from both the environmental and the transportation-related agencies found the previous FDOT transportation planning and project development process to be "somewhat effective" or "not effective" in protecting the environment and in improving transportation systems. In comparing environmental and transportation agency responses, the largest difference of opinion was in whether the previous process protected the natural environment. Transportation-related agencies viewed the previous process as being "effective" in this area, where environmental agencies rated the process as "somewhat effective." Responses to the performance baseline questions confirm that the previous transportation planning and project development process in Florida was flawed in that it created redundancies in the transportation planning and environmental permitting processes. For example, because environmental issues were given only minimal consideration in the project development and planning phases, transportation decisions had to be revisited and often modified during the environmental permitting and NEPA processes. Responses also confirmed that the previous FDOT process was only somewhat effective at producing efficient and effective transportation systems, and was not consistently effective in protecting the human and natural environments. Responses to the initial performance measure questions on the FDOT process prior to the ETDM process are presented in Table 1 and Figure 2.

**Table 1. Florida ETDM Performance Measure #1: Transportation Planning and Project Development Process before Implementation of ETDM**

| Performance Baseline Question   | Data Points | Average Rating |
|---|-------------|----------------|
| <b>Rate the effectiveness of the “traditional” system in avoiding redundant evaluations and decision processes:</b>   | <b>6</b>    | <b>1.66</b>    |
| <b>Rate the effectiveness of the “traditional” (pre-ETDM) FDOT transportation planning and project development process in producing an efficient and effective transportation system:</b> | <b>6</b>    | <b>2.33</b>    |
| <b>Rate the effectiveness of the “traditional” (pre-ETDM) FDOT transportation planning and project development process in protecting the natural environment is:</b>                      | <b>6</b>    | <b>2.66</b>    |
| <b>Rate the effectiveness of the “traditional” (pre-ETDM) FDOT transportation planning and project development process in protecting the human environment:</b>                           | <b>6</b>    | <b>2.16</b>    |

Key to data points: Usually very effective=4, Usually effective=3, Usually somewhat effective=2, Usually not effective=1, Not applied=0

**Figure 2. Florida ETDM Performance Measure #1: Environmental Agency versus Transportation-Related Agency Evaluations**



Key to data points: Usually very effective=4, Usually effective=3, Usually somewhat effective=2, Usually not effective=1, Not applied=0

Responses to the performance measure questions about the ETDM process show a clear improvement in all overall process effectiveness. Both the transportation-related and environmental agency respondents awarded the ETDM process higher ratings than FDOT's previous transportation planning and project development process in avoiding redundancies, in producing effective and efficient transportation systems, and in protecting the human and natural environment. Ratings in these categories ranged from "somewhat effective" to "effective." The most substantial gains were in the areas of avoiding redundant evaluations and decision processes and in protecting the human environment.

In comparing environmental agency and transportation-related agency responses on the ETDM process, environmental agencies gave the ETDM process slightly higher ratings on all performance measure questions than the transportation-related agencies.

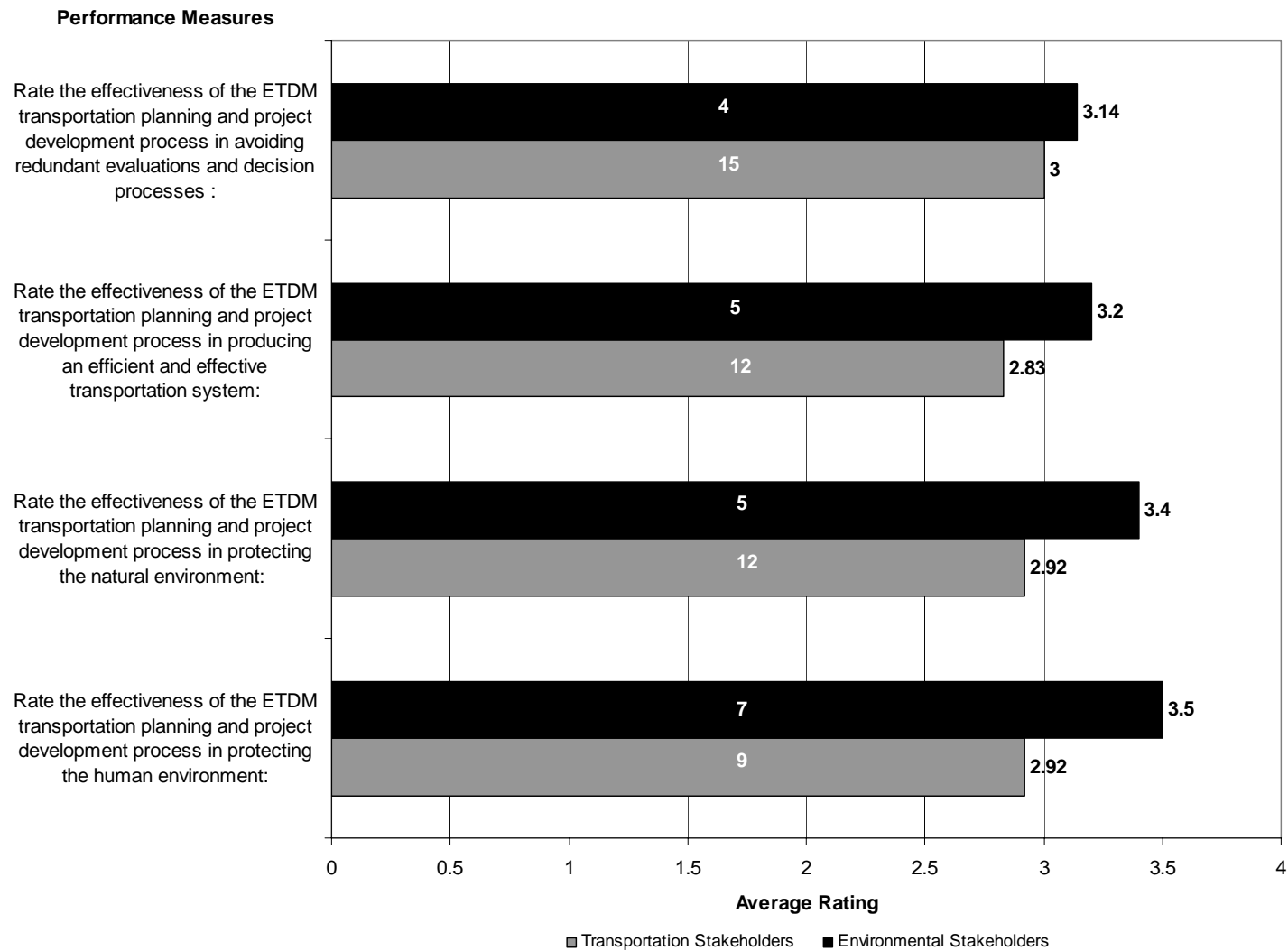
The widest differences in ratings between transportation and environmental agencies were on questions of protection of the human and natural environment, indicating greater satisfaction among regulatory agencies on the quality of project planning and the environmental review process. Environmental agencies gave the ETDM process a higher rating in environmental protection categories than the transportation-related agencies. Responses to the performance measure questions on the ETDM process are presented in Table 2 and Figure 3.

**Table 2. Florida ETDM Performance Measure #1: Evaluation of the ETDM Process**

| ETDM Process   | Data Points | Average Rating |
|--|-------------|----------------|
| <b>Rate the effectiveness of the ETDM transportation planning and project development process in avoiding redundant evaluations and decision processes :</b>     | <b>19</b>   | <b>3.05</b>    |
| <b>Rate the effectiveness of the ETDM transportation planning and project development process in producing an efficient and effective transportation system:</b> | <b>17</b>   | <b>2.94</b>    |
| <b>Rate the effectiveness of the ETDM transportation planning and project development process in protecting the natural environment:</b>                         | <b>17</b>   | <b>3.06</b>    |
| <b>Rate the effectiveness of the ETDM transportation planning and project development process in protecting the human environment:</b>                           | <b>16</b>   | <b>3.06</b>    |

Key to data points: Usually very effective=4, Usually effective=3, Usually somewhat effective=2, Usually not effective=1, Not applied=0

**Figure 3. Florida ETDM Performance Measure #1: Environmental versus Transportation-Related Agency Evaluations of ETDM Process**



Numbers on bars indicate number of respondents

Key to data points: Usually very effective=4, Usually effective=3, Usually somewhat effective=2, Usually not effective=1, Not applied=0

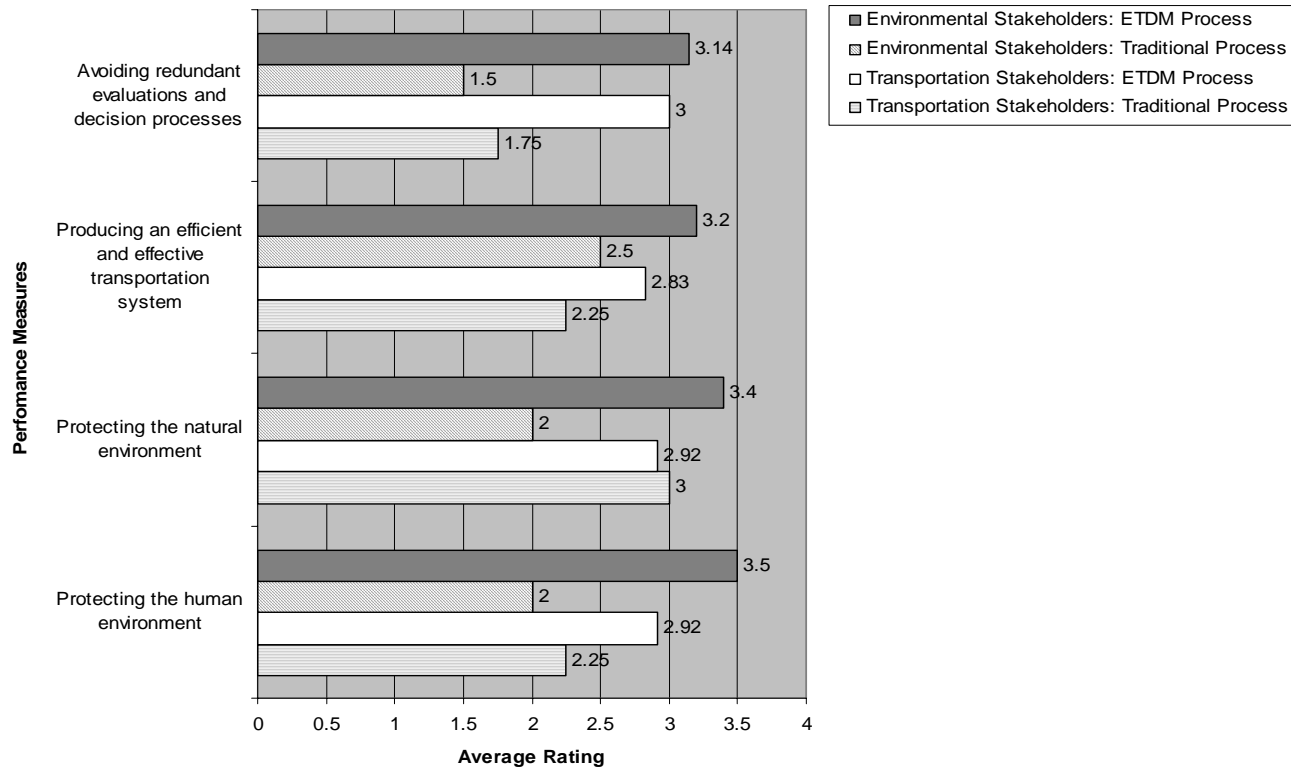
The degree to which the ETDM process improved environmental and transportation system results is demonstrated by comparing the transportation-related and environmental agency average ratings for the previous FDOT process versus the ETDM process. The results of the comparison are presented in Figure 4. In almost all cases, ratings from both groups substantially improved between the previous FDOT process and the ETDM process, moving from “not effective” to “effective” or from “somewhat effective” to “effective”. The areas of greatest improvement in overall ratings were in avoiding redundant evaluation and decision-making processes. For environmental agencies, the greatest areas of improvement were in the protection of the human and natural environment. For transportation-related agencies, the greatest areas of improvement were in reducing redundancies.

Pilot project participants interviewed for this study cited several other benefits of the ETDM process. These included the involvement of each review agency in the planning process, agency awareness of expected project impacts, accelerated mitigation performed earlier in the project timeline, and broadened awareness of environmental issues among participating MPOs.

Based on the reports of Pilot Project respondents, the Florida ETDM process was successful in improving environmental and transportation system results through its integrated planning process. Participants consistently awarded the ETDM process higher marks than the previous FDOT process in avoiding redundancies in decision-making processes, producing efficient and effective transportation systems, and protecting the human and natural environments.



**Figure 4. Florida ETDM Performance Measure #1: Comparison of Agency Ratings for the ETDM Process and the Previous FDOT Transportation Planning and Project Development Process**



Key to data points: Usually very effective=4, Usually effective=3, Usually somewhat effective=2, Usually not effective=1, Not applied=0

**Performance Measure #2: Improved Transportation Decision-making.** This performance measure evaluates whether the ETDM process improves the environmental review process by increasing its productivity and/or its environmental results. The questions associated with this performance measure address issues of staff and consultant labor time, processing time requirements, and whether the ETDM process justified the various time requirements. The text of the performance measure questions are presented in Table 3. As with Performance Measure #1, most respondents to this measure noted that there were insufficient data at the time of their response to definitively answer the performance measure questions.

Generally, respondents found that the overall staff and consultant labor time requirements of the ETDM process were “about the same” as for the previous FDOT transportation planning and project development process. Many respondents noted that the implementation stages of the ETDM process required an increase in staff time because of the learning curve, and that less time would be spent on the process in the future. Improvements were cited in overall processing time, which was found to be between “significantly less” and “about the same” as for the previous FDOT process. Some interviewed stakeholders reported that the ETDM process was longer and required increased staffing resources to complete.

Notably, respondents reported that they “somewhat agreed” or “strongly agreed” that the benefits of the ETDM process justified the labor and processing time involved. Participants interviewed for this study also cited improvements in transportation decision-making, such as a better understanding of proposed projects, and more informed project decisions at the MPO level.

**Table 3. Florida ETDM Performance Measure #2: Improved Transportation Decision-making**

| Performance Measure   | Data Points | Average Rating |
|---|-------------|----------------|
| <b>The benefits of the ETDM process justify its labor and processing time requirements:</b><br><i>Key to data points: Strongly agree=4, Somewhat agree=3, Somewhat disagree=2, Strongly disagree=1, No opinion=0</i>  | <b>15</b>   | <b>3.6</b>     |
| <b>The overall processing time requirements of the ETDM process, as compared to the traditional FDOT planning and project development process, are:</b><br><i>Key to data points: Significantly greater=3, About the same=2, Significantly less=1, No opinion=0</i>                   | <b>14</b>   | <b>1.64</b>    |
| <b>The overall staff and consultant labor (time) requirements of the ETDM process, as compared to the traditional FDOT planning and project development process, are :</b><br><i>Key to data point: Significantly greater=3, About the same=2, Significantly less=1, No opinion=0</i> | <b>16</b>   | <b>2.31</b>    |

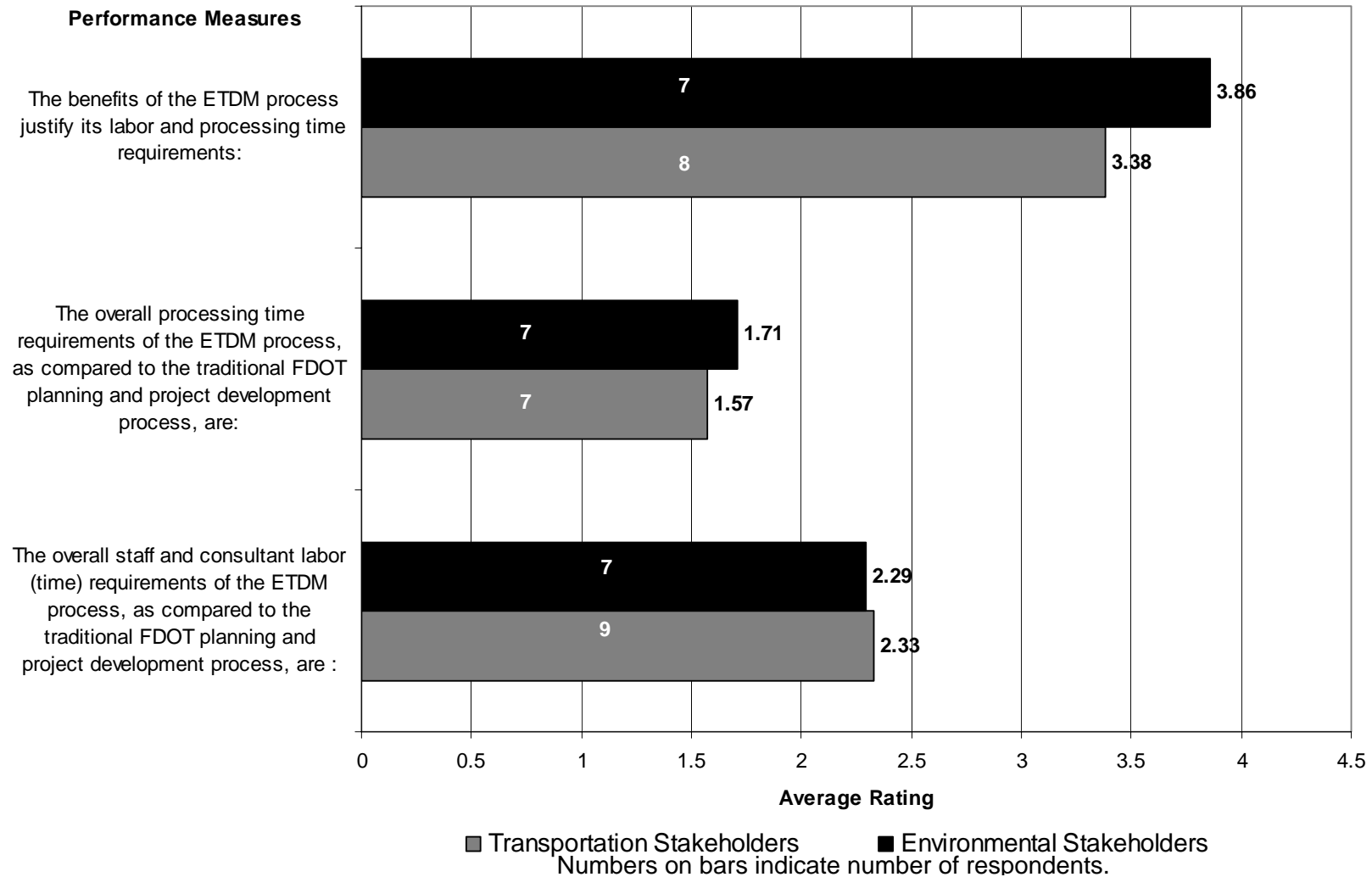
The only distinct difference in environmental agency and in transportation-related agency responses to Performance Measure #2 was on the question of whether the benefits of the ETDM process justified the labor and processing time requirements.

Environmental agencies responded more favorably to this question than transportation-related agencies. A comparison of environmental and transportation-related agency responses to Performance Measure 2 are presented in Figure 5.

Based on the reports of Pilot Project respondents, the Florida ETDM process has not yet been shown to substantially improve the environmental process by increasing productivity, though some improvement in overall project processing time was cited. It is important to note, however, that the results of the productivity performance measure may change over time as the ETDM process becomes standard practice in Florida. Pilot Project respondents' reports do show that the ETDM process enhanced the environmental process by yielding better environmental results.

**Achievement of Expectations.** Federal, State, and local transportation and environmental agency representatives reported performance expectations for the Florida ETDM process in Pilot Project Study application materials, publicity materials, and participant interviews. This section compares reported expectations to the performance measure results and information gathered in participant interviews. Based on the level of information obtained on the Florida ETDM process, the Pilot Project has met most of the stated expectations.

**Figure 5. Florida ETDM Performance Measure #2: Environmental Agency versus Transportation-Related Agency Responses on the ETDM and Improved Transportation Decision-making**



Key to results on Benefits of ETDM Process: Strongly Agree=4, Somewhat Agree=3, Somewhat Disagree=2, Strongly Disagree=1, No Opinion=0.

Key to results on Overall Processing Time Requirements: Significantly Greater=3, About the Same=2, Significantly Less=1, No Opinion=0.

Key to results on Overall Staff and Consultant Labor Requirements: Significantly Greater=3, About the Same=2, Significantly Less=1, No Opinion=0.

FDOT predicted that the ETDM process would decrease project level processing time and in the overall NEPA processing time frame because FDOT could build on planning efforts and incorporate planning choices into the NEPA decisions without rehashing unimportant issues or previously dismissed alternatives. The success of the ETDM process in reducing the time frame for planning and project development has not yet been quantified. A task team of representatives from six agencies, including the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), FDOT Districts, MPOs and the FHWA are in the process of developing performance measures to assess time and cost savings. The overall expectation continues to be that the process will take less time in the future. Data to evaluate time and cost savings is not expected to be available before July 2005.

It was expected that staff and consultant labor time for ETDM projects would increase initially but, once familiarity with the ETDM was reached, staff time would be about the same as in the previous transportation planning and project development process. FDOT predicts that it will see positive results on time and cost savings within the next one to two years for Categorical Exclusions (CEs), and within five years for EISs. Respondents to performance measure questions and participant interviews had mixed views on the level of staff time required to carry out the ETDM process. Interview participants reported the expected equal or increased levels of staffing time required to review projects with the ETDM process, while reporters on performance measure questions indicated that the initial consultant and staff labor time invested in implementing the ETDM process was similar to that for the previous FDOT process.

FDOT expected improved environmental results using the ETDM process. Performing systems-level regional and state-wide analyses with the Florida Geographic Data Library (FGDL) Environmental Screening Tool was expected to enable FDOT to take early avoidance actions, prepare systems level regional and state-wide mitigation plans, and obtain better environmental results. The ETDM process was also expected to increase avoidance of environmental impacts through early indirect and cumulative impact assessment and better distribution of information. Responses from environmental agencies to performance measure questions for the ETDM process show clear improvement in the area of environmental protection over the previous FDOT transportation planning and project development process. Similarly, responses from participant interviews indicate success in achieving early impact assessment and accelerated mitigation. According to participant interviews, using the FGDL Environmental Screening Tool also proved helpful in assessing potential cumulative impacts because reviewers could see all active transportation projects in a region.

ETDM process respondents anticipated that participating agencies would have a better understanding of their own agency's processes, the processes of other agencies, and the environmental review process as a whole. This was expected to result in higher quality land use decisions. Based on responses from participant interviews, this expectation has been met, and perhaps exceeded. ETDM process participants regularly cited increased collaboration and education as some of the most successful outcomes of the Pilot Project. They credited the ETDM process with helping participants better understand the overall transportation and environmental planning process and proposed projects. At the local level, MPOs were able to make more informed decisions about

project implementation. Participation in the ETDM process was also reported to result in better communication between the agencies because of the increased understanding of the environmental process.

Certain stated expectations for the ETDM process are not likely to occur until after the ETDM process has been fully reviewed and evaluated for effectiveness. These include FDOT's expectation, with the ETDM process, to continue preparing some Type 2 (mitigated) categorical exclusion (CE) projects under NEPA. FDOT also hoped to be able to execute programmatic agreements for certain NEPA procedures and some other laws. This would allow moving projects directly to design in cases where there are no apparent issues found in early reviews.

**Responses to Evaluative Questions.** Responses to evaluative questions for the Florida ETDM Pilot Project were generated based on participant reporter interviews conducted through site visits and via telephone, Performance Measure Reports, and Pilot Project Progress Reports. For the Florida ETDM Pilot Project, eight participant reporters, representing 47 percent of the reporters identified by Caltrans for the Pilot Project, were interviewed in person. The responses to evaluative questions are presented in Table 4.



**Table 4. Florida ETDM: Responses to Evaluative Questions**

| <b>Evaluative Question</b>   | <b>Responses</b>  |
|--|---|
| How successful was the Pilot Project in reducing the time frame of the planning and project development process? | The success of the ETDM process in reducing the time frame for planning and project development has not yet been quantified. A task team of agency representatives is in the process of developing performance measures to assess time and cost savings. FDOT predicts that it will see positive results on time and cost savings within the next one to two years for CEs and within five years for EISs. FDOT also expects that the typical 10-15 years planning period for transportation projects should be reduced through the ETDM process. Additional time saving benefits include the possibility of using the Project Summary Reports as environmental information for FHWA CEs.   |
| How much time was saved or lost in terms of initial expectations?  | See above.  |
| What problems or delays were encountered in achieving the objectives of the Pilot Project?                       | <p>FDOT's original goal was to have all agency agreements developed and approved by June 30, 2003. Twelve agency agreements were signed in the first year of the project, but agreements with the National Park Service, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and the Florida Water Management Districts are outstanding as of July 2004.</p> <p>Some system management and data quality issues occurred with the FGDL Environmental Screening Tool. Problems included projects being removed before the comment period had ended, no universal reminder system for project commenting deadlines, no mechanism for requesting an extension of the comment period, inadequate project descriptions, and inconsistent GIS data quality and coverage.</p> |
| What factors were responsible for these delays?  | <p>The delay in signing some agency agreements was caused by the need to update and inform senior administrative staff on the ETDM process, concerns about agency staffing, unwillingness to sign the agreement without funding in place, and concerns about the effect of the conflict resolution process on the permitting processes.</p> <p>Difficulties with the FGDL Environmental Screening Tool were largely related to the variability in the quality and coverage of GIS data among resource areas and regions in Florida.</p>   |

| Evaluative Question   | Responses  |
|---|--|
| How were problems resolved when they occurred?  | The ETDM process is designed to evolve, and is changing based upon ETAT feedback.  |
| Did the Pilot Project require increased or decreased levels of resources on the part of sponsors or other stakeholders? | Responses to this question were mixed. Some participants reported in interviews that the ETDM process required equal or greater levels of staffing resources than the previous FDOT process, while performance measure respondents reported that the ETDM process took significantly less or about the same staffing resources as the previous FDOT process. Some initial increase in staffing effort was anticipated in the implementation of the ETDM process, but this is expected to decrease as the process becomes more familiar.  |
| How successful was the Pilot Project in the view of major stakeholders?   | The success of the ETDM process regarding time and cost savings has not yet been quantified. However, based on participant feedback, the process has been successful in improving environmental results and increasing collaboration between transportation and environmental agencies. Participants noted, however, that the process has yet to be tested with a large-scale, complex, or controversial project.  |
| To what extent were environmental resources protected?  | <p>The majority of participant respondents reported an improvement in the level of environmental protection through use of the ETDM process. Improvements included better awareness of project impacts and earlier avoidance and minimization of impacts.</p> <p>Some participants wanted more feedback from FDOT on agency comments in the planning and project development phase. There is no direct response mechanism built into the screening process for FDOT to respond to comments. Some participants cited no consistent correlation between the recommendations made during the planning phase and the permitting process.</p> |
| Was this approach better or worse than previous approaches in protecting the environment?                               | Participants consistently rated the ETDM process as being more efficient and more successful in protecting environmental resources than the previous FDOT transportation planning and project development process.   |
| Did the Pilot Project result in any environmental enhancements?   | Specific environmental enhancements resulting from projects developed with the ETDM process were not reported by process participants.   |

| Evaluative Question   | Responses  |
|---|--|
| What approaches taken or problems encountered in the Pilot Project relate to the unique conditions or requirements in the particular state? | Florida has more State regulations than Federal regulations and there are inconsistencies between the two. Florida is second to Hawaii in endangered and threatened species. Activities of 24 different agencies have to be coordinated.   |
| Did the Pilot Project result in process or quality improvements other than time and cost savings?   | <p>The FGDL Environmental Screening Tool allows all reviewers to view the same project data and each other's comments, and keeps all project comments in one location for the duration of the project. The single repository for project information helps ensure that issues are not overlooked. The FGDL Environmental Screening Tool was also helpful in allowing agencies to view all projects in the planning phase at once, get a better sense of potential cumulative and indirect impacts, and develop avoidance and minimization strategies earlier in the project planning and environmental review processes. The use of the screening tool has led to updates to several important State GIS layers.</p> <p>Participation in the ETDM process resulted in various agencies learning more about the overall transportation and environmental planning process, which has lead to better communication between the agencies.</p> |
| To what extent were transportation decisions improved by the new approaches taken in the Pilot Project?                                     | The success of the ETDM process regarding time and cost savings has not yet been quantified, but respondents indicate that the ETDM process has helped participants better understand the proposed projects and helped MPOs make more informed decisions about project implementation. Earlier involvement between agencies in the project development process also helped avoid surprise delays. Respondents also strongly indicate an improvement in overall process efficiency and successful avoidance of significant environmental impacts.   |

| Evaluative Question  | Responses  |
|--|--|
| <p>What lessons or conclusions can be gained from the results of the Pilot Project that are applicable at the local, state, regional, and national levels?</p> | <p>Successful major planning efforts require a high-level project champion and much preparation. Much time is needed to educate non-transportation (and transportation) participants on the transportation planning and project development process, as well as on participating agency programs and processes. Moving environmental considerations into the planning process helps overall project flow but may increase time requirements. Implementation of a process similar to ETDM is data intensive and requires significant up-front time for quality control, data collection, and maintenance. ETDM Process also demonstrated the benefits of the use of GIS capabilities in performing indirect and cumulative impact assessment in planning.</p> |

## *Riverside County Integrated Project*

Riverside County began the *Riverside County Integrated Project* (RCIP) planning effort in May 1999 to address serious transportation congestion, habitat conservation, open space, land use, and watershed issues in the large, rapidly growing County region. The RCIP integrated and coordinated the preparation of a new Riverside County General Plan, the development of a Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP), the identification of four new transportation corridors through the Community and Environmental Transportation Acceptability Process (CETAP), and the development of a watershed plan for the San Jacinto and Santa Margarita watersheds (referred to as the Special Area Management Plan (SAMP)). Integration of these components was designed to balance competing transportation, conservation, and development interests; avoid fragmented and adversarial planning efforts; and preserve transportation corridors for future development. For more detailed information on the RCIP, please refer to the Project Narrative in Appendix B.

The RCIP was evaluated on four performance measures: Improved Transportation Decision-Making: Quality and Efficiency Expectations (#1), Improved Transportation Decision-Making: Early Identification and Closure (#2), Improved Environmental Protection (#3), and Improved Transportation Decision-Making: Time and Cost Savings (#4). These performance measures are discussed in more detail later in this section of the chapter.

Given its scope, the RCIP process carried numerous challenges related to schedule and sequencing. The RCIP process was originally scoped to take 36 months

starting in 1999, but is now projected to end in 2007. Key parts of the process, such as the General Plan, MSHCP, and the NEPA process for one of the CETAP corridors have been completed, but the major part of the CETAP process and the SAMP have not been completed. Because the RCIP has not been completed as scheduled, there is insufficient data to fully address some performance measures.

RCIP sponsors submitted the names of twelve Pilot Project stakeholders to the Pilot Project study to serve as participant-reporters. Between September 2002 and December 2004, there were nine Performance Measure Reports for the RCIP process submitted on the Research Project Web Site by six Pilot Project participant-reporters, resulting in a response rate of 50 percent. The six participant-reporters were from Federal, State, and local transportation agencies. There were no responses on the Performance Measures from environmental agency participants; however, environmental stakeholders provided similar input on the evaluative questions through the participant interview process. Responses to performance measures are summarized and evaluated below.

**Performance Measure #1: Improved Transportation Decision-Making:**  
**Quality and Efficiency Expectations.** This performance measure compares the initial perceptions of the potential of the RCIP to achieve improvements in the transportation planning process to participants' perceptions during application of the RCIP process. The first set of evaluative questions measured participants' expectations for the RCIP process before it began. The questions assessed whether participants believed the process would improve the quality and efficiency of transportation decision-making, and to what degree the participants believed the process would be improved. The second set of evaluative

questions asked respondents each quarter to assess actual performance of the RCIP process for the same factors. The text for both sets of questions and the participant responses are presented in Table 5. Responses are from transportation participant reporters only. Environmental stakeholders did not substantively comment on these issues in participant interviews.

Initial expectations for the success of the RCIP process among the transportation agency respondents were typically high. The majority of respondents “strongly agreed” that the RCIP process would improve the quality and efficiency of transportation decision-making. One respondent “strongly disagreed.” The expected degree of improvement was also typically “high,” though some reports of “moderate” and “low” were also registered.

In evaluating the actual performance of the RCIP process, reporters’ assessments were similar to their expectations. Most respondents “strongly agreed” or “somewhat agreed” that the RCIP process was improving decision-making and felt that, on average, the degree of improvement was “moderate.” Comments submitted with participant responses for the early quarter evaluations pertained primarily to the integration process, noting that there were initial problems with making timely decisions and reaching agreement on important issues. Later comments indicated that these issues were resolved with greater involvement from supervisory level staff.

The responses to Performance Measure #1 indicate that the majority of transportation stakeholders had high expectations that the RCIP would improve the quality and efficiency of transportation decision-making, but had mixed expectations about the degree of improvement.

**Table 5. RCIP Performance Measure #1: Improved Transportation Decision-making: Quality and Efficiency Expectations.**

| Performance Measure   | Data Points* | Average Rating |
|---|--------------|----------------|
| <i>Potential Performance</i>  |              |                |
| <b>The RCIP process will improve the quality and efficiency of decision-making on transportation projects:</b><br><i>Key to data points: Strongly agree=4, Somewhat agree=3, Somewhat disagree=2, Strongly disagree=1, No opinion=0</i> | <b>5</b>     | <b>3.4</b>     |
| <b>The expected degree of improvement in the quality and efficiency of decision-making as a result of the RCIP process is:</b><br><i>Key to data points: High=3, Moderate=2, Low=1, No change=0</i>                                     | <b>5</b>     | <b>2.4</b>     |
| <i>Actual Performance</i>   |              |                |
| <b>The RCIP process is improving the quality and efficiency of decision-making on transportation projects:</b><br><i>Key to data points: Strongly agree=4, Somewhat agree=3, Somewhat disagree=2, Strongly disagree=1, No opinion=0</i> | <b>9</b>     | <b>3.1</b>     |
| <b>The degree of improvement in the quality and efficiency of decision-making as a result of the RCIP process is:</b><br><i>Key to data points: High=3, Moderate=2, Low=1, No change=0</i>  | <b>9</b>     | <b>2.1</b>     |

\*All respondents are from transportation or transportation-related agencies.



In evaluating the portion of the RCIP process completed to date, transportation stakeholders reported ratings only slightly below initial expectations.

**Performance Measure #2: Improved Transportation Decision-making: Early Identification and Closure.** This performance measure evaluates the RCIP goal of reducing the time and costs of the transportation planning and project development process by achieving early identification and resolution on environmental issues affecting transportation corridor development. The performance measure questions assess the degree of participation of high-level decision-making staff in RCIP proceedings, the timeliness and effectiveness of decision-making, and the degree of adherence to decisions made in RCIP proceedings. Respondents were asked to answer the performance measure questions quarterly over the course of the RCIP process. The full text of the performance measure questions and participant responses are presented in Table 6.

Only one-third of all respondents reported on Performance Measure #2. As stated previously, all respondents to the performance measure questions were from transportation agencies, or transportation-related organizations such as the Western Riverside Council of Governments. The respondents “somewhat disagreed” that participating organizations were sending appropriate representatives with sufficient authority to make decisions for their organization to RCIP proceedings. Respondents also “somewhat disagreed” that the decision-making process was proceeding in a timely and effective manner. Two of the three respondents to this Performance Measure commented early in the RCIP process, and their responses reflect the initial stages of RCIP implementation.

**Table 6. RCIP Performance Measure #2: Improved Transportation  
Decision-making: Early Identification and Closure.**

| Performance Measure   | Data Points* | Average Rating |
|---|--------------|----------------|
| <b>The organizations participating in the RCIP proceedings send representatives to meetings and hearings who have the authority necessary to make decisions for their organization on the issues presented.</b> | <b>3</b>     | <b>2.66</b>    |
| <b>RCIP participants make decisions in a timely and effective manner.</b>   | <b>3</b>     | <b>2.33</b>    |
| <b>Once a decision is made in RCIP proceedings, the participants treat it as binding except in cases involving significant new information or substantially changed circumstances</b>                           | <b>3</b>     | <b>3</b>       |

Key to data points: Strongly agree=4, Somewhat agree=3, Somewhat disagree=2, Strongly disagree=1, No opinion=0

\* All respondents are from transportation or transportation-related agencies.

Comments submitted with responses to Performance Measure #2 were similar to those for Performance Measure #1, indicating that more involvement from supervisory-level staff was necessary for the RCIP to proceed in a timely, effective manner. One commenter noted that after the CETAP was recognized under Executive Order 13274, *Environmental Stewardship and Transportation Infrastructure Project Review*, in November 2002, Federal resource agencies paid greater attention to the RCIP. In stakeholder interviews, transportation stakeholders reported prolonged frustration over levels of responsiveness and guidance from environmental participants.

Although environmental agency stakeholders did not respond directly to the performance measure questions, they addressed issues related to Performance Measure #2 in participant interviews. In general, environmental agency participants expressed dissatisfaction with the decision-making and coordination processes involved with developing the RCIP. Some environmental agency participants felt that hurried and inadequate environmental analysis in the RCIP process contributed to difficulty in making timely, responsible, and informed decisions in the NEPA and other environmental permitting processes. The USACE and other environmental agency staff also indicated that the overall approach to problem solving was never explicitly articulated, and did not follow the consensus-based process envisioned by the RCIP. The process continued without resolution when problems and questions arose. Controversy over the CETAP Tier I EISs required intervention by a mediator from the Interagency Transportation Infrastructure Streamlining Task Force because no established conflict resolution procedure was built into the RCIP process. In addition, environmental stakeholders consistently noted that an unrealistic and overly ambitious

process schedule had the potential to result in poor, uninformed decisions. Many of these issues have been resolved, or are being addressed in the continuing NEPA process for the remaining CETAP corridors.

Reporters to the performance measure questions did “somewhat agree” that participants respected decisions made in RCIP proceedings as binding. Similarly, there were no reports from interviewed environmental stakeholder of participants rescinding earlier decisions.

Based on responses to Performance Measure #2, the initial stages of the RCIP process were not successful in identifying and resolving key transportation and environmental issues because there was insufficient participation from appropriate agency staff, an overly ambitious schedule that affected decision-making, and a lack of coordination and collaboration between stakeholders. The process issues cited in Performance Measure #2 are being addressed in the preparation of remaining portions of the RCIP.

**Performance Measure #3: Improved Environmental Protection.** This performance measure compares perceptions of the effectiveness of the traditional California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) transportation planning and project development process and the RCIP process in improving environmental results. Performance measure questions evaluate the success of the “traditional” process and the RCIP process in protecting the human and natural environment. Respondents were asked to evaluate the success of the RCIP process quarterly. The text of the performance measure questions and reporter responses are presented in Table 7.

**Table 7. RCIP Performance Measure #3: Improved Environmental Protection**

| Performance Measure   | Data Points* | Average Rating |
|---|--------------|----------------|
| <i>Performance Baseline</i>   |              |                |
| <b>Rate the effectiveness of the “traditional” (pre-RCIP) Caltrans transportation planning and project development process in protecting the human environment.</b> | <b>5</b>     | <b>2</b>       |
| <b>Rate the effectiveness of the “traditional” (pre-RCIP) transportation planning and project development process in protecting the natural environment.</b>        | <b>5</b>     | <b>2.2</b>     |
| <i>RCIP Performance</i>   |              |                |
| <b>Rate the effectiveness of the transportation planning and project development process used for the RCIP in protecting the human environment.</b>                 | <b>9</b>     | <b>2.5</b>     |
| <b>Rate the effectiveness of the transportation planning and project development process used for the RCIP in protecting the human environment.</b>                 | <b>9</b>     | <b>2.4</b>     |

Key to data points: Usually very effective=4, Usually effective=3, Usually somewhat effective=2, Usually not effective=1, Not applied=0

All respondents are from transportation or transportation-related agencies.

In evaluating the “traditional” Caltrans planning and project development process, respondents rated the process as being “somewhat effective” in protecting the human and natural environments. The RCIP process received slightly higher ratings, with evaluations between “somewhat effective” and “effective.”

These responses were from transportation agency and transportation-related organization participants only, and do not reflect the views of environmental agency stakeholders.

In stakeholder interviews, environmental agency participants expressed support for the individual components of the RCIP and the premise of integrating these components, but reported that the process for coordinating the environmental and transportation goals of the RCIP was problematic. Problems cited included hurried fieldwork, research, analysis, and report preparation; poor integration of environmental planning data from components such as the SAMP and MSHCP into the CETAP Tier I Draft EISs; and flawed environmental analysis in NEPA documentation. Some environmental agency staff also felt that the process moved forward regardless of agency comment. These issues are being addressed in the preparation of the remaining portions of the RCIP.

Based on these responses to Performance Measure #3 and related feedback, transportation agencies viewed the RCIP process as being only slightly more effective in protecting the human and natural environment than the traditional Caltrans process. Environmental agency stakeholders supported the premise of RCIP, but were concerned about inadequate integration and coordination between components of the RCIP resulting in poor environmental quality. The integration issues cited by environmental stakeholders are being addressed in the preparation of remaining portions of the RCIP.

**Performance Measure #4: Improved Transportation Decision-making: Time and Cost Savings.** This performance measure evaluates whether the RCIP process improves the environmental review process by increasing its productivity and/or its environmental results. Performance measure questions compare the traditional Caltrans transportation planning and project development process with the RCIP process in terms of staff and consultant labor time and overall processing time and address whether the RCIP process justifies its labor and processing time requirements. Because the RCIP process is not complete, there is insufficient data to determine the exact time and cost savings for permitting and implementing the CETAP corridors. The reported responses assess perceptions of time and cost savings rather than quantified results. The text of the performance measure questions and reporter responses are presented in Table 8.

Transportation agency respondents had differing views on the overall processing time requirements of the RCIP process. Approximately half of the respondents felt that the overall staff and consultant labor time required to conduct the RCIP process was “significantly less” than the traditional Caltrans process, and the other half of respondents felt the time requirements were “about the same” as the traditional Caltrans process. Most respondents felt that the overall processing time requirements for the RCIP process were “significantly less” than the previous process. Some stakeholders observed that it was too soon to tell whether the RCIP saved time over the pre-RCIP process in implementing transportation corridors, though most expected that the RCIP would streamline the process to some degree. Other respondents commented that although they believed that the RCIP process took less time, it could have been conducted more efficiently.

**Table 8. RCIP Performance Measure #4: Improved Transportation Decision-making: Time and Cost Savings**

| Performance Measure   | Data Points* | Average Rating |
|---|--------------|----------------|
| <b>The overall staff and consultant labor (time) requirements of the RCIP process, as compared to the traditional Caltrans planning and project development process, are:</b><br><i>Key to data points: Significantly greater=3, About the same=2, Significantly less=1, No opinion=0</i> | <b>8</b>     | <b>1.75</b>    |
| <b>The overall processing time requirements of the RCIP process, as compared to the traditional Caltrans planning and project development process, are:</b><br><i>Key to data points: Significantly greater=3, About the same=2, Significantly less=1, No opinion=0</i>                   | <b>8</b>     | <b>1.63</b>    |
| <b>The benefits of the RCIP process justify its labor and processing time requirements.</b><br><i>Key to data points: Strongly agree=4, Somewhat agree=3, Somewhat disagree=2, Strongly disagree=1, No opinion=0</i>  | <b>9</b>     | <b>3.57</b>    |

\* All respondents are from transportation or transportation-related agencies.



Environmental agency stakeholders did not substantively comment on this issue in participant interviews.

When posed with the question of whether the benefits of the RCIP process justified its labor and processing time requirements, respondents reported that they “somewhat agreed” or “strongly agreed” that it did, indicating a degree of satisfaction in the results of the process among transportation stakeholders.

Based on reporter responses, the RCIP project was perceived to somewhat improve the environmental review process by reducing staff and consultant labor time and overall processing time by at least a modest degree. More substantive information regarding this performance measure will be available after the completion of the RCIP in 2007. The RCIP continues to have strong support among transportation stakeholders, who reported that the process provided benefits that outweighed time and cost considerations.

**Achievement of Expectations.** Federal, State, and local transportation and environmental agency representatives reported performance expectations for the RCIP process in Pilot Project Study application materials, publicity materials, and participant interviews. This section compares reported expectations to the performance measure results and information gathered in participant interviews.

Caltrans hoped that the RCIP would shift the transportation planning paradigm in California from being reactive in coordinating growth and transportation planning to being proactive. The long-term results were expected to include a consensus-based process that saved time and money. While the RCIP was designed to achieve these goals, problems with the execution of the planning process hindered its initial success. It was

challenging to meet an aggressive schedule and to have sustained involvement from the resource agencies on a major planning effort. According to responses on performance measures, participants were middling in their assessment of the ability of the process to improve the quality and efficiency of transportation decision-making. Proactive processes, such as the early identification and resolution of planning issues, were fraught with communication and decision-making problems. Interview participants also indicated that the RCIP process took longer and cost more money than anticipated because of overly ambitious initial projections.

Environmental agencies anticipated that collaborative efforts with other local, State, and Federal stakeholders would yield a balanced decision-making process that adhered to existing laws and also gave full and equal consideration to transportation infrastructure improvements, economic growth, aquatic resources protection, and other key environmental factors within western Riverside County. This expectation was not met in the initial stages of the RCIP given the environmental agencies' reports of hurried, data gathering, flawed impact analysis, and poor integration. The issues raised are being addressed in the remaining portion of the RCIP expected to be completed in 2007.

It was anticipated that the Pilot Project would also produce a much-improved county-level GIS system with consistent data sets for all four plans. Participants did not report or comment on the GIS aspects of the RCIP process.

**Responses to Evaluative Questions.** Responses to evaluative questions for the RCIP Pilot Project were generated based on participant reporter interviews conducted through site visits and via telephone, Performance Measure Reports, and Pilot Project Progress Reports. For the RCIP Pilot Project, five participant reporters, representing 42

percent of the reporters identified by RCIP sponsors for the Pilot Project, were interviewed in person. The responses to evaluative questions are presented in Table 9.

**Table 9. RCIP: Responses to Evaluative Questions**

| Evaluative Question  | Responses   |
|--|---|
| How successful was the Pilot Project in reducing the time frame of the planning and project development process? | <p>Based on feedback received on Performance Measures #1, #2, and #4 and participant interviews, the portion of the RCIP process completed to date was at least moderately successful in improving the overall efficiency of decision-making on transportation projects. The initial stages of the RCIP process were not successful in quickly identifying and resolving key environmental issues affecting County transportation corridor development, but these issues are being addressed in the remaining portions of the RCIP. Transportation stakeholders believed that the RCIP decreased project processing time by at least a moderate degree. More substantive information regarding this performance measure will be available after the completion of the RCIP in 2007.</p> <p>The MSHCP allowed for issuance of one Federal and State Endangered Species Umbrella Permit valid for 75 years. There is no longer a need for full Section 7 coordination or Individual Permits from the USFWS and the California Department of Fish and Game. This could reduce review and consultation time by up to three years. It is also anticipated that the Section 7 consultation time frame, which currently takes 6 months to 18 months, will be reduced.</p> <p>When completed in 2005, the SAMP will allow issuance of Regional General Section 404 Permits for projects that meet specific criteria within the three SAMP watersheds. The General Permit is expected to streamline regional Section 404 compliance using a programmatic approach to permitting.</p> |
| How much time was saved or lost in terms of initial expectations?  | <p>Because the RCIP process is incomplete, data to evaluate these aspects of the Pilot Project will not be available until after 2007. In responses to Performance Measures and in participant interviews, most stakeholders in the RCIP expected that the Pilot Project would streamline the transportation planning and project development processes to some degree.</p>   |

| Evaluative Question   | Responses   |
|---|---|
| <p>What problems or delays were encountered in achieving the objectives of the Pilot Project?</p> | <p>Additional time was needed to complete RCIP. The RCIP project was originally scoped to cost \$13 million and take 36 months. This schedule was acknowledged as being too ambitious, and the process was re-scoped to be a 60-month, \$36 million effort. Subsequent delays in the SAMP and CETAP components of the RCIP have again extended the schedule. At present, the SAMP is expected to be completed in 2005 and the CETAP is expected to be completed in 2007.</p> <p>There were numerous challenges in gaining concurrences between Federal resource and county agencies during the NEPA/404 process for the CETAP corridors. Environmental agencies were dissatisfied with the level and quality of information presented in the NEPA documents and the EPA ultimately gave the first two CETAP Tier I Draft EIS/EIRs a Category 3 rating (Inadequate).</p> <p>Loss of funding forced USACE to discontinue work on the SAMP scheduled for a ROD in August 2004 and permit issuance in October 2004.</p> |
| <p>What factors were responsible for these delays?</p>  | <p>The RCIP required additional time in order to continue the stakeholder process, gain further stakeholder support, and resolve Federal resource agency issues with the CETAP corridors.</p> <p>The challenges in the NEPA/404 process were rooted in an overly ambitious timeline; difficulty in handling level of data requirements of other regulations, such as Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, in Tier I EISs; and inadequate process guidance.</p>   |

| Evaluative Question   | Responses  |
|---|--|
| How were problems resolved when they occurred?  | <p>Key to resolving the NEPA/ 404 issues was the active intervention by a U.S. DOT “champion” appointed to the CETAP by the Interagency Transportation Infrastructure Streamlining Task Force, created by Executive Order 13274. This champion provided leadership to keep the parties moving. Meetings were held between FHWA and the Federal resource agencies to determine the magnitude of additional work required to address their NEPA process concerns. Tiered EISs were not used for the remaining CETAP corridors.</p> <p>One million dollars has been allocated in the Congressional budget to complete the SAMP in 2005.</p> |
| Did the Pilot Project require increased or decreased levels of resources on the part of sponsors or other stakeholders? | <p>Based on responses to Performance Measure #4, transportation stakeholders felt that the staff and consultant labor time and overall processing time requirements for the RCIP process were significantly less or about the same as for the traditional Caltrans process. In interviews, some transportation participants noted that there should have been more planning for the post-RCIP period, particularly in the areas of implementation, staffing, and funding. Environmental stakeholders did not substantively comment on this issue in participant interviews.</p>  |
| How successful was the Pilot Project in the view of major stakeholders?   | <p>Environmental and transportation stakeholders strongly supported the conceptual basis and goals for the RCIP, but reported substantial problems in the coordination and integration aspects of the project. Transportation agency participants felt that the RCIP improved the overall quality and efficiency of decision-making on transportation projects and was more effective than the previous planning process in protecting the human and natural environments. In the opinion of most transportation respondents, the process also reduced staff time and overall processing time by at least a moderate degree.</p>         |

| Evaluative Question   | Responses   |
|---|---|
| To what extent were environmental resources protected?                                    | <p>Environmental stakeholders were initially concerned about inadequate integration and coordination between components of the RCIP resulting in poor environmental quality. These issues are being addressed in the continuing NEPA process for the CETAP corridors. Ultimately, the RCIP will better protect environmental resources by balancing and integrating habitat, open space, development, and transportation corridor decisions.</p> <p>Components of the RCIP provide demonstrated environmental benefits. The CETAP effort to identify and preserve rights-of-way for transportation corridors, while minimizing environmental impacts, is shaping the growth patterns for Riverside County. The MSHCP preserved 150,000 acres of land for conservation purposes, resulting in over 40 percent of the land in Riverside County being set aside for conservation purposes. When completed in 2005, the SAMP will develop a map of preservation areas, restoration areas, and areas for mitigation.</p> |
| Was this approach better or worse than previous approaches in protecting the environment? | Transportation stakeholders viewed the RCIP process as being more effective in protecting the human and natural environment than the traditional Caltrans process. Environmental stakeholders did not substantively comment on this issue.  |
| Did the Pilot Project result in any environmental enhancements?                           | RCIP components preserved important endangered species habitats and will address wetland preservation, restoration, and mitigation areas. The integration of the General Plan, MSHCP, and SAMP with the transportation corridors being examined under the CETAP prevented conflicts and fragmented development decision-making.   |

| Evaluative Question  | Responses  |
|--|--|
| <p>What approaches taken or problems encountered in the Pilot Project relate to the unique conditions or requirements in the particular state?</p> | <p>The RCIP approach was devised in response to the intense degree of growth in California, the State's extensive habitat diversity, the high number of endangered species in California, and the need to balance the conflicting interests between environmental, transportation, and development entities. The nature of land use planning in California is balkanized because decision-making occurs at the local level. As many as 43 State agencies are potentially involved in the transportation-land use decisions. The unique California tax base established by Proposition 13 prohibits new taxes in a community unless approved by a 2/3 majority vote. This drives a community to encourage development since sales tax revenues are the primary source of funds for basic community services.</p> <p>While integration and consistency were key, there were three separate environmental documents prepared for the General Plan, CETAP, and MSHCP. The reason for the separate environmental documents was that the General Plan was subject to CEQA only. CETAP and MSHCP involved Federal actions so they were subject to both CEQA and NEPA.</p> |
| <p>Did the Pilot Project result in process or quality improvements other than time and cost savings?</p>   | <p>Local Riverside County transportation agency staff reported that one of the major benefits of the RCIP process was the improved relationships between local governments brought on by the integrated planning approach and stakeholder involvement. Public outreach and education were also noted as positive and parts of the process.</p>   |



| Evaluative Question  | Responses   |
|--|---|
| <p>To what extent were transportation decisions improved by the new approaches taken in the Pilot Project?</p>   | <p>Transportation agency respondents reported that the RCIP process improved the transportation decision-making process by a moderate degree. There were some initial difficulties with resolving environmental issues affecting transportation corridor development, but these problems are being addressed in the completion of the RCIP process. The quality of the transportation decisions made with the RCIP process in relation to environmental quality was rated as a slight improvement over the previous process.</p> <p>Environmental stakeholders interviewed for the Pilot Project study expressed support for the conceptual basis of the RCIP and its ability to improve transportation decision-making, but did not substantively comment on this evaluative question.</p>   |
| <p>What lessons or conclusions can be gained from the results of the Pilot Project that are applicable at the local, state, regional, and national levels?</p> | <p>Goal of corridor preservation is laudable and logical, but challenging. The process requires substantial funding and a significant time investment from all participants. Integrated planning takes years to accomplish and it is important to be realistic about process scheduling. It is similarly important to carefully coordinate the scheduling and sequencing of planning effort components.</p> <p>It is challenging to have sustained involvement from resource agencies on a major, multi-year planning effort. Such efforts require a high-level project champion, early partnering with agency participants, and extensive early coordination with stakeholders to expedite proceedings. Continuous education for agency participants and stakeholders is needed. It is vital to have a mechanism for dispute resolution in place at the beginning of the process to preserve momentum and ensure quality decision-making.</p> <p>The use of Tiered EISs to streamline the project development process requires substantial coordination and clear communication between project proponents and reviewing agencies. Project proponents must clarify with reviewing agencies which decisions will be made in a Tier I versus a Tier II document, and the level of detail necessary in each document. Careful consideration should also be given to the scheduling and sequencing of supporting planning components in order to meet agency participants' expected or required data thresholds for decision-making.</p> |

## *Integrating NEPA and Statewide Planning in Oregon*

The statewide planning process in the State of Oregon requires integration of the Local Comprehensive Plans required for each community and the Transportation System Plans required for each community of 10,000 or more people. Corridor plans (or Refinement Planning) developed through the Transportation System Plans previously did not consider environmental factors, and decisions made in that process had to be revisited and often had to be revised during the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. As a result, the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) began a process to integrate the NEPA process with the Statewide Planning process (referred to in this section of the report as the Integrated Process). The goals of the Pilot Project are to reduce public frustration with redundant processes by combining the Refinement Planning and NEPA processes; to incorporate regulatory agency concerns early in the planning process; to improve transportation decision-making; to preserve transportation corridors for future development; and to shorten the overall time required to advance from planning product to completed transportation facility.

To accomplish these goals, ODOT developed two new approaches to integrate the NEPA and Statewide Planning processes: an early coordination process, dubbed the Collaborative Environmental and Transportation Agreement on Streamlining (CETAS), and a Tiered NEPA Decision-Making Approach. The CETAS process streamlines the environmental process by expanding the 1996 Oregon NEPA/404 Merger Agreement to include a broader definition than integration of NEPA and the Clean Water Act Section 404 Procedures. At each concurrence point in the NEPA review process,

(Purpose and Need, Range of Alternatives, Selection Criteria, and Preferred Alternative), CETAS agencies receive a presentation and each agency is then asked to document to ODOT their concurrence. The ten CETAS agencies include FHWA, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS, now the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA Fisheries), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), ODOT, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DCLD), the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Oregon Division of State Lands.

The CETAS Major Transportation Project Agreement is an implementing tool for the Tiered NEPA Decision-Making Process. Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statements (EISs), or Location EISs, are completed on projects that have not been identified for funding for the next 10 to 20 years. Tier 2 EISs, or Design EISs, are prepared when the project is later funded for construction and addresses design alternatives within the selected corridor alternative. There is agency concurrence through the CETAS at key decision points during both the Location EIS and the Design EIS processes. At present, only one project has progressed far enough through the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process to address these Performance Measure questions. The Newberg-Dundee Transportation Improvement Project is a large bypass project involving eight corridors. For more detailed information on this Pilot Project, please refer to the project narrative in Appendix B.

The Pilot Project was evaluated on five Performance Measures: Improved Transportation Decision-Making: Quality and Efficiency (#1); Improved Transportation

Decision-Making: Early Identification and Closure (#2); Improved Environmental Protection (#3); Improvements in Transportation Corridor Protection (#4); and Improved Transportation Decision-Making: Cost and Time Savings (#5). ODOT submitted the names of eleven Pilot Project stakeholders to the Pilot Project study to serve as participant-reporters. Between January 2003 and December 2004, eleven participant-reporters submitted thirteen Performance Measure Reports for the Integrating Statewide Planning and NEPA in Oregon Pilot Project on the Research Project Web Site, resulting in a response rate of 100 percent. The reporters were from 8 different Federal, State, and local transportation and environmental agencies. A total of 6 reports were from transportation-related agencies (*i.e.*, Departments of Transportation (DOTs) or Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)) and 7 were from environmental agencies. ODOT has not had any new projects that have completed the Tiered NEPA Decision-Making Process, and the CETAS process is still evolving. As a result, some of the responses to Performance Measures offer evaluations of work completed to date rather than final outcomes.

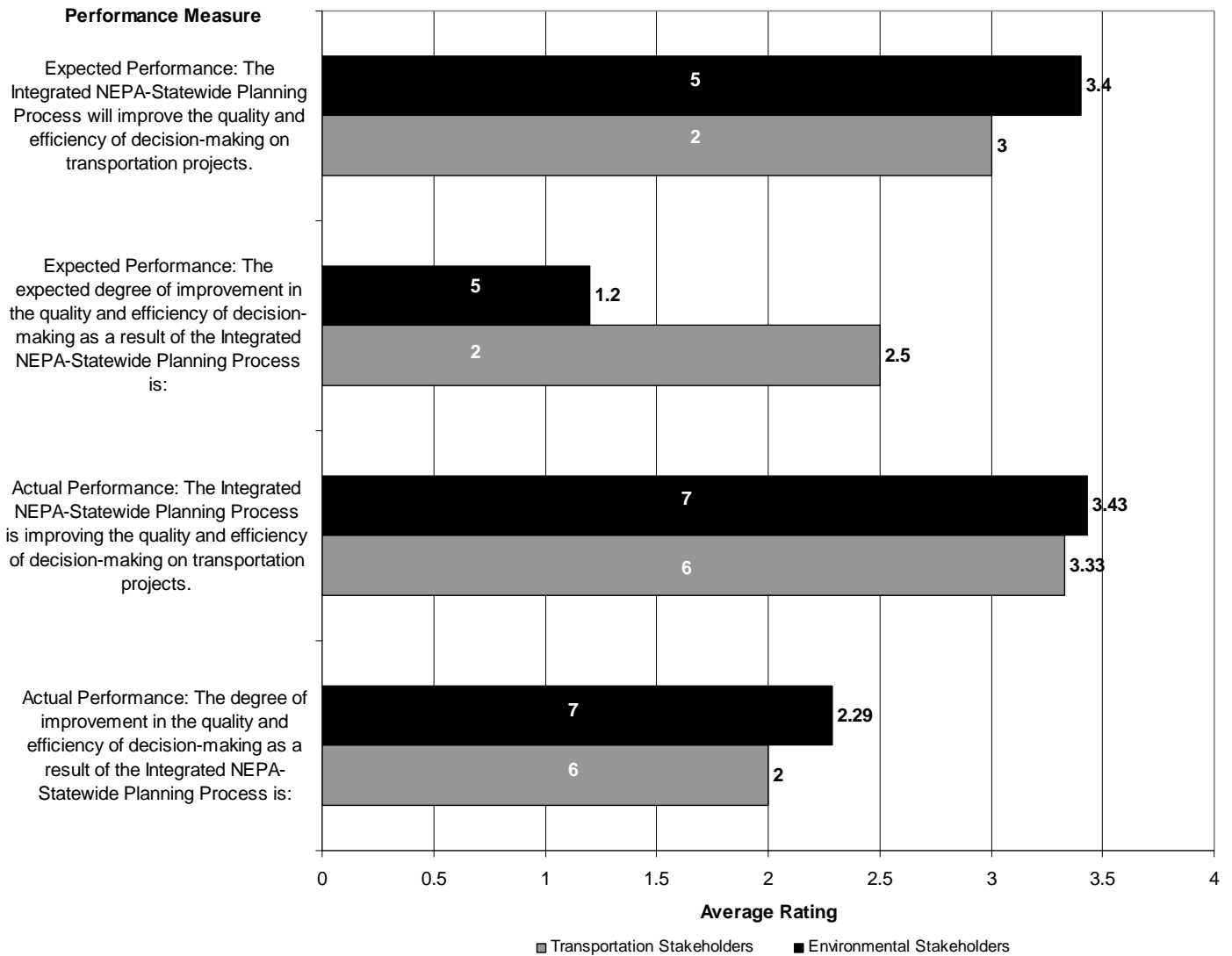
**Performance Measure #1: Improved Transportation Decision-Making: Quality and Efficiency.** This Performance Measure evaluates participants' perceptions of the potential for the Statewide Planning-NEPA Integration Pilot Project to achieve improvement in the quality and efficiency of transportation decision-making as compared to perceptions of improvement during the application of the Integrated Process. Respondents were asked to evaluate the actual performance of the Integrated Process quarterly. Performance Measure questions addressed participant perceptions of whether the Integrated Process would improve the efficiency and quality of transportation

decision-making, if they believed the process did, in actuality, improve decision-making, and the expected and actual perceived degrees of improvement provided by the process. The text of the Performance Measure questions and a summary of responses are presented in Table 10. Comparisons of environmental and transportation stakeholders' answers to Performance Measure questions are presented in Figure 6.

**Table 10. Integrating NEPA and Statewide Planning in Oregon Performance  
Measure #1: Improved Transportation Decision-making: Quality and  
Efficiency**

| Performance Measure   | Data Points | Average Rating |
|---|-------------|----------------|
| <i>Expected Performance</i>   |             |                |
| <b>The Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process will improve the quality and efficiency of decision-making on transportation projects.</b><br><i>Key to results: Strongly agree=4, Somewhat agree=3, Somewhat disagree=2, Strongly disagree=1, No opinion=0</i> | <b>7</b>    | <b>3.28</b>    |
| <b>The expected degree of improvement in the quality and efficiency of decision-making as a result of the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process is:</b><br><i>Key to results: High=3, Moderate=2, Low=1, No change=0</i>                                     | <b>7</b>    | <b>1.57</b>    |
| <i>Actual Performance</i>   |             |                |
| <b>The Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process is improving the quality and efficiency of decision-making on transportation projects.</b><br><i>Key to results: Strongly agree=4, Somewhat agree=3, Somewhat disagree=2, Strongly disagree=1, No opinion=0</i> | <b>13</b>   | <b>3.38</b>    |
| <b>The degree of improvement in the quality and efficiency of decision-making as a result of the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process is:</b><br><i>Key to Results: High=3, Moderate=2, Low=1, No change=0</i>  | <b>13</b>   | <b>2.15</b>    |

**Figure 6. Integrating NEPA and Statewide Planning in Oregon Performance Measure #1: Comparison of Environmental and Transportation Stakeholders Responses**



Numbers on bars indicate the number of respondents

Key to results for questions on improvement: Strongly agree=4, Somewhat agree=3, Somewhat disagree=2, Strongly disagree=1, No opinion=0

Key to results for questions on degree of improvement: High=3, Moderate=2, Low=1, No change=0

Initial expectations of the ability of the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process to improve transportation decision-making were restrained. Respondents on average “somewhat agreed” that the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process would succeed in improving decision-making quality and efficiency to a “low” or “moderate” degree. When assessed separately, environmental stakeholders and transportation stakeholders responded similarly on the anticipated success of the Pilot Project. Both groups “somewhat agreed” that the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process would result in improvements. Transportation stakeholders, however, were much more optimistic than environmental stakeholders as to the level of improvement the Integrated Process would provide. Transportation respondents predicted that the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process would provide between a “moderate” and “high” degree of improvement in decision-making quality and efficiency, while environmental respondents predicted that the level of improvement would be “low.”

As a group, respondents’ evaluations of the actual performance of the Pilot Project were similar to their expectations. The reporters still “somewhat agreed” on average that the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process was improving the quality and efficiency of transportation decision-making in practice. The respondents’ opinions on the degree of improvement the actual practice provided were higher, with an overall rating of “moderate.” When assessed separately, environmental stakeholders and transportation stakeholders were largely in agreement in their responses to the Performance Measure questions on the actual performance of the Pilot Project.

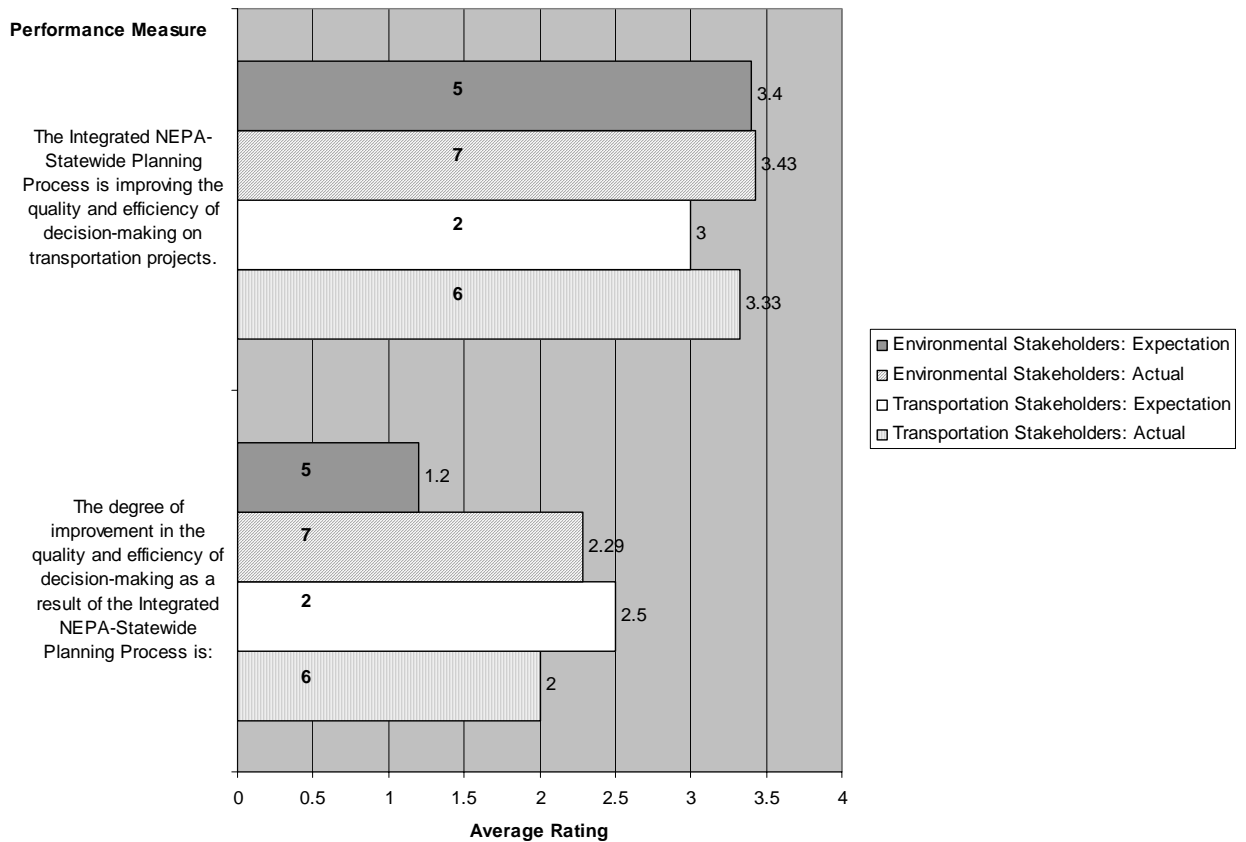
Comparing environmental and transportation stakeholders’ expectations for the performance of the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process and their later



evaluations of actual process performance indicates a more dramatic level of improvement brought by the Integrated Process. The comparisons are shown in Figure 7. Both groups “somewhat agreed” that the Pilot Project would improve the quality and efficiency of decision-making on transportation projects, and continued to “somewhat agree” that the process improved decision-making in practice. The level of agreement between transportation and environmental agency stakeholders on this topic, as well as the agreement between each group’s expectations and assessment of actual performance, indicates a broad level of satisfaction with the process performance. The comparison also shows that environmental stakeholders’ expectations for the degree of improvement in the decision-making process afforded by the Integrated Process were exceeded, while transportation stakeholders’ expectations were not completely met. After initially expecting only a “low” degree of improvement in transportation decision-making as a result of the Pilot Project, environmental stakeholders found that, in actuality, the process provided a “moderate” degree of improvement. Conversely, transportation stakeholders initially expected that the Pilot Project would provide between a “moderate” and “high” degree of improvement, but in actuality felt that the process provided a slightly lower, “moderate” degree of improvement in the decision-making process.

Based on stakeholders’ responses, the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning process was successful in improving the quality and efficiency in transportation decision-making by at least a moderate degree. Stakeholders’ expectations for the overall success of the Pilot Project were met, and environmental stakeholders’ expectations as to the degree of success were exceeded.

**Figure 7. Integrating NEPA and Statewide Planning in Oregon Performance Measure #1: Comparison of Expected and Actual Ratings for Environmental and Transportation Stakeholders**



Key to results for questions on improvement: Strongly agree=4, Somewhat agree=3, Somewhat disagree=2, Strongly disagree=1, No opinion=0

Key to results for questions on degree of improvement: High=3, Moderate=2, Low=1, No change=0

**Performance Measure #2: Improved Transportation Decision-making: Early Identification and Closure.** This Performance Measure evaluates whether the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process reduces processing time and cost by achieving early identification of, and closure on, project issues. Performance Measure questions examine participants' perceptions of the performance of the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process on topics such as having representatives with authority to make decisions attend process proceedings, timely and effective decision-making, and adherence to decisions made in process proceedings. The text of the Performance Measure questions and a summary of responses are presented in Table 11. Comparisons of responses from environmental and transportation stakeholders are shown in Figure 8.

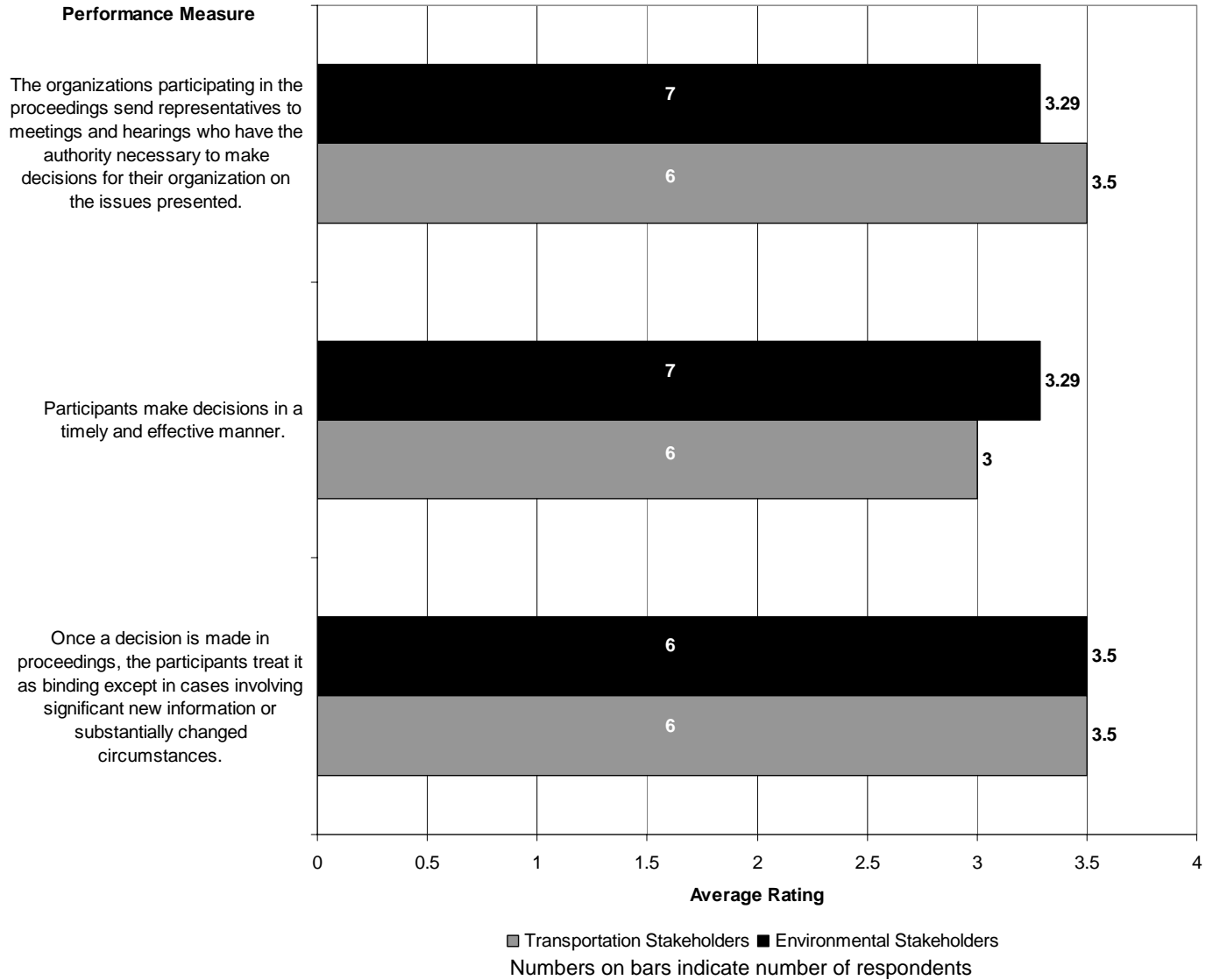
Respondents to Performance Measure #2 on average “somewhat agreed” that participating organizations sent representatives with the authority to make decisions for their organizations to process proceedings. Environmental and transportation stakeholders largely agreed on this issue when their responses were evaluated separately. Respondents on average also “somewhat agreed” that process participants made decisions in a timely and effective manner. Again, there was little difference in responses on this topic from transportation versus environmental participants. In participant interviews, CETAS members noted some difficulties in the coordination of the decision-making processes with the Pilot Project. Interview subjects reported that, when problems arose on the Newberg-Dundee Transportation Improvement Project, the ODOT staff coordinating the CETAS process for the project had no power to make project changes in response to CETAS concerns.

**Table 11. Integrating NEPA and Statewide Planning in Oregon Performance Measure #2: Improved Transportation Decision-making: Early Identification and Closure.**

| Performance Measure  | Data Points | Average Rating |
|--|-------------|----------------|
| <b>The organizations participating in the proceedings send representatives to meetings and hearings who have the authority necessary to make decisions for their organization on the issues presented.</b> | <b>13</b>   | <b>3.38</b>    |
| <b>Participants make decisions in a timely and effective manner.</b>   | <b>13</b>   | <b>2.92</b>    |
| <b>Once a decision is made in proceedings, the participants treat it as binding except in cases involving significant new information or substantially changed circumstances.</b>                          | <b>12</b>   | <b>3.33</b>    |

Key to results: Strongly agree=4, Somewhat agree=3, Somewhat disagree=2, Strongly disagree=1, No opinion=0

**Figure 8. Integrating NEPA and Statewide Planning in Oregon Performance Measure #2: Comparison of Environmental and Transportation Stakeholder Responses.**



Key to results: Strongly agree=4, Somewhat agree=3, Somewhat disagree=2, Strongly disagree=1, No opinion=0

Many felt that the CETAS elevation protocol should have been invoked much sooner in the process, and that higher levels of management should have been involved as soon as disputes arose.

As a group, reporters on this Performance Measure also “somewhat agreed” that process participants were committed to adhering to decisions made as a group.

Environmental and transportation agency reporters responded identically on this issue. In participant interviews, transportation stakeholders noted that there were some problems with agency adherence to decisions made during the NEPA process for the Newberg-Dundee Transportation Improvement Project. Several agencies initially did not concur with the Preferred Alternative for the project, and ODOT felt that the non-concurrence was based on factors other than those agreed upon in the agency agreement for Criteria for Selection of the Preferred Alternative.

Based on responses to Performance Measure #2 and information gathered in participant interviews, stakeholders found that the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process has been somewhat successful to-date in identifying and achieving closure on project issues early in the transportation planning process. Though difficulties in two areas addressed by the Performance Measure were reported in interviews, these problems were sufficiently resolved by the time of Performance Measure reporting to elicit satisfactory evaluations from participants.

**Performance Measure #3: Improved Environmental Protection.** This Performance Measure evaluates the success of the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process in achieving better environmental results by measuring perceptions of the environmental results prior to, and with, the Integrated Process. Performance Measure

questions address the degree to which each process protects the human and natural environment. Respondents evaluated the previous ODOT process once, and evaluated the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process quarterly. The text of the Performance Measure questions and a summary of responses are presented in Table 12. A comparison of environmental and transportation agency stakeholder responses is shown in Figure 9.

Respondents to Performance Measure #3 reported on average that the previous ODOT transportation planning and project development process was “usually somewhat effective” in protecting the human and natural environments. Participants gave the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process higher marks, agreeing on average that the new process was “usually effective” in protecting the human and natural environments. In comparing the responses of environmental stakeholders with those of transportation stakeholders, environmental agency participants cited the greatest degree of improvement between the previous ODOT planning process and the new Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process. Environmental stakeholders rated the previous ODOT process as being “usually somewhat effective” in protecting the human environment and “usually not effective” in protecting the natural environment. Conversely, environmental participants rated the Pilot Project process as being “usually effective” in protecting the human environment and “usually somewhat effective” in protecting the natural environment. Transportation stakeholders registered no change between the two processes, consistently rating both as being “usually effective” in protecting the human and natural environments.

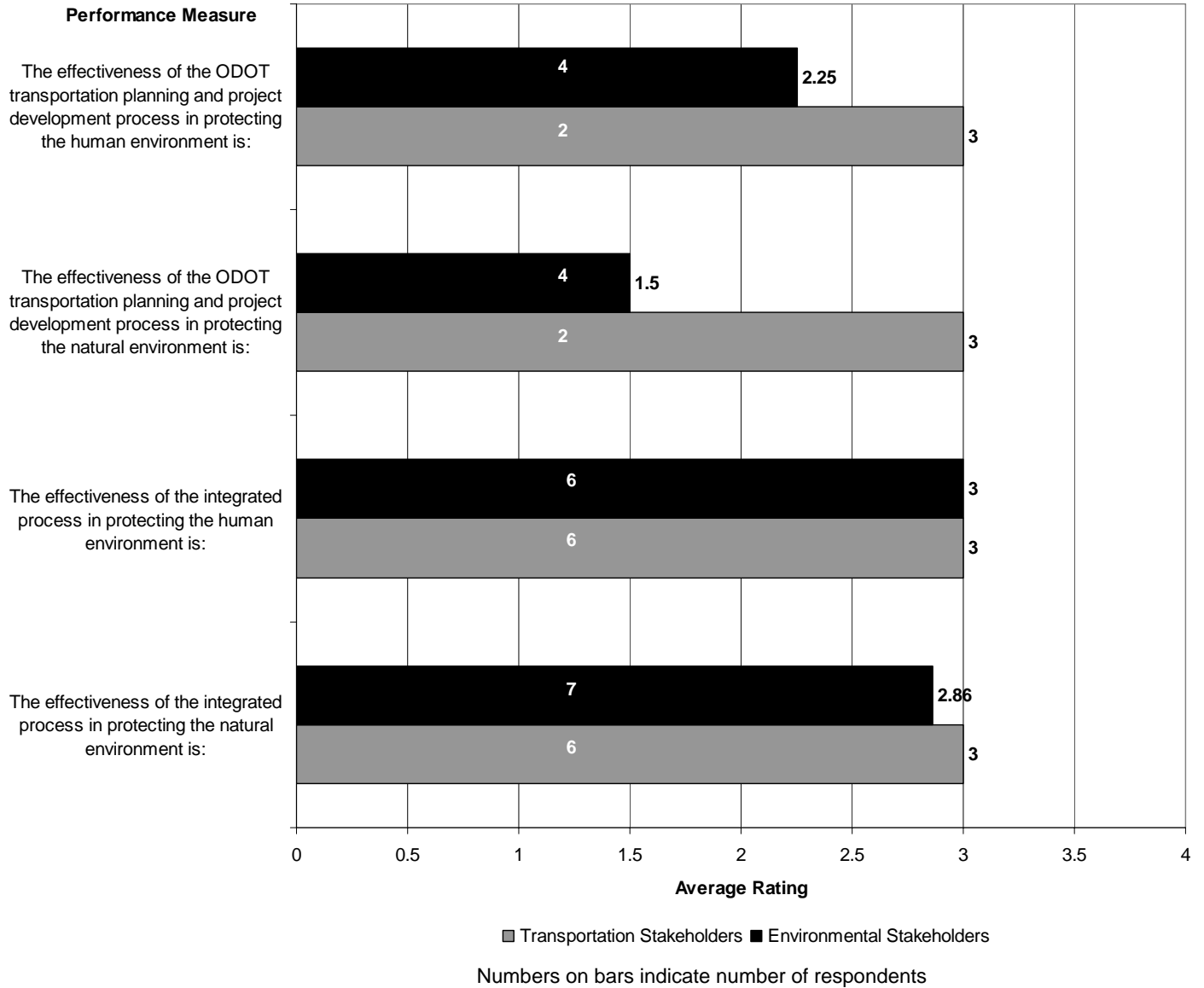
**Table 12. Integrating NEPA and Statewide Planning in Oregon Performance  
Measure #3: Improved Environmental Protection.**

| Performance Measure  | Data Points | Average Rating |
|--|-------------|----------------|
| <i><b>Baseline Performance</b></i>   |             |                |
| <b>The effectiveness of the ODOT transportation planning and project development process in protecting the human environment is:</b>   | <b>6</b>    | <b>2.5</b>     |
| <b>The effectiveness of the ODOT transportation planning and project development process in protecting the natural environment is:</b> | <b>6</b>    | <b>2</b>       |
| <i><b>Integrated Process Performance</b></i>   |             |                |
| <b>The effectiveness of the integrated process in protecting the human environment is:</b>   | <b>12</b>   | <b>3</b>       |
| <b>The effectiveness of the integrated process in protecting the natural environment is:</b>   | <b>13</b>   | <b>3.15</b>    |

Key to results: Usually very effective=4, Usually effective=3, Usually somewhat effective=2, Usually not effective=1, Not applied=0



**Figure 9. Integrating NEPA and Statewide Planning in Oregon Performance Measure #3: Comparison of Environmental and Transportation Stakeholder Responses.**



Key to results: Usually very effective=4, Usually effective=3, Usually somewhat effective=2, Usually not effective=1, Not applied=0

Based on these responses, there were widely differing views between transportation and environmental stakeholders in Oregon as to the level of protection afforded by the previous ODOT transportation planning and project development process. Transportation stakeholders felt the process provided an acceptable level of environmental protection, whereas environmental stakeholders found the previous process inadequate. All stakeholders agreed that the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process was successful in improving protection of the human and natural environments, but the greatest degree of satisfaction with the new process came from environmental stakeholders, who cited substantial improvements in the level of protection.

**Performance Measure #4: Improvements in Transportation Corridor**

**Protection.** This Performance Measure evaluates the success of the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process in protecting future transportation corridors. The Performance Measure questions examine the degree of community responsiveness to ODOT requests for protective action for corridors given preferred alternative designation. The Performance Measure questions were:

1. Please list the projects for which a Draft EIS identified a preferred alternative corridor.
2. For each project, please list the communities from which ODOT requested action to protect a corridor designated in a Draft EIS as a “preferred alternative.”
3. Please list those communities that designated the preferred alternative corridor area as protected prior to the Final EIS and ROD for the project.

4. If a requested designation was not made, please indicate any known reasons for that lack of designation.

At present, only one project has progressed far enough through the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process to address these Performance Measure questions. The Newberg-Dundee Transportation Improvement Project is a large bypass project involving eight corridors. After the completion of the Draft Location EIS for the project in early 2004, ODOT drafted statewide land use goals exceptions and Local Comprehensive Plan amendments designed to preserve the recommended corridor. ODOT submitted the proposed amendments and goal exceptions to the corridor communities of Dundee, Newberg, and Yamhill in March 2004. Numerous public meetings were held during the summer of 2004 to discuss the proposals, and the Yamhill County Commissioners adopted the exceptions and amendments in September 2004. Completion of the Location Final EIS for the project is scheduled for early 2005.

Based on these limited results, there appears to be a high degree of community responsiveness in protecting transportation corridors identified as the Preferred Alternative. In participant interviews, however, stakeholders noted that the timing of passage of statewide planning goal exceptions and amendments of local comprehensive plans in conjunction with the Tiered NEPA Decision-Making Process has proved challenging. Process participants observed that is difficult to address the goal exception standards with the level of information generated for a Location EIS, however ODOT Transportation System Plan Guidelines require passage of the exceptions and local comprehensive plan amendments at this stage of the process. The success seen in the Newberg-Dundee project may not be indicative of future success. Oregon is

considering shifting the responsibility of preparing goal exception findings to towns and counties, allowing local entities to complete the process before ODOT becomes involved in the transportation planning process.

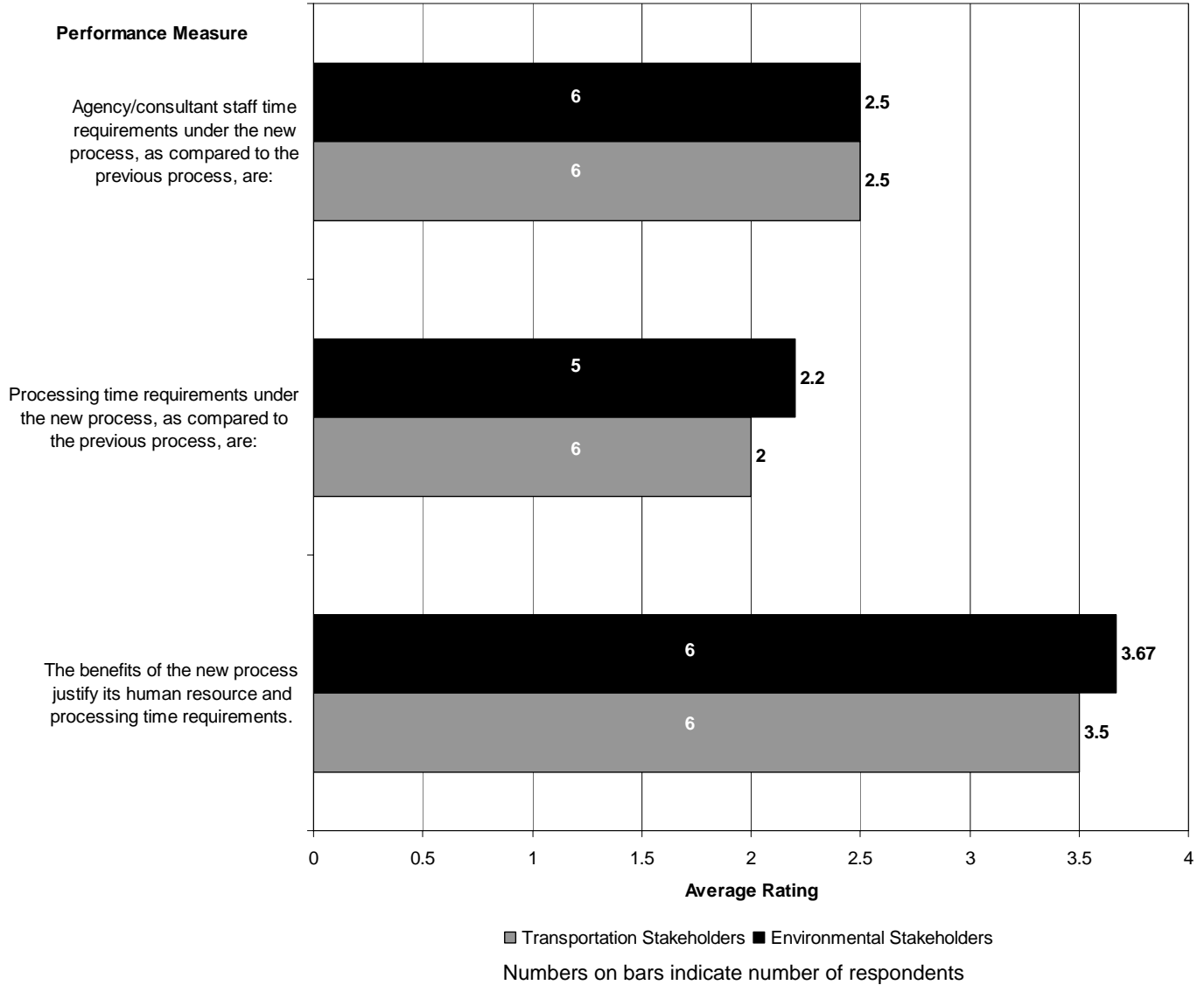
**Performance Measure #5: Improved Transportation Decision-making: Cost and Time Savings.** This Performance Measure evaluates the return on investment provided by the Pilot Project by measuring reductions in overall agency and consultant labor and processing time requirements, and/or enhancement of the quality of final results. Performance Measure questions address issues of agency and staff consultant time requirements, processing time requirements, and whether the benefits of the Pilot Project justified stated time requirements. Respondents were asked to respond to the Performance Measure questions quarterly. Because ODOT has not completed any projects using the Integrated Process, there is no measurable data available to assess time and cost savings. Responses to this Performance Measure are based on the performance of the Integrated Process performance to date, and not final results. The text of the Performance Measure questions and a summary of responses are presented in Table 13. Environmental and transportation stakeholder responses are compared in Figure 10.

Respondents to this Performance Measure were evenly divided on whether the agency and consultant staff time requirements for the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process to date were “about the same” or “significantly greater” than for the previous process. When evaluated separately, transportation and environmental stakeholders were similarly evenly split as to whether the Pilot Project time requirements were the same or greater than the previous ODOT process.

**Table 13. Integrating NEPA and Statewide Planning in Oregon Performance Measure #5: Improved Transportation Decision-making: Cost and Time Savings**

| Performance Measure   | Data Points | Average Rating |
|---|-------------|----------------|
| <b>Agency/consultant staff time requirements under the new process, as compared to the previous process, are:</b><br><i>Key to results: Significantly greater=3, About the same=2, Significantly less=1, No opinion=0</i> | <b>12</b>   | <b>2.5</b>     |
| <b>Processing time requirements under the new process, as compared to the previous process, are:</b><br><i>Key to results: Significantly greater=3, About the same=2, Significantly less=1, No opinion=0</i>              | <b>11</b>   | <b>2.09</b>    |
| <b>The benefits of the new process justify its human resource and processing time requirements.</b><br><i>Key to results: Strongly agree=4, Somewhat agree=3, Somewhat disagree=2, Strongly disagree=1, No opinion=0</i>  | <b>12</b>   | <b>3.58</b>    |

**Figure 10. Integrating NEPA and Statewide Planning in Oregon Performance Measure #5: Comparison of Environmental and Transportation Stakeholder Responses.**



Key to results for Agency/consultant staff time and Processing time requirements: Significantly greater=3, About the same=2, Significantly less=1, No opinion=0

Key to results for process benefits: Strongly agree=4, Somewhat agree=3, Somewhat disagree=2, Strongly disagree=1, No opinion=0

None of the respondents reported that the Integrated Process thus far required “significantly less” time than previous planning processes, however ODOT anticipated that the most substantial time savings with the Integrated Process would be realized in the Design EIS phase. Interview participants’ responses on changes in staff time requirements caused by the Integrated Process ranged from negligible to substantial.

There was more agreement among respondents regarding processing time requirements for the Integrated Process. On average, reporters said that the processing time for the Pilot Project was “about the same” as for the previous ODOT process. There was little difference between transportation and environmental stakeholders’ responses on this topic.

Respondents expressed strong support for the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process, with most reporters “strongly agreeing” that the benefits of the new process justified its human resource and processing time requirements. Again, transportation and environmental stakeholders logged similar average responses to this question, signaling broad agreement on the benefit of the Pilot Project process.

Based on responses to this Performance Measure, the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process has not demonstrably reduced the agency/consultant staff time or overall processing time requirements for projects to date as compared to the previous ODOT process. The Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process has been successful in generating a high degree of support from both transportation and environmental stakeholders, who found that the benefits of the process justify the present human resource and processing time requirements.

**Achievement of Expectations.** ODOT had a range of expectations for how the components of the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process would improve the transportation planning process in Oregon. ODOT expected that the use of Location EISs during the transportation planning stage would result in the following benefits: 1) the planning decision would be sustainable and would not have to be revisited later when the facility is funded, 2) land use decisions could safely be made based on the first assumptions, 3) when the funding is secured and the Design EIS is prepared, that the decision in the Location EIS could be assumed, and that the design could focus on design alternatives and issues within the selected location alternative, and 4) right-of-way could be purchased or otherwise preserved to protect the corridor decision based on the Location EIS. Because ODOT has not completed a project using the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process, there are no outcomes to assess against agency expectations for the use of Location EISs.

ODOT believed that the time savings generated by the Tiered NEPA Decision-Making Process would occur at the Design EIS stage. That process would avoid the dynamic of trying to solve both the “big picture” and “small picture” issues at the same time. Also, ODOT believed that money would be saved by not preparing 30 percent design on multiple corridors (typically four) in the Location EIS, as might occur in a regular EIS. In addition, by focusing on the general issues at first, ODOT could get local community buy-in before having to address the localized issues of individual property owners. These would be addressed later, and at the necessary detail level once the corridor alternative is selected. Because ODOT has not taken a transportation project



beyond the Location phase of the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process, there is no data on which to evaluate the agency's expectations regarding time savings.

ODOT noted that the agency may not consider another large corridor project for the Tiered NEPA process in the near future, as the time and cost savings have not been realized thus far. The largest obstacle to the success of the Tiered NEPA process component of the Pilot Project has been resource agencies' discomfort with the low level of detail presented in environmental analysis during the location phase. Although an agreement regarding the necessary level of detail for Location EISs was reached on the Newberg-Dundee Transportation Improvement Project, the issue has yet to be completely resolved. ODOT has also encountered confusion from the public on the need for two environmental documents providing two levels of environmental analysis in the tiered NEPA process.

ODOT expected that the early coordination process represented by the CETAS would continue strengthening the agency's relationships with regulatory agencies and local communities, and to develop increased understanding of each other's interests and needs. Results on these points have been mixed. Stakeholders expressed concern over the lack of collaboration, communication, and coordination between ODOT, CETAS participants, and local entities on the Newberg-Dundee Transportation Improvement Project. On the positive side, ODOT representatives stated in participant interviews that the agency has gained greater familiarity with the reviewing agencies' preferences and will be able to apply this knowledge to future projects for overall time savings and greater efficiency.

**Responses to Evaluative Questions.** Responses to evaluative questions for the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Pilot Project were generated based on participant reporter interviews conducted through site visits and via telephone, Performance Measure Reports, and Pilot Project Progress Reports. For the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Pilot Project, eight participant reporters, representing 73 percent of the reporters identified by ODOT for the Pilot Project, were interviewed in person. The responses to evaluative questions are presented in Table 14.

**Table 14. Integrating NEPA and Statewide Planning in Oregon: Responses to Evaluative Questions.**

| Evaluative Question   | Responses  |
|---|--|
| <p>How successful was the Pilot Project in reducing the time frame of the planning and project development process?</p> | <p>Presently, ODOT has not completed any transportation planning projects with the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process, and there is insufficient data to compare timelines for projects completed through the previous ODOT process versus the Integrated Process. ODOT is currently reviewing one project, the Newberg-Dundee Transportation Improvement Project, using the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process. ODOT has exceeded the projected time frames for project milestones to date. The Location EIS for the project was delayed one year because of disagreements between agencies on the preferred alternative and the time required for the localities to draft and pass goal exceptions and comprehensive plan amendments. The project has not entered the Design Phase, where ODOT predicted the greatest time savings will be realized. ODOT noted that the agency may not consider another large corridor project for the tiered NEPA process in the near future, as the time and cost savings have not been realized thus far.</p> <p>Based on feedback received on Performance Measures and in participant interviews, stakeholders feel that the Integrated Process has the potential to streamline the environmental process, but that this has not happened because of difficulties gaining concurrences from the CETAS and the use of the Tiered NEPA Decision-Making Process. Participants reported that the process has improved the efficiency of decision-making by a moderate degree and that the process has been somewhat successful in addressing and resolving environmental issues early in the transportation process. Respondents were less optimistic about net time savings using the Integrated Process, and reported on average that the project processing time with the Integrated Process was about the same as the previous ODOT Process. None of the respondents reported that the Integrated Process saved time over previous ODOT planning processes; however ODOT has previously stated that they expected the most substantial time savings to occur in the Design Phase. (continued)</p> |

| <b>Evaluative Question</b>  | <b>Responses</b>  |
|---|---|
| <p>How successful was the Pilot Project in reducing the time frame of the planning and project development process?</p> <p>(continued from previous page)</p> | <p>Thus far, there has been a high degree of community responsiveness in protecting transportation corridors identified as the Preferred Alternative in Location EISs. Yamhill County passed goal exceptions and local comprehensive plan amendments for the Newberg-Dundee Transportation Improvement Plan between the Draft and Final Location EIS phases.</p>  |
| <p>How much time was saved or lost in terms of initial expectations?</p>  | <p>Presently, only one project, the Newberg-Dundee Transportation Improvement Project, is being reviewed using the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process. ODOT has exceeded its projected time frames for completion of various stages of the planning process. ODOT hoped to complete the Location EIS for the project in 2003 and to begin scoping the Design EIS before the end of the research period. Delays in gaining concurrences from review agencies have postponed the release of the Final Location EIS until early 2005. The Design EIS is expected to be completed in 2007. ODOT may not consider another large corridor project for the tiered NEPA process in the near future, as the time and cost savings have not been realized thus far.</p> |

| Evaluative Question  | Responses  |
|--|--|
| What problems or delays were encountered in achieving the objectives of the Pilot Project? | <p>1) The use of Location EISs as part of the Tiered NEPA Decision-Making Process has not met streamlining expectations. The Final Location EIS for the Newberg-Dundee Project was originally scheduled to be issued in 2003, but was delayed one year due to non-concurrence by Federal regulatory agencies on the preferred alternative and the time required for the localities to draft and pass goal exceptions and comprehensive plan amendments. The Final Location EIS is now scheduled to be completed in 2005 and the Design EIS is schedule for completion in 2007.</p> <p>2) The level of information generated for a Location EIS is often insufficient to address planning goal exception standards; however, Oregon's Transportation System Planning Guidelines require passage of the exceptions and local comprehensive plan amendments at this stage of the process.</p> <p>3) Communication and coordination between ODOT, CETAS participants, and local entities has been problematic. Of particular concern with the Newberg-Dundee Project was a lack of interaction between the Project Oversight Steering Team (POST), which makes major project decisions, and the CETAS Group during any phase of the project.</p> |
| What factors were responsible for these delays?  | <p>1) The NEPA concurrence points in the CETAS agreement and in the Standard Operating Procedures that supplement the Major Transportation Projects Agreement required much more definition and process development than anticipated. Obstacles in the Tiered NEPA process for the Newberg-Dundee Transportation Improvement Study included resource agencies' discomfort with the low level of detail presented in environmental analysis during the location phase, and confusion from the public on the need for two environmental documents with differing levels of environmental analysis in the Tiered NEPA process.</p> <p>2) No response.</p> <p>3) No response.</p>  |

| Evaluative Question   | Responses   |
|---|---|
| How were problems resolved when they occurred?  | <p>1) A team of ODOT planning and project development members, along with CETAS Group members, developed Guidance Papers on the approach to use on each concurrence point (Purpose and Need, Range of Alternatives, Selection Criteria, and Preferred Alternative). Elevated discussions among the agencies resolved the NEPA concurrence conflict, and all CETAS participants signed a Record of Agreement/Consensus on the Location EIS in January 2004. In the agreement, ODOT committed to avoidance and mitigation measures during the design phase of the project. The measures were broadly outlined in the document, with specificity only as necessary to establish expectations for measuring future consistency with the agreement.</p> <p>2) ODOT and the DLCD have had many meetings to discuss this issue and are converging toward mutually acceptable processes and agreements. Oregon is considering shifting the responsibility of preparing goal exception findings to towns and counties, allowing local entities to complete the land use planning process before ODOT becomes involved in the transportation planning process.</p> <p>3) No response.</p> |
| Did the Pilot Project require increased or decreased levels of resources on the part of sponsors or other stakeholders? | In responses to Performance Measures, Pilot Project stakeholders reported that the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process required either “about the same” or “significantly greater” levels of agency and consultant staff time requirements than the previous ODOT process.   |

| Evaluative Question  | Responses  |
|--|--|
| <p>How successful was the Pilot Project in the view of major stakeholders?</p> | <p>Views among participating agencies on the overall success of the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning process in Oregon are mixed. The perception among many State and Federal agency participants is that the Integrated Process has the potential to streamline the environmental process and improve environmental protection, but that these goals have not been achieved on the Newberg-Dundee Transportation Improvement Project because of difficulties gaining concurrences from the CETAS and the use of the Tiered NEPA Decision-Making Process. The use of Location EISs as part of the Tiered NEPA Decision-Making Process has not met expectations. ODOT noted that the agency may not consider another large corridor project for the tiered NEPA process in the near future, as the time and cost savings have not been realized thus far.</p> <p>Stakeholders consistently expressed support for the concept of the Integrated Process and its other benefits in their responses to Performance Measures. Respondents on average agreed that the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process was improving the quality and efficiency of transportation decision-making to a moderate degree. Environmental stakeholders found that the process performed above their expectations in this area. Although there were some difficulties in decision-making during the NEPA process for the Newberg-Dundee Transportation Improvement Project, the stakeholders felt that the overall quality of the decision-making involved with the Pilot Project was an improvement over the previous process. Transportation and environmental stakeholders agreed that the Integrated Process was more successful in protecting the environment than the previous process, and environmental stakeholders cited substantial improvement in the perceived level of protection. Although there were no demonstrated cost or time savings associated with the Pilot Project, stakeholders expressed a high degree of support for the Project saying the benefits justified the necessary investment of resources.</p> |

| <b>Evaluative Question</b>  | <b>Responses</b>   |
|---|--|
| To what extent were environmental resources protected?  | Environmental and transportation stakeholders agreed that the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process provided better protection of the human and natural environments than the previous ODOT transportation planning and project development process. Environmental stakeholders reported in responses to Performance Measures that the Pilot Project process was a substantial improvement.   |
| Was this approach better or worse than previous approaches in protecting the environment?   | As stated above, environmental and transportation stakeholders found that the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process was demonstrably better in protecting the human and natural environment than the previous ODOT process.   |
| Did the Pilot Project result in any environmental enhancements?   | Because ODOT has not completed a project using the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process, there is no information available about resulting environmental enhancements provided by the Pilot Project process at this time.  |
| What approaches taken or problems encountered in the Pilot Project relate to the unique conditions or requirements in the particular state? | State planning law mandates that ODOT projects be consistent with local comprehensive plans and statewide planning goals. Local governments must concur with a project and adopt comprehensive plan amendments and goal exceptions to authorize a facility within a proposed corridor. The Transportation System Plan Guidelines require these comprehensive plan amendments and goal exceptions to be passed between the time of the Location Draft EIS and publishing of the Location Final EIS. |
| Did the Pilot Project result in process or quality improvements other than time and cost savings?   | Positive outcomes of the Integrated Process identified by participants include greater consideration of environmental quality on the part of ODOT, bringing environmental issues into focus early in the review process, and providing more opportunity to identify mitigation opportunities. The CETAS process has also been successful in providing a forum for agencies to move beyond jurisdictional boundaries for information on resource protection.  |
| To what extent were transportation decisions improved by the new approaches taken in the Pilot Project?                                     | In responses to Performance Measures, stakeholders felt that the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process was improving the quality of transportation decision-making by a moderate degree.  |



| Evaluative Question  | Responses   |
|--|---|
| <p>What lessons or conclusions can be gained from the results of the Pilot Project that are applicable at the local, state, regional, and national levels?</p> | <p>Collaborative decision-making needs to involve all decision-makers in each step of the process. For example, State and Federal regulatory and resource agencies involved in the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process believed that having more involvement and interaction with the POSTs could have resolved many of the concurrence issues encountered with the Newberg-Dundee Transportation Improvement Project.</p> <p>In collaborative decision-making and review processes, it is important to have a clear understanding among agencies as to their roles and responsibilities in the process, a commitment not to overstep those bounds, and an agreement not to revisit previous discussions and decisions.</p> <p>It is vital to have a conflict resolution process built into a streamlining effort, along with guidelines for when and how a decision-making process should be elevated to conflict resolution.</p> <p>The use of Tiered EISs to streamline the project development process requires substantial coordination and clear communication between project proponents and reviewing agencies. Project proponents must clarify with reviewing agencies which decisions will be made in a Tier 1 versus a Tier 2 document, and the level of detail necessary in each document.</p> |

*Environmental Streamlining for the Georgia Rail Passenger Program (GRPP)*

Georgia has a network of over 5,000 miles (8,047 kilometers) of railroad lines, many of which could have capacity added to handle passenger traffic. In response to Georgia's extraordinary rate of growth, traffic congestion, and air quality problems, in January 2000, the State of Georgia developed a comprehensive program to implement rail passenger services along seven existing railroad corridors. The Georgia Rail Passenger Program (GRPP) includes both commuter rail trains in the Atlanta area to help cope with growing peak-hour traffic, and intra-state/intercity trains to provide a multimodal alternative in the state's largest travel markets. The Georgia Rail Passenger Program (GRPP) contains seven commuter rail services, six intercity rail services, and the Multi-Modal Passenger Terminal (MMPT). The Multi-Modal Passenger Terminal in downtown Atlanta will serve the initial commuter rail service from Macon and Athens and new regional bus services, and will provide links to Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA).

The GRPP requires coordination among a number of State and Federal agencies. The three principal State agencies involved in the project are the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), Georgia Rail Passenger Authority (GRPA) and the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA). The main Federal agencies active on the project are the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The GRPP Pilot Project uses a system of multi-agency coordination among the State transportation agencies, concurrent document reviews for rail corridor Environmental Assessments (EAs) among all agencies, public involvement, and position funding at the Georgia Historic Preservation Division (GHPD) to quickly reach program decisions, foster a unified front when dealing with third parties, and avoid the time-consuming traditional joint decision-making processes. For more detailed information on the Pilot Project, please refer to the project narrative in Appendix B.

The GRPP Pilot Project was evaluated on three Performance Measures: Impact of Early Involvement on Environmental Review Time Requirements (#1), Improved Transportation Decision-Making (Time and Cost Savings) (#2), and Improvement in Transportation Decision-Making Process (Expedited Decision-Making and Program Delivery (#3)). The GRPP submitted the names of twelve Pilot Project stakeholders to the Pilot Project study to serve as participant-reporters. Between February 2003 and December 2004, there were nine Performance Measure responses submitted by six stakeholders from seven different Federal, State, and local transportation and environmental agencies, resulting in a response rate of 50 percent. A total of seven reports were from transportation-related agencies and two were from environmental agencies.

**Performance Measure #1: Impact of Early Involvement on Environmental Review Time Requirements.** This Performance Measure evaluates the reduction in time required for review through the use of the early public involvement process. The Performance Measure questions examined the date of the first public meeting, the date of the scoping meeting, the submission date of the Draft EA, and date of Federal lead

agency approval of the rail corridor for the Macon Corridor, the Athens Corridor, and the MMPT in Atlanta. The processing times for the EAs were then compared to national averages. National averages for EA processing time were used for comparative purposes in this Performance Measure because the State of Georgia does not maintain statistics for EA processing times within the state. There were no stakeholder responses to this Performance Measure. Results were compiled based on participant interviews, Progress Reports submitted by the Pilot Project during the research period, and information available on the Georgia Rail Passenger Program website (<http://www.garail.com/Pages/Home.html>). The compiled results of the Performance Measure questions are presented in Table 15.

From the date of the first public meeting to the issuance of a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), the EA for the Macon Corridor took eighteen months. According to a Report to Congress submitted by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), titled *FHWA Environmental Streamlining Activities During FY2003*, (5) the median completion time for the 230 EAs submitted that year was 26 months. The time frame for completion of the Macon Corridor EA was approximately 30 percent less than the national median time frame.

The Athens Corridor EA took 51 months from the first scoping meeting to the issuance of the FONSI, or approximately twice as long as the national median time frame. There were mitigating circumstances with the Athens Corridor EA. Additional time was needed because FTA wanted a concurrence letter from the Georgia Historic Preservation Division on the Determination of Effect to be included in the EA.

**Table 15. GRPP Performance Measure #1: Impact of Early Involvement on Environmental Review Time Requirements.**

| Performance Measure                                     | Date  |
|---|---|
| <i><b>Macon Corridor</b></i>                            |   |
| <b>Date of first public meeting</b>                     | <b>May 2000</b>   |
| <b>Date of scoping meeting</b>                          | <b>March 2001</b>   |
| <b>Date of submission of draft EA</b>                   | <b>August 2001</b>  |
| <b>Date of Federal lead agency approval of corridor</b> | <b>November 2001 (FONSI)</b>  |
| <i><b>Athens Corridor</b></i>                           |   |
| <b>Date of scoping meeting</b>                          | <b>December 1999</b>  |
| <b>Date of first public meeting</b>                     | <b>May 2000</b>   |
| <b>Date of submission of draft EA</b>                   | <b>June 2003</b>  |
| <b>Date of Federal lead agency approval of corridor</b> | <b>February 2004 (FONSI)</b>  |
| <i><b>Multi-Modal Passenger Terminal, Atlanta</b></i>   |   |
| <b>Date of first public meeting</b>                     | <b>Unknown</b>  |
| <b>Date of scoping meeting</b>                          | <b>Unknown</b>  |
| <b>Date of submission of draft EA</b>                   | <b>1995, Reevaluated<br/>September 2000</b>                         |
| <b>Date of Federal lead agency approval of corridor</b> | <b>June 1995<br/>FONSI determined still valid<br/>December 2000</b> |

The process was also subject to a four- to six-month delay and a one- to two-month delay as a result of requests for additional funding for completion. In participant interviews, stakeholders reported that, despite delays and a lengthened time frame, the GRPP agency review process with USFWS, GHPD, USACE, and GDOT worked well for the Athens Corridor EA preparation.

The time frame for the processing of the MMPT EA could not be evaluated as the major part of the environmental review process for this project occurred more than ten years ago. A FONSI was issued on the MMPT in 1995 and reevaluated and determined still to be valid in December 2000.

Based on the available data, the GRPP Pilot Project proved successful in reducing the NEPA processing time frames for the Macon Corridor by 30 percent over the national median time frame.

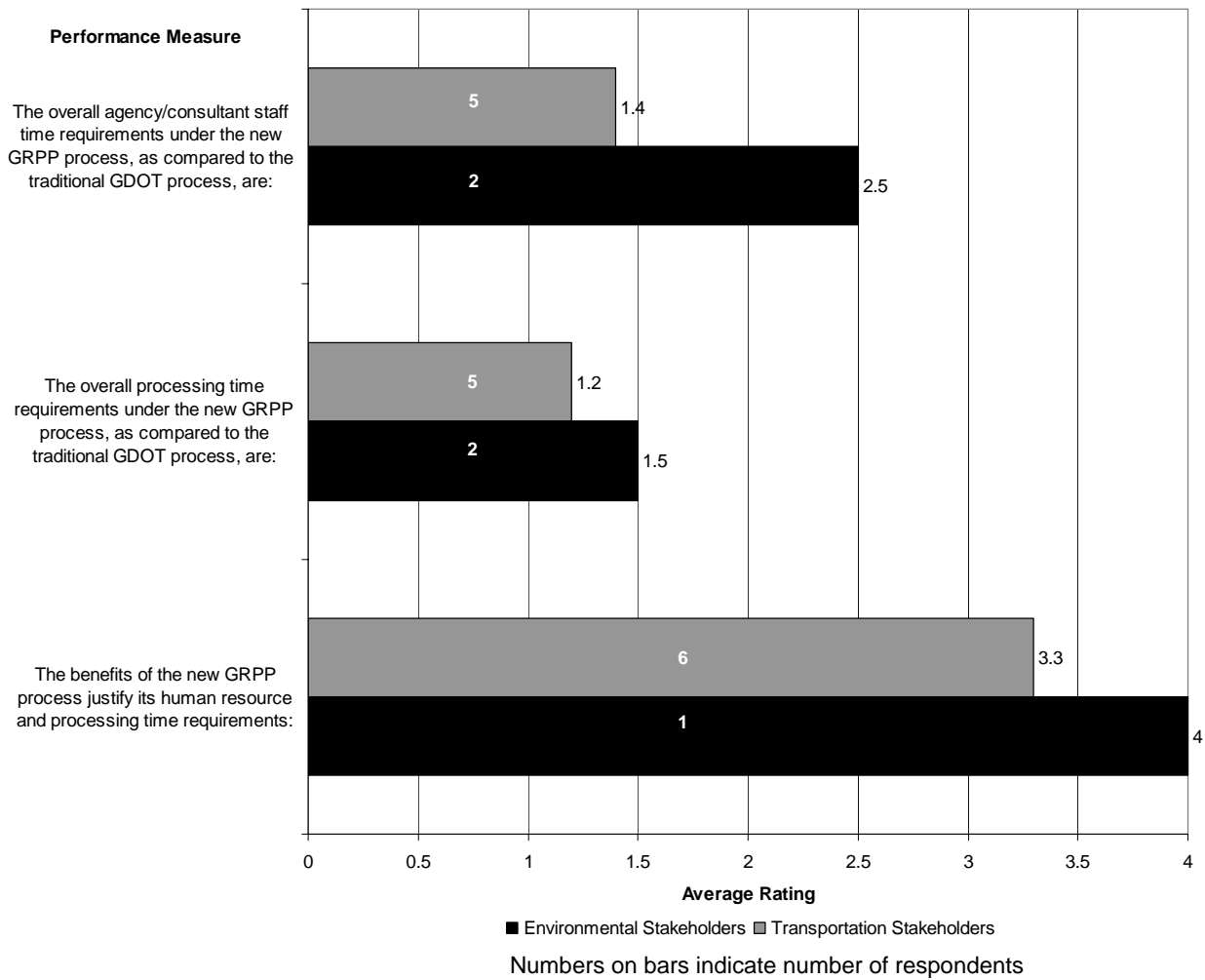
**Performance Measure #2: Improved Transportation Decision-making, Time and Cost Savings.** This Performance Measure evaluates the ability of the Pilot Project to improve the results of the environmental review process by reducing overall agency and consultant labor and processing time requirements, or enhancing the quality of final results. The Performance Measure questions address agency and consultant staff time requirements, overall processing time requirements, and whether the benefits of the new GRPP process justify its human resource and processing time requirements. The text of Performance Measure questions and a summary of responses are presented in Table 16. A comparison of responses from transportation and environmental stakeholders is presented in Figure 11.

**Table 16. GRPP Performance Measure #2: Improved Transportation Decision-making, Time and Cost Savings**

| Performance Measure  | Data Points | Average Rating |
|--|-------------|----------------|
| <b>The overall agency/consultant staff time requirements under the new GRPP process, as compared to the traditional GDOT process, are:</b> | <b>7</b>    | <b>1.7</b>     |
| <b>The overall processing time requirements under the new GRPP process, as compared to the traditional GDOT process, are:</b>              | <b>7</b>    | <b>1.3</b>     |
| <b>The benefits of the new GRPP process justify its human resource and processing time requirements:</b>                                   | <b>7</b>    | <b>3</b>       |

Key to data points (Agency/consultant staff time, overall processing time): Significantly greater=3, About the same=2, Significantly less=1, No opinion=0  
Key to data points (Justification of time requirements): Strongly agree=4, Somewhat agree=3, Somewhat disagree=2, Strongly disagree=1, No opinion=0

**Figure 11. GRPP Performance Measure #2: Comparison of Environmental and Transportation Stakeholder Responses.**



Key to data points (Agency/consultant staff time, overall processing time): Significantly greater=3, About the same=2, Significantly less=1, No opinion=0

Key to data points (Justification of time requirements): Strongly agree=4, Somewhat agree=3, Somewhat disagree=2, Strongly disagree=1, No opinion=0



Respondents on average reported that the agency and consultant staff time requirements for the GRPP Pilot Project as compared to the traditional GDOT transportation planning and project development process were between “significantly less” and “about the same.” Only one respondent reported that the time requirements were significantly greater. In comparing the responses of environmental and transportation stakeholders to this question, transportation stakeholders felt the process was more successful in reducing agency and staff time than environmental participants. Transportation stakeholders reported that the GRPP Pilot Project process staff time requirements were “significantly less” than for previous GDOT processes, while environmental participants reported the time requirements as being between “about the same” and “significantly greater” than for the previous process.

Aggregate responses regarding overall processing time requirements were similar to those for staff time requirements. Respondents on average reported that the GRPP Pilot Project took between “significantly less” and “about the same” amount of time as previous processes. Environmental and transportation stakeholders were in agreement on this Performance Measure question.

GRPP Pilot Project participants expressed strong support for the value of the process. On average, stakeholders “somewhat agreed” that the benefits of the GRPP process justified its human resource and processing time requirements. When compared separately, transportation stakeholder responses were similar, with respondents “somewhat agreeing” that the GRPP process benefits justified time and resource investment. The lone environmental respondent to this Performance Measure question “strongly agreed” with this premise.

Based on these responses, the GRPP Pilot Project was moderately successful in reducing staff and processing time requirements. Stakeholders also felt that the GRPP process was a solid investment of time and resources, as the benefits the process provided justified these expenditures.

**Performance Measure #3: Improvement in Transportation Decision-making Process, Expedited Decision-making and Program Delivery.** GRPP developed a multi-agency agreement at the State level among the GDOT, GRTA, and GRPA to define shared decision-making and production responsibilities among those agencies. Under the agreement, the three agencies established a Program Management Team comprised of members from each of the three agencies. That team holds responsibility for joint decision-making and program coordination. The Project Management Team appointed a Georgia Rail Passenger Coordinating Committee (GRPCC) to serve in an advisory capacity to the Team. Implementation of the program is the responsibility of the Rail Program Managers Committee, composed of staff from each of the three agencies. This Performance Measure evaluates joint management of the GRPP project under the GRPP multi-agency agreement and whether the management model has expedited decision-making and program delivery.

The evaluative questions solicit the opinions of Rail Program Managers, GRPCC Members, and Program Management Team members from the three agencies, and Other GRPP Stakeholders involved in the Pilot Project on issues such as communication, coordination, decision-making processes, dispute avoidance and resolution, decision implementation, and the overall effectiveness of the joint management process. The text of the evaluative questions and a summary of responses

are presented in Table 17. Comparison of the groups' responses to the evaluative questions is presented in Figure 12.

Participants as a whole registered generally positive, but middling, responses to the evaluative questions for this Performance Measure. On average, respondents rated the quality of communication among GDOT, GRPA, and GRTA in the Pilot Project process as being between "fair" and "adequate." Management agency responses were nearly identical, while the sole Other GRPP Stakeholder respondent rated the communication quality slightly lower at "fair."

Opinions were more varied concerning the quality of coordination between the management agencies under the agency agreement. The Rail Program Managers rated the coordination as "good", while GRPCC Members and Project Management Team members rated it slightly lower at between "adequate" and "good." In participant interviews, some State environmental agency participants noted that coordination between the agencies could have been improved and that more effort could have been made to give each agency a better overall understanding of the GRPP.

Rail Program Managers and Project Management Team Members were in near agreement on the quality of the decision-making processes employed in the GRPP Pilot Project, rating them between "usually somewhat effective" and "usually effective." GRPCC Members rated the processes slightly lower, calling them "usually somewhat effective."

**Table 17. GRPP Performance Measure #3: Improvement in Transportation Decision-making Process, Expedited Decision-making and Program Delivery**

| Performance Measure   | Data Points | Average Rating |
|---|-------------|----------------|
| <i>Rail Program Managers</i>  |             |                |
| 1. The quality of communication among GDOT, GRPA and GRTA is:   | 4           | 2.5            |
| 2. The coordination between Rail Program Managers and the GRPCC is:   | 4           | 4              |
| 3. The decision-making process under the GRPP MOA is:   | 4           | 2.75           |
| 4. The dispute avoidance/resolution process under the GRPP MOA is:  | 4           | 2              |
| 5. The GRPP MOA makes implementation of decisions on the GRPP more efficient and effective.   | 4           | 2.5            |
| 6. The overall effectiveness of the joint management process, taking into account cost, time, and how equitable the results are for the three participating agencies, is: | 4           | 3.25           |
| <i>GRPCC Members</i>  |             |                |
| 1. The quality of communication among GDOT, GRPA and GRTA is:   | 3           | 2.6            |
| 2. The coordination between GRPCC members, the Rail Program Managers, and the Program Management Team is:   | 3           | 3              |
| 3. The decision-making process under the GRPP MOA is:   | 3           | 2              |
| 4. The dispute avoidance/resolution process under the GRPP MOA is:  | 3           | 2              |
| 5. The GRPP MOA makes implementation of decisions on the GRPP more efficient and effective.   | 3           | 2.3            |
| 6. The overall effectiveness of the joint management process, taking into account cost, time, and how equitable the results are for the three participating agencies, is: | 3           | 2              |

Key to data points:

Questions 1, 2, and 6: Excellent=5, Good=4, Adequate=3, Fair=2, Poor=1

Questions 3 and 4: Usually very effective=4, Usually effective=3, Usually somewhat effective=2, Usually not effective=1, Not applied=0

Question 5: Strongly agree=4, Somewhat agree=3, Somewhat disagree=2, Strongly disagree=1, No opinion=0

**Table 17. GRPP Performance Measure #3: Improvement in Transportation Decision-making Process, Expedited Decision-making and Program Delivery (Continued)**

| Performance Measure  | Data Points | Average Rating     |
|--|-------------|--------------------|
| <i>Program Management Team Members</i>   |             |                    |
| <b>1. The quality of communication among GDOT, GRPA and GRTA is:</b>   | <b>3</b>    | <b>2.6</b>         |
| <b>2. The coordination among the Program Management Team, the Rail Program Managers, and the GRPCC is:</b>   | <b>3</b>    | <b>3.6</b>         |
| <b>3. The decision-making process under the GRPP MOA is:</b>   | <b>3</b>    | <b>2.6</b>         |
| <b>4. The dispute avoidance/resolution process under the GRPP MOA is:</b>  | <b>3</b>    | <b>2.5</b>         |
| <b>5. The GRPP MOA makes implementation of decisions on the GRPP more efficient and effective.</b>   | <b>3</b>    | <b>3</b>           |
| <b>6. The overall effectiveness of the joint management process, taking into account cost, time, and how equitable the results are for the three participating agencies, is:</b> | <b>3</b>    | <b>3.3</b>         |
| <i>Other GRPP Stakeholders</i>   |             |                    |
| <b>1. The quality of communication by GRPP (GDOT, GRPA and GRTA) with stakeholders is:</b>   | <b>1</b>    | <b>2</b>           |
| <b>2. The coordination by GRPP agencies (GDOT, GRPA and GRTA) with stakeholders is:</b>  | <b>1</b>    | <b>No response</b> |
| <b>3. The decision-making process used by GRPP agencies (GDOT, GRPA and GRTA) is:</b>  | <b>1</b>    | <b>No response</b> |
| <b>4. The dispute avoidance/resolution by GRPP is:</b>   | <b>1</b>    | <b>No response</b> |
| <b>5. From a stakeholder's perspective, the overall effectiveness of the GRPP joint management process under the MOA, is</b>   | <b>1</b>    | <b>No response</b> |

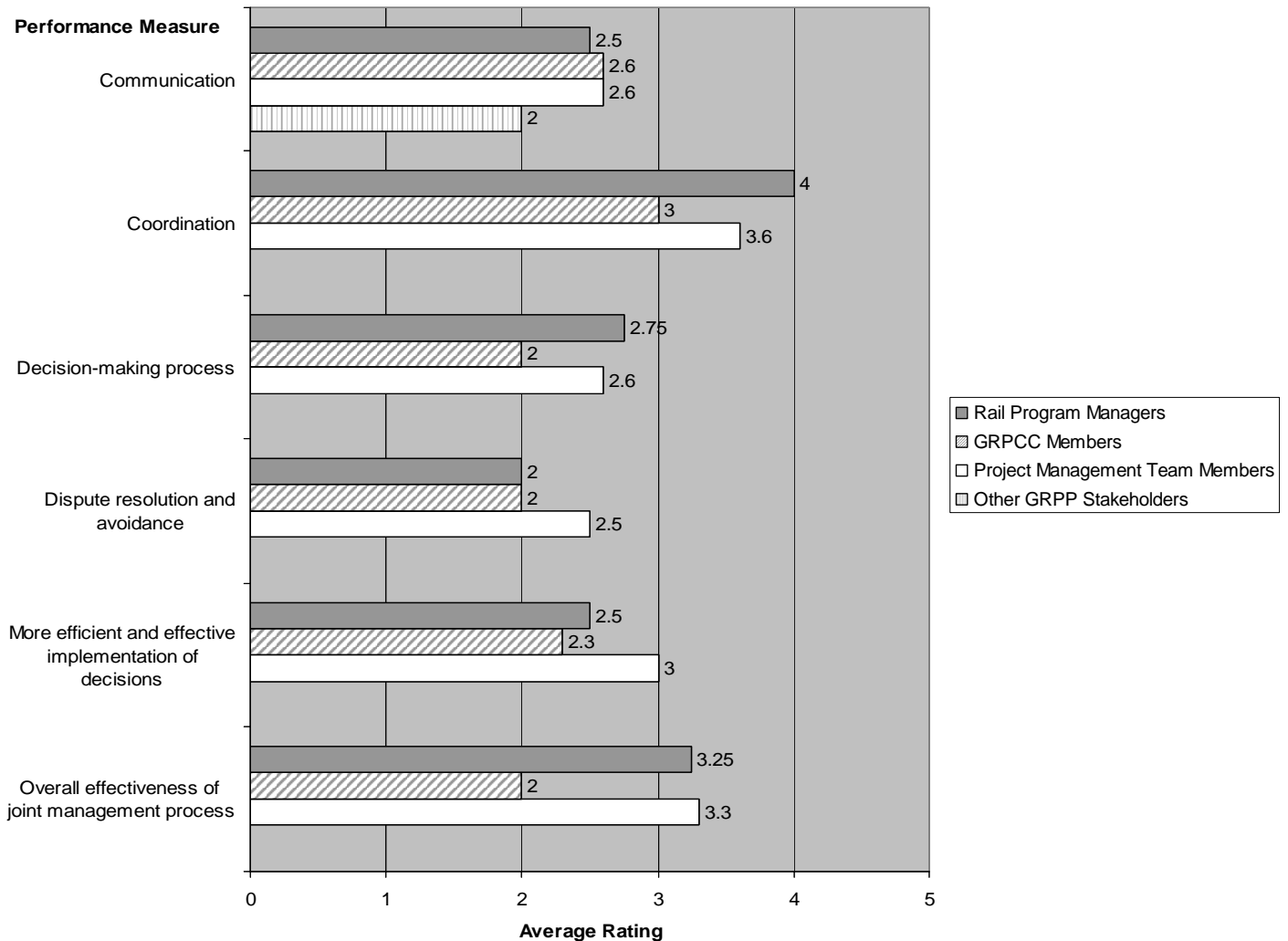
Key to data points:

Questions 1, 2, and 6: Excellent=5, Good=4, Adequate=3, Fair=2, Poor=1

Questions 3 and 4: Usually very effective=4, Usually effective=3, Usually somewhat effective=2, Usually not effective=1, Not applied=0

Question 5: Strongly agree=4, Somewhat agree=3, Somewhat disagree=2, Strongly disagree=1, No opinion=0

**Figure 12. Comparison of Stakeholder Responses on Improvement of the Transportation Decision-making Process, Expedited Decision-making and Program Delivery**



**Key to data points:**

**Communication, Coordination, and Overall effectiveness:**

Excellent=5, Good=4, Adequate=3, Fair=2, Poor=1

**Decision-making process and Dispute resolution:**

Usually very effective=4, Usually effective=3, Usually somewhat effective=2, Usually not effective=1, Not applied=0

**Efficient and effective implementation:**

Strongly agree=4, Somewhat agree=3, Somewhat disagree=2, Strongly disagree=1, No opinion=0

Rail Program Managers and GRPCC Members were in agreement on the dispute resolution and avoidance measures built into the agency agreement, rating them as “usually somewhat effective.” Project Management Team Members rated the measures slightly higher between “usually somewhat effective” and “usually effective.”

Overall, Rail Program Managers and GRPCC Members “somewhat disagreed” that the GRPP agency agreement made implementation of decisions on the GRPP project more efficient and effective. One respondent commented that the GRPP Pilot Project process was much better than no process, but presented many challenges, such as significantly different agency approaches to issues and varying quality of data received from consultants. Project Management Team Members “somewhat agreed” that the agency agreement made implementation decisions more efficient and effective.

Again, there were widely differing opinions on the overall effectiveness of the joint management process on the GRPP Pilot Project. Rail Program Managers and Project Management Team Members rated the overall effectiveness of the joint management model as “adequate” while GRPCC Members rated it as “fair.”

Based on the individual and aggregate responses from GRPP agency-agreement participants, the joint management model established by the agreement was moderately successful in its goal of expediting decision-making and program delivery. The majority of participants “somewhat disagreed” that the agreement made implementation of decisions on the GRPP project more efficient and effective, and the overall effectiveness of the joint management model was only between “adequate” and “fair.”

**Achievement of Expectations.** GRPP Pilot Project stakeholders expected several successful component pieces of the Pilot Project process to carry over into other GDOT

efforts. The expected ancillary benefits included identification of general streamlining needs and constraints through a preparatory survey of review agencies; a new comprehensive public involvement process model; a successful model State multi-agency MOU and program management team process; a new web-based public comment system; and establishment of a concurrent document review cycle among GDOT and Federal transit agencies. GDOT has not reported on the success of using processes developed for the GRPP Pilot Project for other individual projects or environmental streamlining efforts.

**Responses to Evaluative Questions.** Responses to evaluative questions for the GRPP Pilot Project were generated based on participant reporter interviews conducted through site visits and via telephone, Performance Measure Reports, and Pilot Project Progress Reports. For the GRPP Pilot Project, six participant reporters, representing 50 percent of the reporters identified by GRPP for the Pilot Project, were interviewed in person. The responses to evaluative questions are presented in Table 18.



**Table 18. GRPP: Responses to Evaluative Questions**

| <b>Evaluative Question</b>   | <b>Responses</b>  |
|--|---|
| How successful was the Pilot Project in reducing the time frame of the planning and project development process? | Based on the analysis presented in Performance Measure #1, the Pilot Project was successful in reducing the NEPA processing time frame for the Macon Corridor EA by approximately 30 percent over the national median time frame. In participant interviews, some participants reported expedited consultations under the streamlining procedures for the GRPP. There were differences of opinion among interviewed participants as to whether the Pilot Project process expedited environmental review in the case of GRPP, but they agreed that the process would save time on projects with more extensive and significant impacts.            |
| How much time was saved or lost in terms of initial expectations?  | The concurrent review process for GRPP environmental documents used by GDOT, GRTA, GRPA, FTA, FHWA, and FRA was expected to eliminate the pre-release internal review step in the typical sequential review process, and thereby substantially reduce review time. Based on the analysis presented in Performance Measure #1, the GRPP Pilot Project process reduced the time frame for the EA for the Macon Corridor by nearly 30 percent. The time frame for completion of the Athens Corridor EA was nearly twice the national average reported by FHWA in 2003, however this was partly due to additional required review and funding delays. |
| What problems or delays were encountered in achieving the objectives of the Pilot Project?                       | Additional time was needed to complete the EA for the Athens Corridor.  |
| What factors were responsible for these delays?  | FTA wanted a concurrence letter from the Georgia Historic Preservation Division on the Determination of Effect to be included in the EA. The process was also subject to a four- to six-month delay and a one- to two-month delay as a result of requests for additional funding for completion.  |
| How were problems resolved when they occurred?   | The Determination of Effect letter was prepared by the Georgia Historic Preservation Division and requests for additional funding to complete the EA were submitted.  |

| Evaluative Question   | Responses   |
|---|---|
| Did the Pilot Project require increased or decreased levels of resources on the part of sponsors or other stakeholders? | Based on responses to Performance Measure #2, the GRPP Pilot Project was moderately successful in reducing staff time requirements, with most participants reporting levels as being “significantly less” or “about the same.” In participant interviews, State environmental agency participants reported higher than average staff time spent on GRPP because of additional meetings and increased technical assistance. Some participants who reported reduced or similar staff time requirements also noted that the GRPP had few significant impacts, and therefore did not carry many of the complex and time consuming negotiations or avoidance and mitigation strategies necessary in other projects.  |
| How successful was the Pilot Project in the view of major stakeholders?   | <p>In participant interviews, feedback on the GRPP streamlining effort was largely positive and most participants felt that the effort was successful. This feeling is reinforced by responses to Performance Measure #2. When queried on whether the benefits of the GRPP process justified the necessary investment of time and human resources, stakeholders agreed that the process was a solid investment.</p> <p>Some participants noted that coordination between the agencies could have been better, and that more effort could have been made to give each agency a better overall understanding of the GRPP. In responses to Performance Measures #3, the majority of participants echoed this feeling, saying they somewhat disagreed that the joint management of the GRPP environmental permitting process made implementation of decisions on the GRPP project more efficient and effective. The majority of participants also rated the overall effectiveness of the joint management model as being between “adequate” and “fair.”</p> |
| To what extent were environmental resources protected?  | The GRPP project did not have the potential to result in significant environmental impacts. Extensive agency coordination and public involvement ensured that environmental concerns were not overlooked.   |

| Evaluative Question   | Responses   |
|---|---|
| Was this approach better or worse than previous approaches in protecting the environment?   | The lack of significant impacts associated with the GRPP project made it difficult for participants to assess whether the project improved environmental protection. Criticisms included a lack of flexibility on station locations because of funding for acquisition of right-of-way, a lack of feedback on agency comments on the reviewed documents, and lack of input among the environmental agencies on the corridor design.   |
| Did the Pilot Project result in any environmental enhancements?   | As a result of public involvement process, the GRPP team is working to address the issue of gentrification as a side effect of the GRPP. Noise control measures and wetland mitigation were cited as two of the environmental successes for the GRPP. Noise control measures included developing quieter grade crossings on the Macon Corridor and grade separation and prohibition of horns on the Athens Corridor. Participants cited identification of environmental resources before the start of the NEPA process and the higher level of environmental data brought into the process as positive changes. |
| What approaches taken or problems encountered in the Pilot Project relate to the unique conditions or requirements in the particular state? | The GRPP is somewhat unique in having three State transportation agencies involved in a program of projects (GDOT, GRPA, and GRTA).   |
| Did the Pilot Project result in process or quality improvements other than time and cost savings?   | <p>GDOT's preparatory survey of review agencies regarding their receptiveness, obstacles, advantages, review time frames and resource constraints may be helpful in other environmental study processes. The public involvement process, web-based public commenting system, and concurrent document review cycle developed for GRPP may be used to streamline other GDOT projects.</p> <p>Based on responses to Performance Measure #3, the GRPP Pilot Project process improved coordination between the participating agencies and had at least a somewhat effective decision-making process model.</p>       |

| Evaluative Question  | Responses   |
|--|---|
| <p>To what extent were transportation decisions improved by the new approaches taken in the Pilot Project?</p>   | <p>All the project components reviewed under the GRPP Pilot Project are proceeding toward implementation without revisiting environmental decisions.</p> <p>Most interviewed participants felt that the GRPP Pilot Project process improved transportation decisions. Early coordination and concurrent review were seen as the key factors in the program's success, as was the higher level of environmental data brought into the process. The GRPP public involvement process also revealed potential Environmental Justice issues in the Macon Corridor.</p>   |
| <p>What lessons or conclusions can be gained from the results of the Pilot Project that are applicable at the local, state, regional, and national levels?</p> | <p>1) Extensive early coordination with stakeholders helps expedite subsequent major project proceedings. Such coordination is important to afford each reviewing agency a clear understanding of multi-faceted projects like the GRPP. As demonstrated by the GRPP Pilot Project agency agreement, gaining firm commitments from agencies to supporting the streamlining effort is also vital.</p> <p>2) Use of the Web as a part of the public participation process is an easy and cost-effective way to disseminate information to a wide audience and to encourage feedback from affected parties. It also helps ensure that the public has access to accurate information about the project and the sponsors' perspectives on issues.</p> |

*The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)/FHWA/EPA Partnership Effort*

The EPA, Caltrans, and FHWA interact on a variety of issues during the transportation planning, project development, and permitting processes. The passage of California Senate Bill 45 in 1997 and the resulting shift of transportation decision-making to the local level meant that many land use decisions were reached early in the transportation planning process. EPA's comments and questions during the NEPA process often centered on these land use decisions. The agencies felt that a healthier relationship based on mutual understanding of agencies' missions, legal mandates, and authorities, and an understanding of why conflicts develop would lead to potential solutions to these conflicts. In 1999, Caltrans, EPA, and FHWA held a facilitated workshop called the Mare Island Accord to explore each agency's legal mandates and to determine the issues and factors that led to problems in normal business interactions. The results of the workshop were a set of recommendations on "communication", "policy", and "knowledge and information" issues and the adoption of an implementation plan in March 2000.

To accomplish the initiatives envisioned in the Mare Island Accord, the agencies established three Partnership Working Groups: the Partnership Steering Committee, the NEPA/404 Integration Workgroup, and the Partnership for Integrated Planning (PIP) Pilot Project in Merced County. The Partnership Steering Committee comprises senior management and staff of each agency. The committee discusses emerging problems, issues, opportunities, and agency priorities and reports and tracks the status of the Caltrans/FHWA/EPA Partnership Effort initiatives. The NEPA/404 Integration Process

Monitoring Workgroup was charged with evaluating the existing NEPA/404 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) process and revising the MOU to improve implementation. The PIP is as a broad-based advisory committee comprised of Federal and State transportation and resource agencies established to guide the development of Merced County's 2030 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). For more detailed information on the Caltrans/FHWA/EPA Partnership Effort, please refer to the project narrative in Appendix B.

The Caltrans/FHWA/EPA Partnership Effort was evaluated based on five Performance Measures: Improved Transportation Decision-Making (Mare Island Accord) (#1); Improved Transportation Decision-Making (Merced Partnership for Integrated Planning (PIP)) (#2); Improved Environmental Protection (Merced PIP) (#3); Improved Transportation Decision-Making (NEPA/404 Review Process) (#4); and Improved Transportation Decision-Making (Time and Cost Savings) (#5). Caltrans submitted the names of four Pilot Project stakeholders to the Pilot Project study to serve as participant-reporters. Between August 2004 and December 2004, there were three Performance Measure reports submitted by two State transportation and Federal environmental agency stakeholders, resulting in a response rate of 50 percent. Two of the reports were from transportation-related stakeholders and one was from an environmental stakeholder. The low number of participant-reporters for this Pilot Project and the paucity of responses from the reporters necessitate caution in drawing any definitive conclusions on the Performance Measures and evaluative questions. When possible, information gathered in personal interviews with Pilot Project stakeholders, during the summer of

2004, was used to supplement responses to the Performance Measures, the achievement of expectations assessment, and responses to evaluative questions.

**Performance Measure #1: Improved Transportation Decision-Making (Mare Island Accord).** This Performance Measure evaluates the implementation of the Mare Island Accord and its goal of fostering effective, collaborative efforts among Caltrans, EPA, and FHWA in the transportation and environmental planning processes. The evaluative questions compare pre-Accord and post-Accord results. Only one stakeholder submitted a response to this Performance Measure. The respondent was a transportation agency stakeholder. The text of the evaluative questions and the response are presented in Table 19. A comparison of the responses regarding pre-Accord (baseline) and post-Accord (partnership) performance for are shown in Figure 13.

Based on the reporter's response to this Performance Measure, the Caltrans/EPA/FHWA Partnership substantially improved coordination and understanding among participating transportation and regulatory and resource agencies and resulted in quality environmental and transportation decision-making.

**Performance Measure #2: Improved Transportation Decision-Making (Merced Partnership for Integrated Planning (PIP)).** This Performance Measure evaluates the effectiveness of the Merced Partnership for Integrated Planning (PIP) and its goals. The goals of the Merced PIP were to integrate environmental considerations into regional transportation planning and increase early coordination with stakeholders. The evaluative questions for this Performance Measure compare the regional transportation planning process before and after the involvement of the PIP. Only one stakeholder responded to this Performance Measure.

**Table 19. Caltrans/FHWA/EPA Partnership Performance Measure #1:  
Improved Transportation Decision-Making (Mare Island Accord)**

| Performance Measure   | Data Points | Average Rating |
|---|-------------|----------------|
| <i><b>Baseline Performance</b></i>  |             |                |
| The participating agencies consistently displayed a high level of cooperation and collaboration in their interactions.  | 1           | 2              |
| Interagency communication on transportation projects and issues was timely and effective.   | 1           | 2              |
| Caltrans offered frequent and appropriately-timed opportunities for regulatory and resource agency involvement in transportation project planning and development activities.                           | 1           | 1              |
| Interagency coordination efforts typically produced timely and high-quality information and decisions.  | 1           | 2              |
| Caltrans had an “environmental IQ” that demonstrated a broad-based understanding within Caltrans of the missions, jurisdictional concerns, and operating needs of the regulatory and resource agencies. | 1           | 2              |
| The regulatory and resource agencies had a “transportation IQ” that demonstrated a broad-based understanding of the mission, jurisdictional concerns, and operating needs of transportation agencies.   | 1           | 1              |
| On average, the environmental review process for transportation projects produced good environmental results.   | 1           | 3              |
| On average, the environmental review process for transportation projects produced good transportation results.  | 1           | 3              |
| <i><b>Partnership Performance</b></i>   |             |                |
| The participating agencies consistently display a high level of cooperation and collaboration in their interactions.  | 1           | 4              |
| Interagency communication on transportation projects and issues is timely and effective.  | 1           | 3              |
| Caltrans offers frequent and appropriately-timed opportunities for regulatory and resource agency involvement in transportation project planning and development activities.                            | 1           | 3              |
| Interagency coordination efforts typically produce timely and high-quality information and decisions.   | 1           | 3              |

Key to data points: Always=5, Usually=4, Frequently=3, Sometimes=2, Rarely or Never=1

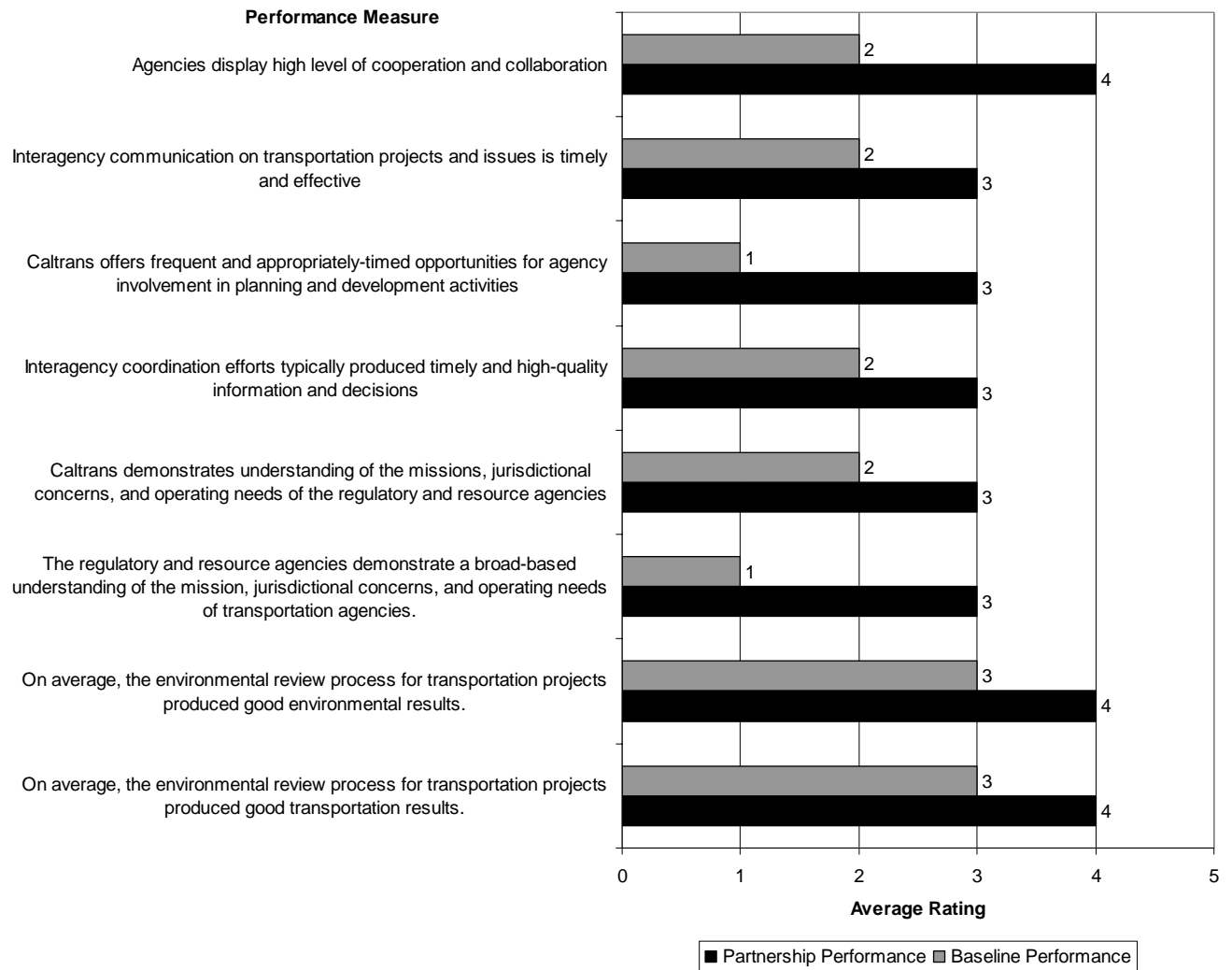


**Table 19. Caltrans/FHWA/EPA Partnership Performance Measure #1:  
Improved Transportation Decision-Making (Mare Island Accord)  
(Continued)**

| Performance Measure  | Data Points | Average Rating |
|--|-------------|----------------|
| <b>Caltrans has an “environmental IQ” that demonstrates a broad-based understanding within Caltrans of the missions, jurisdictional concerns, and operating needs of the regulatory and resource agencies.</b> | <b>1</b>    | <b>3</b>       |
| <b>The regulatory and resource agencies have a “transportation IQ” that demonstrates a broad-based understanding of the mission, jurisdictional concerns, and operating needs of transportation agencies.</b>  | <b>1</b>    | <b>3</b>       |
| <b>On average, the environmental review process for transportation projects produces good environmental results.</b>   | <b>1</b>    | <b>4</b>       |
| <b>On average, the environmental review process for transportation projects produces good transportation results.</b>  | <b>1</b>    | <b>4</b>       |

Key to data points: Always=5, Usually=4, Frequently=3, Sometimes=2, Rarely or Never=1

**Figure 13. Caltrans/FHWA/EPA Partnership Performance Measure #1:  
Comparison of Partnership and Baseline Performance**



Key to data points: Always=5, Usually=4, Frequently=3, Sometimes=2, Rarely or Never=1

The response was submitted by an environmental stakeholder. The text of the evaluative questions and a summary of responses are presented in Table 20. Based on the reporter's responses to this Performance Measure, the Caltrans/FHWA/EPA Partnership dramatically improved the level of involvement of State and Federal agencies in the transportation planning process and their level of responsiveness. The respondent did not evaluate the PIP process as compared to the previous planning process in identifying and assessing environmental effects for the plan projects. According to responses from stakeholders interviewed as part of the Research Project, the GIS-based UPLAN Urban Growth Model used during the planning process was extremely effective in modeling transportation and urban growth scenario analyses and presenting the environmental benefits and tradeoffs for transportation planning decisions. Interviewed participants credited the use of the UPLAN application with improving environmental assessment.

**Performance Measure #3: Improved Environmental Protection**

**(Merced PIP).** This Performance Measure evaluates the effectiveness of the Merced Partnership for Integrated Planning (PIP) and its goal of achieving better environmental results through an integrated transportation planning process. The evaluative questions compare results before and after the PIP process. Two participants responded to this Performance Measure, but each respondent answered only one set of evaluative questions. The text of the evaluative questions and a summary of responses are presented in Table 21.

**Table 20. Caltrans/FHWA/EPA Partnership Performance Measure #2:  
Improved Transportation Decision-making, Merced Partnership for  
Integrated Planning (PIP)**

| Performance Measure   | Data Points | Average Rating     |
|---|-------------|--------------------|
| <b><i>Baseline Performance</i></b>  |             |                    |
| <b>The process encouraged State and Federal agencies to participate in the evaluation of all significant issues.</b>  | <b>1</b>    | <b>1</b>           |
| <b>When State and Federal agency input was requested, those agencies gave the input in a timely and effective manner.</b>   | <b>1</b>    | <b>1</b>           |
| <b>The planning process used tools and procedures that were able to identify effectively the potential human and natural environmental effects of the regional plan's projects.</b> | <b>1</b>    | <b>1</b>           |
| <b><i>Partnership Performance</i></b>   |             |                    |
| <b>The process encourages State and Federal agencies to participate in the evaluation of all significant issues.</b>  | <b>1</b>    | <b>4</b>           |
| <b>When State and Federal agency input is requested, those agencies give the input in a timely and effective manner.</b>  | <b>1</b>    | <b>4</b>           |
| <b>The planning process uses tools and procedures that are able to identify effectively the potential human and natural environmental effects of the regional plan's projects.</b>  | <b>0</b>    | <b>No response</b> |

Key to data points: Always=5, Usually=4, Frequently=3, Sometimes=2, Rarely or Never=1

**Table 21. Caltrans/FHWA/EPA Partnership Performance Measure #3:  
Improved Environmental Protection**

| Performance Measure  | Data Points | Average Rating |
|--|-------------|----------------|
| <i><b>Baseline Performance</b></i>   |             |                |
| <b>The effectiveness of the process in protecting the human environment.</b>   | <b>1</b>    | <b>2</b>       |
| <b>The effectiveness of the process in protecting the natural environment</b>  | <b>1</b>    | <b>1</b>       |
| <b>The effectiveness of the process in producing decisions that remain in effect, rather than being revisited, during subsequent NEPA proceedings.</b> | <b>1</b>    | <b>1</b>       |
| <i><b>Partnership Performance</b></i>  |             |                |
| <b>The effectiveness of the process in protecting the human environment.</b>   | <b>1</b>    | <b>3</b>       |
| <b>The effectiveness of the process in protecting the natural environment</b>  | <b>1</b>    | <b>3</b>       |
| <b>The effectiveness of the process in producing decisions that remain in effect, rather than being revisited, during subsequent NEPA proceedings.</b> | <b>1</b>    | <b>3</b>       |

Key to data points: Always=5, Usually=4, Frequently=3, Sometimes=2, Rarely or Never=1

Based on responses to this Performance Measure, the integrated planning process used for the Merced County's 2030 RTP provided better protection of the human and natural environments than the previous planning process. The respondent additionally felt that the decisions made during the PIP process were of sufficient quality to remain in effect during the subsequent NEPA proceedings. However, the Merced County 2030 RTP has not had any major projects reviewed under NEPA prior to the end of the research study period; therefore this evaluative question cannot be definitively answered. Given the direct involvement of Federal, State, and regional agencies such as Caltrans, FHWA, EPA, USACE, USFWS, and NOAA Fisheries in the PIP process however, participants remain confident that the decisions made during the PIP and CEQA processes will not need to be revisited during the NEPA process.

**Performance Measure #4: Improved Transportation Decision-Making (NEPA/404 Review Process).** This Performance Measure was to evaluate the effectiveness of the Revised NEPA/404 Integration Process and its goal of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the NEPA/404 review process. The evaluative questions compare results before the revised integration agreement with results under the revised agreement. Evaluation of this Performance Measure was not possible because Council on Environmental Quality guidance on Purpose and Need, issued in 2004, (6) delayed the NEPA/404 MOU revision process.

**Performance Measure #5: Improved Transportation Decision-Making (Time and Cost Savings).** This Performance Measure evaluates the results of the Merced PIP and Revised NEPA/404 Integration Process and their goals of improving the results of the environmental review process by increasing return on investment. Return on

investment is characterized as a reduction in overall agency and consultant labor and processing time requirements, and/or enhancement of the quality of final results. Only one stakeholder responded to the evaluative questions for this Performance Measure. Because the Revised NEPA/404 Integration Process was not implemented, the responses apply only to the Merced PIP. The text of the evaluative questions and the responses are presented in Table 22.

Based on the response to this Performance Measure, the Merced PIP process did not require additional levels of agency or consultant staff time and required processing time similar to that of previous planning efforts. The respondent “somewhat agreed” that the PIP justified the human resource and processing time requirements, indicating that the effort was a positive investment.

**Achievement of Expectations.** Caltrans had a number of predictions and expectations for how the Caltrans/EPA/FHWA Partnership would improve communication, policy, and level of knowledge between the partnership agencies. Caltrans predicted that the NEPA/404 Integration Process Monitoring Workgroup, the Merced County PIP Pilot Study, and training coordination would be the most valuable initiatives of the Caltrans/FHWA/EPA Partnership Effort. Based upon feedback in study progress reports, these initiatives began improving interagency understanding and communication almost immediately.

Caltrans anticipated that the revised NEPA/404 MOU would result in a more efficient process by better defining the projects that would be subject to the merger process and by addressing changes in the Section 404 permit requirements since the drafting of the original MOU. This expectation cannot be evaluated.

**Table 22. Caltrans/FHWA/EPA Partnership Performance Measure #5:  
Improved Transportation Decision-making, Time and Cost Savings**

| Performance Measure   | Data Points | Average Rating |
|---|-------------|----------------|
| <b>Agency/consultant staff time requirements under the new processes, as compared to the previous processes, are:</b><br><i>Key to results: Significantly greater=3, About the Same=2, Significantly less=1</i> | <b>1</b>    | <b>2</b>       |
| <b>Processing time requirements under the new processes, as compared to the previous processes, are:</b><br><i>Key to results: Significantly greater=3, About the Same=2, Significantly less=1</i>              | <b>1</b>    | <b>2</b>       |
| <b>The benefits of the new processes justify their human resource and processing time requirements:</b><br><i>Key to results: Strongly agree=4, Somewhat agree=3, Somewhat disagree=2, Strongly disagree=1</i>  | <b>1</b>    | <b>3</b>       |



The revised NEPA/404 MOU was delayed as a result of Council on Environmental Quality guidance on NEPA Purpose and Need issued in 2004.

As part of the Training and Outreach Coordination component of the Pilot Project, the partnership agencies held trainings on environmental planning, air quality, cumulative impacts, and the new Caltrans Programmatic Agreement for Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Several planned trainings were affected by budget constraints within the participating agencies. Feedback on the trainings from participants interviewed for the Pilot Project study noted that the partnership training and outreach efforts were more successful than previous efforts, but thought that training needed to be more formal, long term, and jointly initiated by all three agencies.

The Merced County PIP Pilot Study is viewed as a strong success by Pilot Project stakeholders and other participants, particularly because of the innovative public outreach efforts associated with the project. The success of the Merced County PIP Pilot Study in terms of environmental streamlining has not yet been quantified, as major projects from the 2030 RTP have not complete the NEPA process.

Caltrans expected to further strengthen the positive ties made with FHWA and EPA during the partnership effort by increasing the frequency of the Partnership Steering Committee meetings, holding an environmental summit, and increasing training and rotational assignment opportunities. The Partnership Steering Committee is now meeting quarterly, but no environmental summit has been held to date. Training and rotational assignment opportunities have been recently hampered by a lack of funding, as well as staffing shortfalls and logistical difficulties.

**Responses to Evaluative Questions.** Responses to evaluative questions for the Caltrans/EPA/FHWA Partnership Pilot Project were generated based on participant reporter interviews conducted through site visits and via telephone, Performance Measure Reports, and Pilot Project Progress Reports. For the Caltrans Partnership, one participant reporter, representing 25 percent of the reporters identified by Caltrans for the Pilot Project, was interviewed in person. The responses to evaluative questions are presented in Table 23.

**Table 23. Caltrans/FHWA/EPA Partnership: Responses to Evaluative Questions**

| <b>Evaluative Question</b>   | <b>Responses</b>  |
|--|---|
| How successful was the Pilot Project in reducing the time frame of the planning and project development process? | Based on the response to Performance Measure #5, the time frame for the transportation planning process for the Merced RTP under the PIP was about the same as for previous RTP processes. The Merced PIP could not be evaluated in terms of environmental streamlining as major projects from Merced County RTP have not yet completed the NEPA review process. This Performance Measure could not be evaluated for the revised NEPA/404 MOU, as the document was not implemented.                               |
| How much time was saved or lost in terms of initial expectations?  | The amount of time saved or lost in terms of initial expectations was not quantified by respondents to Performance Measure #5 or interview participants.  |
| What problems or delays were encountered in achieving the objectives of the Pilot Project?                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) The Partnership Steering Committee did not initially meet regularly.</li><li>2) Training and outreach efforts initially moved forward, but were not as extensive as initially scoped.</li><li>3) Interagency rotational job assignments designed to increase understanding and levels of knowledge between agency staff were limited.</li><li>4) The revised NEPA/404 MOU negotiation process was delayed and ultimately, the revised MOU was not implemented.</li></ul> |

| Evaluative Question   | Responses   |
|---|---|
| What factors were responsible for these delays?   | <p>1) Disruption in the Partnership Steering Committee meeting schedule was partially caused by personnel changes. Most of the original drafters of the Mare Island Accord, who were mid-level managers, are no longer in the same positions. The lack of Steering Committee meetings was also attributed to the fact that no single agency had been designated the lead the effort.</p> <p>2) Budget constraints within the agencies limited the scope of training and outreach coordination activities.</p> <p>3) Staffing shortfalls, budget constraints, and location issues limited interagency rotational job assignments.</p> <p>4) The revised NEPA/404 MOU was not implemented as a result of CEQ guidance on Purpose and Need Statements issued in 2004. The workload associated with revising the MOU was substantial.</p> |
| How were problems resolved when they occurred?  | <p>1) In 2003, Caltrans worked to enhance the activity level of the Partnership Steering Committee. As a result, there were Committee meetings held in April 2003 and July 2003, and two additional meetings in late 2003 and early 2004. The process has since been rejuvenated and the group is meeting regularly.</p> <p>2) Unresolved.</p> <p>3) Unresolved.</p> <p>4) Unresolved.</p>  |
| Did the Pilot Project require increased or decreased levels of resources on the part of sponsors or other stakeholders? | <p>According to the response to Performance Measure #5, the Merced PIP required about the same level of agency and consultant staff time as previous RTP processes. Interview participants did not substantively comment on this issue.</p>   |

| Evaluative Question   | Responses  |
|---|--|
| How successful was the Pilot Project in the view of major stakeholders?                   | Based on responses to Performance Measures, stakeholders in the Pilot Project found that the Caltrans/EPA/FHWA Partnership met many of its stated goals. The Partnership improved coordination and understanding among the participating agencies and increased their involvement in transportation planning processes before the initiation of the NEPA process. Stakeholders believed that the Merced PIP improved protection of the human and natural environments and that its results justified the necessary expenditures of human resource and processing time. |
| To what extent were environmental resources protected?                                    | According to responses to Performance Measure #3, the Merced PIP was more successful than previous transportation planning processes in protecting the human and natural environments. The UPLAN GIS application used for the PIP was credited with providing superior analysis of impacts on endangered species and their habitat, wetlands, and important farmlands. The application was also useful in developing recommendations on the optimum locations for development and transportation infrastructure.   |
| Was this approach better or worse than previous approaches in protecting the environment? | The respondent to Performance Measure #3 found that the Pilot Project process was more effective in protecting the human and natural environments than previous transportation planning processes.   |
| Did the Pilot Project result in any environmental enhancements?                           | With the Merced PIP, land use, transportation, ecosystem preservation decisions, and local community issues were addressed through the planning process. The UPLAN GIS application facilitated analysis of impacts on endangered species and their habitat, wetlands, and important farmlands, and helped develop recommendations on optimum locations for development and placement of transportation infrastructure.   |

| Evaluative Question   | Responses  |
|---|--|
| What approaches taken or problems encountered in the Pilot Project relate to the unique conditions or requirements in the particular state?             | The number of entities that Caltrans must deal with to conduct business is high. For example, there are potentially 43 different State agencies, as well as local agencies, that could be involved in Caltrans activities. In California, the Regional Transportation Plans prepared by the Metropolitan Planning Organizations as part of the Federal planning process also must meet California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements. CEQA requires a cumulative impact analysis.   |
| Did the Pilot Project result in process or quality improvements other than time and cost savings?   | The NEPA/404 Integration Process Monitoring Workgroup, Merced County PIP Pilot Study, and training coordination have improved interagency understanding and communication.   |
| To what extent were transportation decisions improved by the new approaches taken in the Pilot Project?   | Pilot Project stakeholders reported in responses to Performance Measures and in participant interviews that the improved coordination and understanding among the partnership agencies would facilitate improved transportation decision-making. The extent of improvement as demonstrated by the Merced PIP and the revised NEPA/404 MOU cannot be determined at this time as major projects from the Merced County 2030 RTP have not been completed under NEPA and the NEPA/404 MOU has not yet been implemented.  |
| What lessons or conclusions can be gained from the results of the Pilot Project that are applicable at the local, state, regional, and national levels? | <p>The Merced PIP developed methods for conducting effective multi-party planning processes on a broad scale. The project also demonstrated the benefits of high-level GIS capabilities. Use of the PIP approach to performing cumulative impacts analyses for groups of projects may lead to the development of a standardized method for such analyses that may be able to be implemented across California and in other states.</p> <p>Revising or creating programmatic agreements or MOUs are substantial undertakings. Given staff shortages at the DOTs and other agencies, the use of consultants would facilitate these efforts and prevent delays in implementation.</p> |

## *EIS Screening Worksheets in Wisconsin*

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) has used Screening Worksheets (SWs) for Environmental Assessments (EAs) for more than 20 years. The SWs describe the proposed action and its direct, indirect, and cumulative effect evaluations and mitigation measures in an easy-to-complete question and answer format. The worksheets have been an effective tool for determining whether a given project will require an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Pilot Project is to take these worksheets to the next level and use them to create an EIS.

WisDOT developed three types of worksheets for the EIS: Basic, Factor, and EIS. The “Basic Sheets” must be completed for all projects and include such sections as Executive Summary, Purpose and Need, and Alternatives. The “Factor Sheets” are project-specific sheets that focus on a specific resource and are completed only for those resources that would be affected. Impacts and mitigation are described on these sheets. “EIS Sheets” are required for the information that is specific to the EIS, such as the list of agencies and organizations to whom the document was sent. The EIS content generated through the SWs satisfies FHWA EIS regulations while taking an innovative approach to format and organization.

WisDOT prepared EISs using SWs for two highway projects as part the Pilot Project: State Route 23, a 21-mile (34-kilometer), mostly rural corridor between Fond du Lac and Sheboygan; and Verona Road (Route 151)/West Beltline (U.S. 12/14) Project in Madison, a much more urban corridor with heavier traffic. For more detailed

information about the EIS Screening Worksheets in Wisconsin Pilot Project, please refer to the project narrative in Appendix B.

The EIS Screening Worksheets were evaluated based on three Performance Measures: Completeness of Documentation and Reduction of Rework (#1), Time Savings (#2), and Reduction in Documentation and Rework (#3). WisDOT submitted the names of seven Pilot Project stakeholders to the Pilot Project study to serve as participant-reporters. Between January 2003 and December 2004, there were six Performance Measure responses submitted by three stakeholders from two Federal and State environmental agencies, resulting in a response rate of 42 percent. Transportation stakeholders did not submit any responses to Performance Measures, but their views were registered in Pilot Project progress reports. This information was incorporated as applicable in the evaluation of Performance Measures. Performance Measure respondents only answered evaluative questions for Performance Measure #1; no responses were registered for Performance Measures #2 and #3. However, because of the paucity of responses from participant-reporters, it is not possible to draw definitive conclusions on the success of the use of EIS SWs in Wisconsin.

**Performance Measure #1: Completeness of Documentation and Reduction of Rework.** This Performance Measure evaluates the effectiveness of the EIS Screening Worksheet in its goal to make EIS adequacy reviews faster and easier. Respondents were asked to evaluate the Performance Measure quarterly during the study period. The text of the evaluative questions and a summary of responses are presented in Table 24.



**Table 24. EIS Screening Worksheets in Wisconsin Performance Measure #1:  
Completeness of Documentation and Reduction of Rework**

| Performance Measure   | Data Points | Average Rating |
|---|-------------|----------------|
| <b>The format and organization of Screening Worksheet EISs make them easier to read and understand than those of traditional WisDOT EISs.</b>   | <b>5</b>    | <b>3</b>       |
| <b>The standardized approach of the Screening Worksheet EISs still provides sufficient flexibility to permit EIS preparers to effectively address projects with unique characteristics, complexities and needs.</b> | <b>4</b>    | <b>2.75</b>    |
| <b>Screening Worksheet EISs take less time and effort to review for adequacy than traditional WisDOT EISs.</b>  | <b>4</b>    | <b>2.75</b>    |
| <b>The structure of Screening Worksheet EISs produces a more thorough and focused document, and reduces the need to request WisDOT to provide additional information.</b>   | <b>5</b>    | <b>3</b>       |

Key to data points: Strongly agree=4, Somewhat agree=3, Somewhat disagree=2, Strongly disagree=1, No opinion=0

Based on responses to this Performance Measure, stakeholders agreed that the use of SWs for EISs improved the readability of the document and produced a more thorough and focused document. Respondents “somewhat disagreed” that the standardized approach of the SW EISs provided enough flexibility for all projects or took less time and effort to review for adequacy. Comments submitted with Performance Measure responses supported these views. One commenter noted that the use of SWs to generate and EIS improved the coordination of text and graphics, but found the document difficult to navigate through despite explanatory text on its organization. There was also inappropriate use of a yes/no question format in some sections resulting in inadequate evidence of analysis. Another participant commented on the difficulty of standardizing EISs with the use of SWs. They observed that the Verona Road Project Draft EIS did not resemble the original vision for an EIS generated with SWs because of the level of detail needed to present alternatives and impacts. Based on these comments, it appears that the success of EIS Screening Worksheets in making adequacy reviews faster and easier was limited.

**Performance Measure #2: Time Savings.** This Performance Measure was to evaluate the effects of the EIS Screening Worksheets on processing time. Evaluative questions compared agency review times for Draft EISs and Final EISs that used traditional preparation processes versus those that used the SWs. There were no responses to this Performance Measure and stakeholders did not substantively comment on this issue in interviews. WisDOT reported that the typical EIS process for a new major project in Wisconsin takes approximately five years. At present, the Verona Road/West Beltline Project and the State Road 23 Project have been in the NEPA review process

since 2001 and are scheduled to be completed in 2005. If the review processes for both projects are completed on schedule, WisDOT will have realized a time savings of approximately one year with the use of Screening Worksheets to generate EISs.

**Performance Measure #3: Reduction in Documentation and Rework.** This Performance Measure was to evaluate the ability of the EIS Screening Worksheet process to reduce the amount of documentation and the instances of rework required for EISs. The evaluative questions compare the page length of WisDOT Draft EIS and Final EIS documents done without the Worksheet to the page length of such documents done using the Worksheet. WisDOT's stated goal was to reduce the length of EISs to between 150 and 300 pages through the use of SWs. There were no responses to this Performance Measure. In comments submitted with a response to Performance Measure #1, one respondent stated that thus far the Draft EISs generated using the SWs were not any shorter than traditional EISs (the Verona Road/West Beltline EIS was 438 pages) but seemed to include less irrelevant information.. The participant indicated that there were still opportunities to make the EIS shorter and more concise, such as eliminating redundant figures and text. The State Road 23 Draft EIS, issued after the Draft EIS for the Verona Road/West Beltline document, was 142 pages, indicating that the SW format can be effective in reducing document length.

**Achievement of Expectations.** Using the SWs was expected to result in streamlining of the National Environmental Policy review process by standardizing the format of EISs and requiring only the information needed to identify, evaluate, and mitigate adverse environmental effects. WisDOT hoped to reduce the EIS length to approximately 150 to 300 pages (not including technical appendices or comment letters)

and to increase the uniformity of the documents. Results on the success in reducing document size are mixed. The Verona Road/West Beltline Draft EIS was 438 pages, while the State Road 23 Draft EIS was only 142 pages. Comments submitted with responses to Performance Measures indicated that WisDOT's expectations regarding uniformity have not been met. The Verona Road/West Beltline EIS did not resemble the original standardized WisDOT vision for an EIS generated with SWs because of the level of detail needed to present alternatives and impacts.

A typical EIS process for a new major project in Wisconsin takes approximately five years to complete and the EISs are voluminous documents. WisDOT believed the EIS SWs would shorten environmental review times by focusing on the issues that were of consequence and by making the documents easier to review and, at the same time, foster increased public awareness. At this time, the two transportation projects being reviewed using the Screening Worksheet EISs have not completed the NEPA process. Both the Verona Road/West Beltline and State Road 23 NEPA processes began in 2001 and are scheduled for completion in 2005. If the Final EISs for the projects are completed on schedule, the use of EIS Screening Worksheets may have saved approximately one year over the traditional EIS process in Wisconsin.

WisDOT believed the SWs would foster increased public awareness of projects and project impacts by presenting information in a straightforward and accessible manner and by focusing only on the issues of greatest consequence. Achievement of this expectation cannot be evaluated, as there has been no solicitation of input on these issues from the public.

**Responses to Evaluative Questions.** Responses to the evaluative questions for the EIS Screening Worksheets in Wisconsin Pilot Project were generated through analysis of the responses to Pilot Project Performance Measures, Pilot Project Progress Reports, and telephone interviews with participant reporters during the research period. The evaluative questions and responses are presented in Table 25.

**Table 25. EIS Screening Worksheets in Wisconsin: Responses to Evaluative Questions**

| Evaluative Question  | Responses   |
|--|---|
| How successful was the Pilot Project in reducing the time frame of the planning and project development process? | <p>Neither of the two transportation projects being reviewed with Screening Worksheet EISs has completed the NEPA process. If the projects complete the NEPA process as presently scheduled, the processing time for the Screening Worksheet EISs will be less than for traditional EISs.</p> <p>In responses to Performance Measure #1, stakeholders somewhat disagreed that the Screening Worksheet EISs took less time to review for adequacy than traditional EISs. This was attributed to difficulty in navigating through the document and the inappropriate use of a yes/no question format for some sections.</p> |
| How much time was saved or lost in terms of initial expectations?  | <p>A typical EIS process for a new major project in Wisconsin takes approximately five years to complete. The two transportation projects being reviewed with the use of Screening Worksheet EISs will each take approximately four years if they are completed as scheduled.</p>   |
| What problems or delays were encountered in achieving the objectives of the Pilot Project?                       | <p>1) The initial NEPA review schedules for the Verona Road/West Beltline and State Road 23 projects needed to be lengthened</p> <p>2) There were problems adapting the Screening Worksheets for use on an EIS.</p> <p>3) Reviewers initially found the Verona Road/West Beltline EIS difficult to navigate and unclear.</p>  |

| Evaluative Question   | Responses  |
|---|--|
| What factors were responsible for these delays?   | <p>1) More time than anticipated was spent on public and agency involvement to refine the purpose and need, to determine the alternatives to be considered, and to identify the environmental issues and concerns that will be addressed in the EISs. WisDOT's recent implementation of Context Sensitive Design also required more meetings to occur than initially expected.</p> <p>2) Because the Verona Road Project had a number of alternatives and options, WisDOT was concerned that use of the SWs would be confusing.</p> <p>3) The worksheet format did not present information in a sensible way. Worksheet names were used in cross-references instead of page numbers.</p> |
| How were problems resolved when they occurred?  | <p>1) Additional public and agency meetings were held to resolve these issues.</p> <p>2) WisDOT decided to use Basic Sheets to discuss the whole project as well as to use the Basic Sheets for each alternative. The Factor Sheets discuss the details of the impacts of each of the alternatives.</p> <p>3) WisDOT revised the Verona Road Draft EIS to facilitate easier review of the document and improve document clarity.</p>   |
| Did the Pilot Project require increased or decreased levels of resources on the part of sponsors or other stakeholders? | <p>Response to this question was mixed. Based on responses to Performance Measure #1, participants disagreed that the Screening Worksheet EISs took less time and effort to review for adequacy than traditional EISs. This was attributable to the initial difficulty in navigating the documents. Overall, reporters agreed that the SW format made the documents more readable and easier to understand, and reduced the need to request more information. The length of the EISs generated with Screening Worksheets was not demonstrably smaller than traditional EISs, indicating that preparation time may not have been reduced.</p>   |

| Evaluative Question   | Responses  |
|---|--|
| How successful was the Pilot Project in the view of major stakeholders?   | Response on this topic from participant-reporters and stakeholder interviews was limited. Based on response to Performance Measure #1, the success of the Screening Worksheets in creating a thorough, adequate, readable, and comprehensible document was mixed. The time savings of approximately one year predicted for the EIS process for the Verona Road/West Beltline and State Road 23 projects is a more substantive marker of success.   |
| To what extent were environmental resources protected?  | Neither of the two transportation projects being reviewed with a Screening Worksheet EIS has completed the NEPA review process, preventing further analysis of this issue. WisDOT expected that the level of environmental analysis and consideration of environmental impacts for projects that used SWs for EISs would be the same as would occur if the projects had traditional EISs.  |
| Was this approach better or worse than previous approaches in protecting the environment?   | Respondents to Performance Measure #1 indicated that the EISs generated with Screening Worksheets were more thorough and focused than traditional EISs, perhaps indicating that environmental resource protection was improved through the more targeted approach facilitated by use of the worksheets. Other comments indicated that the use of a yes/no question format on the worksheets for some impact topics was inadequate.   |
| Did the Pilot Project result in any environmental enhancements?   | Neither of the two transportation projects being reviewed under NEPA with a Screening Worksheet EIS has completed the review process, preventing further analysis of this issue. The degree of environmental review and consideration of environmental impacts was the same for projects using SWs for EISs as for projects using traditional EISs. The use of SWs facilitates a more effective way of reporting the same information that has always been gathered in the NEPA process. |
| What approaches taken or problems encountered in the Pilot Project relate to the unique conditions or requirements in the particular state? | WisDOT has been using SWs for Environmental Assessments (EAs) for more than 20 years.  |



| Evaluative Question   | Responses  |
|---|--|
| Did the Pilot Project result in process or quality improvements other than time and cost savings?   | The use of SWs in generating EISs was not designed to result in process or quality improvements other than time and cost savings. The SWs represent a different way of reporting the same information that has always been gathered in a more effective manner.  |
| To what extent were transportation decisions improved by the new approaches taken in the Pilot Project?   | WisDOT expected that the level of environmental analysis and the consideration of environmental impacts for projects that used SWs for EISs would be the same as would occur if the projects had traditional EISs. The SWs represent a different way of reporting the same information that has always been gathered rather than a shift in the decision-making processes. |
| What lessons or conclusions can be gained from the results of the Pilot Project that are applicable at the local, state, regional, and national levels? | There is good potential that other EIS projects within Wisconsin could use the SWs approach and that other states will be able to adopt and modify the worksheets for use in their states.   |

### *Caltrans State and Federal Agency Position Funding Effort*

Caltrans' project development workload had increased substantially in recent years, creating a backlog at the resource agencies that affected Caltrans project delivery. Caltrans initiated the Position Funding Effort to take advantage of TEA-21's Section 1309(e) provisions that allow State Departments of Transportation to enter into cost reimbursement agreements to provide Federal-aid funds to Federal agencies to hire additional staff. The goal of the Caltrans Position Funding Effort is to shorten project time frames by facilitating early agency participation in project planning and design decisions, timely field reviews and negotiations, and faster processing of project and emergency permits.

The mechanics of using Federal funding to support the Caltrans/State and Federal Agency Position Funding Effort proved difficult to administer because the Position Funding Effort is a program, rather than a project, and there was no Federal category of funding that clearly covered the positions. Caltrans also wanted to fund positions at State agencies as well as Federal agencies. Caltrans, therefore, decided to use State funds for the Position Funding Effort rather than Federal-aid reimbursement. Caltrans fills agency positions using Federal and State agency employees; Caltrans employees hired for the other agency's location; and employees on rotation to other agencies. Caltrans has funded positions at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the California Coastal Commission (CCC), California Department of Fish and Game, NOAA Fisheries, the State Historic Preservation Office, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the U.S. Fish

and Wildlife Service. For more detailed information on the Caltrans/State and Federal Agency Position Funding Effort, please refer to the project narrative in Appendix B.

The Caltrans/State and Federal Agency Position Funding Effort was evaluated based on two Performance Measures: Improved Transportation Decision-Making (Number of Positions Funded) (#1) and Improved Transportation Decision-Making (Effect of Position Funding) (#2). Caltrans submitted the names of twelve Pilot Project stakeholders to the Pilot Project study to serve as participant-reporters. Between October 2003 and December 2004, there were twelve Performance Measure Reports submitted by ten stakeholders from five Federal and State transportation and environmental agencies, resulting in a response rate of 83 percent. Ten of the reports were submitted by environmental stakeholders and one report was submitted by a transportation stakeholder. Additional perspective on the Position Funding Effort from transportation stakeholders was gathered through participant interviews. Responses to performance measures are summarized and evaluated below.

**Performance Measure #1: Improved Transportation Decision-Making (Number of Positions Funded).** This Performance Measure evaluates the effectiveness of the interagency position funding initiative and its goals of creating and sustaining additional capacity within agencies reviewing Caltrans projects. The Performance Measure compares the number of positions initially funded and occupied with the number of positions funded and occupied over the course of the study period. Participants were asked to report on this Performance Measure quarterly. There were no responses to this Performance Measure, but some of the relevant information could be compiled from Pilot Project progress reports. Beginning in July 1999, Caltrans had the capacity to fund

21 positions in seven agencies. The initial round of hiring that took place in 2000 filled 9 positions among the seven agencies. Caltrans has not been successful in funding and filling the originally proposed 21 positions during the course of the study period. As of August 2004, there were 13 occupied positions (12 agency positions and 1 Caltrans position) among five of the seven participating agencies (Table 26.).

Difficulties in achieving full staffing capacity have been attributed to high turnover and subsequent problems filling vacant positions. These problems include greatly increased hiring times because of the Federal civil service hiring process, difficulty finding experienced staff willing to take a short-term contract position, periodic hiring freezes, and disparities in pay between funded positions and comparable positions funded by the hosting agency. Caltrans is working to find ways to fill vacancies quickly, reallocate funds from agencies that could not fill their positions to agencies that could, and reallocate funds within agencies from office locations that could not fill their positions to office locations that could.

**Performance Measure #2: Improved Transportation Decision-Making (Effect of Position Funding).** This Performance Measure evaluates the effectiveness of interagency position funding and its goal of creating and sustaining additional capacity within agencies reviewing Caltrans projects. The Performance Measure examines perceptions of the effect of position funding on the agency review process over time. The text of the evaluative questions for the Performance Measure and a summary of responses are presented in Table 27.

**Table 26. Caltrans Position Funding: Allocation of Caltrans-Funded Positions  
by Agency (As of August 2004)**

| Agency  | Number of Positions Funded by Caltrans |
|---|--|
| <b>U.S. Environmental Protection Agency</b>                                 | <b>2</b>                               |
| <b>National Marine Fisheries Service<br/>(Santa Rosa Office)</b>            | <b>2</b>                               |
| <b>U.S. Army Corps of Engineers<br/>(Los Angeles District)</b>              | <b>3</b>                               |
| <b>U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service<br/>(Sacramento and Carlsbad Offices)</b> | <b>2</b>                               |
| <b>California Department of Fish &amp; Game</b>                             | <b>0</b>                               |
| <b>California Coastal Commission</b>  | <b>3</b>                               |
| <b>Office of Historic Preservation</b>                                      | <b>0</b>                               |
| <b>Caltrans (Program Coordinator)</b>                                       | <b>1</b>                               |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>13</b>                              |

Source: Caltrans

**Table 27. Caltrans Position Funding Performance Measure #2: Improved Transportation Decision-making (Effect of Position Funding)**

| Performance Measure  | Data Points | Average Rating |
|--|-------------|----------------|
| <b>Applications are processed within the time agreed to by Caltrans and the agency.</b>  | <b>12</b>   | <b>4.1</b>     |
| <b>Disagreements on projects and applications are resolved in an effective and timely manner.</b>  | <b>12</b>   | <b>3.9</b>     |
| <b>Caltrans establishes and communicates clearly its project priorities so that the reviewing agency can plan effective work schedules.</b>  | <b>12</b>   | <b>3.1</b>     |
| <b>Work products are consistently of high quality, meeting the reviewing agency's needs.</b>   | <b>12</b>   | <b>2.9</b>     |
| <b>The reviewing agency consistently meets expectations for staff availability and participation in project reviews and decision-making.</b> | <b>11</b>   | <b>4.3</b>     |

Key to results: Always=5, Usually=4, Frequently=3, Sometimes=2, Rarely or Never=1

Based on responses to this Performance Measure, many aspects of the position funding effort are functioning well. The funded positions have typically been effective in processing applications within agreed upon time frames and the funded staff are available for participation in project reviews and decision-making.

Respondents also reported that disagreements on projects were usually resolved in a timely manner. Respondents reported that Caltrans “frequently” made project priorities clear for funded position-holders to help them plan effective work schedules. One respondent, however, commented that the transportation agencies could be better about spacing the time frames for requests to avoid excessive workloads. Participants also noted in interviews that prioritization of Caltrans projects has been inconsistent, and cited the need for more coordination with Caltrans on this issue. Work product quality emerged as a potential area of concern in ratings and comments. Respondents reported that though the work products submitted to the reviewing agencies were “frequently” of high quality, work submitted by consultants and local transportation agencies working in concert with Caltrans typically need multiple iterations before approval.

**Achievement of Expectations.** Caltrans expected the Position Funding Effort to result in early and constructive agency participation in project planning and design decisions; timely field reviews and negotiations; and processing of project and emergency permits. Caltrans also expected the funded positions to provide premium service levels, thereby allowing environmental studies and coordination with resource agencies to be completed in a timely manner and shortening project time frames.

Based on responses to Performance Measures and interviews with project stakeholders, the Position Funding Effort has met many of these expectations. Most

respondents to Performance Measures and interview participants reported in that the Position Funding Effort has met expectations in regard to time savings. The USFWS and CCC found that the Position Funding Effort resulted in more timely reviews and faster permit processing. (Please refer to the responses to Evaluative Questions section for examples of quantified time savings.) Respondents to Performance Measures reported that staff was almost always available to work on Caltrans projects, and that the staff was successful in completing project-related work within the agreed upon time frame. The experience varies by region on the question whether the project has met expectations for improvement in the availability of agencies to participate in field reviews and meetings.

**Responses to Evaluative Questions.** Responses to evaluative questions for the Caltrans State and Federal Agency Position Funding Effort Pilot Project were generated based on participant reporter interviews conducted through site visits and via telephone, Performance Measure Reports, and Pilot Project Progress Reports. For the Caltrans Partnership, seven participant reporters, representing 58 percent of the reporters identified by Caltrans for the Pilot Project, were interviewed in person. The responses to evaluative questions are presented in Table 28.



**Table 28. Caltrans Position Funding: Responses to Evaluative Questions**

| Evaluative Question  | Responses  |
|--|--|
| How successful was the Pilot Project in reducing the time frame of the planning and project development process? | <p>Respondents to Performance Measures and participants in stakeholder interviews largely agreed that the Position Funding Partnership has been successful in reducing the time frame for portions of the planning and project development process by allowing environmental studies and coordination with resource agencies to be completed in a timely manner.</p>   |
| How much time was saved or lost in terms of initial expectations?  | <p>Because there is no baseline data for Caltrans permit processing or project review times before the start of the Position Funding Effort, no definitive conclusions can be drawn about the amount of time saved or lost as a result of the Pilot Project. However, participating agencies cited the following examples of time savings experienced as a result of the Pilot Project.</p> <p>USFWS has been able to complete a Biological Opinion and Section 7 consultation in less than 135 days. This has been reduced to as little as 60 days when Caltrans indicated the project had high priority.</p> <p>The California Coastal Commission estimated that on one particular project, they saved a year's review time.</p> <p>EPA staff reported that they are able to manage a larger volume of Caltrans projects with the added staff, but have not quantified whether the review times are shorter than before.</p> |

| Evaluative Question   | Responses   |
|---|---|
| <p>What problems or delays were encountered in achieving the objectives of the Pilot Project?</p> | <p>1) Caltrans had to use State rather than Federal funding to initiate the Position Funding Partnership.</p> <p>2) The Partnership has had difficulty in filling Federal and State agency position vacancies and retaining employees.</p> <p>3) The contract renewal process for the funded positions has been slow.</p> <p>4) Performance of the funded positions is difficult to measure.</p> <p>5) Compliance with the reporting requirements in the various MOUs has been inconsistent.</p> <p>6) State funding for the Position Funding Effort is often at risk, resulting in less staffing than originally scoped.</p> <p>7) Prioritization of Caltrans projects for reviewing agencies is inconsistent.</p> |

| Evaluative Question                                    | Responses  |
|--|--|
| <p>What factors were responsible for these delays?</p> | <p>1) Caltrans wanted to extend position funding to State and Federal agencies and the mechanics of using Federal funding to support the effort were difficult to administer.</p> <p>2) Numerous factors have contributed to hiring and retention problems. These include the lengthy Federal civil service hiring process, Federal agencies' need to adhere to a specific Full Time Equivalent (FTE) allocation of positions, the fact that limited-term positions are not attractive to experienced applicants, the discrepancy in pay grade between funded and permanent agency positions, and State and Federal government hiring freezes.</p> <p>3) The State has instituted contract freezes and efforts to combine contracts for various hires at a single agency into one document have been slow.</p> <p>4) There is no clear method for handling performance issues. Caltrans does not have any input on employee performance evaluations for Federal employees. The performance measures in the initial agreements with the agencies were not useful and were hard to track.</p> <p>5) The reporting requirements set by Caltrans were viewed as onerous by some agencies.</p> <p>6) State funding for the Position Funding Effort is at risk because of the economic downturn in the state and California budget policies.</p> <p>7) Each Caltrans District has its own prioritization list and there is little overall guidance from Caltrans on overarching priority projects.</p> |

| Evaluative Question   | Responses   |
|---|---|
| How were problems resolved when they occurred?  | <p>1) Unresolved.</p> <p>2) Caltrans is working to find ways to fill vacancies quickly, reallocate funds from agencies that could not fill their positions to agencies that could, and reallocate funds within agencies from office locations that could not fill their positions to office locations that could. Caltrans is also using Caltrans employees on rotation to other agencies</p> <p>3) Unresolved.</p> <p>4) Caltrans is trying to formalize the performance evaluation system so that it fosters more accurate and complete feedback (good and bad).</p> <p>5) Caltrans established a remote-access database to facilitate easier and more consistent quarterly tracking and reporting.</p> <p>6) Unresolved.</p> <p>7) Unresolved. Participants suggested more consultation with Caltrans or appointment of a statewide liaison.</p> |
| Did the Pilot Project require increased or decreased levels of resources on the part of sponsors or other stakeholders? | The Position Funding Partnership was designed to increase the capacity of resources available to sponsors and stakeholders. The Pilot Project has been successful in achieving this objective.  |
| How successful was the Pilot Project in the view of major stakeholders?   | Stakeholders submitting responses to Performance Measures and participating in interviews found the Pilot Project largely successful in reducing review and processing times and improving environmental protection. (For more information on improvements in environmental protection, please refer to the question below on whether the Pilot Project approach was better than previous approaches in protecting the environment.)  |
| To what extent were environmental resources protected?  | The Position Funding Partnership was designed to improve the timeliness and effectiveness of the environmental review process and processing of environmental permits for many different projects. The Pilot Project does not change the way such resources are considered or reviewed.   |

| Evaluative Question   | Responses   |
|---|---|
| Was this approach better or worse than previous approaches in protecting the environment?   | The EPA believes that their additional involvement in Caltrans projects through the funded positions will result in better environmental outcomes than before. USFWS also felt the project resulted in better protection of environmental resources by allowing them to invest the proper amount of time in the reviews. The CCC expressed a similar view, stating that the Position Funding Effort provides more opportunities for environmental protection by facilitating greater access to resource protection agencies and professionals.  |
| Did the Pilot Project result in any environmental enhancements?   | Specific environmental enhancements resulting from projects developed utilizing Caltrans-funded staffing resources were not reported by process participants.   |
| What approaches taken or problems encountered in the Pilot Project relate to the unique conditions or requirements in the particular state? | California's State government hiring freeze prevented Caltrans from increasing staff to keep pace with its increased workload. The agency had to look for creative ways to solve its staffing problems.   |
| Did the Pilot Project result in process or quality improvements other than time and cost savings?   | <p>Ancillary benefits of the Pilot Project include early agency participation in projects and the resulting direct communication of concerns between State and Federal agencies, local agencies, and the general public. The State and Federal agencies also benefit by hearing local concerns directly.</p> <p>The EPA reported that the effort has fostered a more collaborative and responsive relationship with Caltrans, and that the number of project-related conflicts between EPA and Caltrans has been reduced because of early Federal involvement in projects. This effort has also led to a better understanding of Caltrans project development and planning practices.</p> <p>The CCC reported similar benefits, citing a greater understanding on both agencies' parts regarding transportation project development and coastal regulations. The Position Funding Effort has resulted in a reorientation of the CCC's typical practices; they are now involved with projects in the planning process, rather than waiting until the permitting stage. The Commission has also started to participate in the project development process and programmatic reviews.</p> |

| Evaluative Question   | Responses  |
|---|--|
| To what extent were transportation decisions improved by the new approaches taken in the Pilot Project?   | There is no demonstrable evidence that the Position Funding Partnership project has improved transportation decisions. However, many of the participating agencies feel that the early involvement in transportation planning and project development and additional staff availability facilitated by the funded positions will result in better environmental outcomes.  |
| What lessons or conclusions can be gained from the results of the Pilot Project that are applicable at the local, state, regional, and national levels? | Funded agency positions can improve environmental review and permit processing times and produce better environmental results. Master agreements or interagency contracts that delineate roles, responsibilities, priorities, dispute resolution, and performance measures are imperative. Such agreements or contracts can take much time to develop and execute. Funding for positions must be stable and flexible, and multi-year contracts (three-year minimum) are essential to attracting qualified staff. |

*The Loop 12/IH 35E Corridor Major Investment Study and Environmental Assessment Project in Texas*

The Loop 12/IH 35E Project was a concurrent Major Investment Study (MIS) and Environmental Assessment (EA) of a 13.5-mile (21.7-kilometer) corridor. The Loop 12/IH 35E Project lies in Dallas County following a primarily north-south route that passes through mixed land uses in the cities of Dallas and Irving. With the population boom in the area expected to continue, improvements in the corridor were needed to reduce traffic congestion. Based on the evaluation of all alternatives and coordination with the public and work group, the Recommended Alternative was a combination of TDM/TSM, highway construction, passenger rail development, and bicycle and pedestrian-oriented improvements.

Streamlining aspects of this project focused on early coordination with involved agencies and the use of a broad stakeholder process. Additional streamlining approaches involved the use of “evergreen” (on-call) contracts for consultants, the use of a combined MIS-NEPA process and contracts, and reviews of NEPA documents concurrently and at interim stages of project development. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Loop 12/IH 35E Project on December 11, 2002, concluding the Pilot Project. For more detailed information about the project, please refer to the Project Narrative in Appendix B.

The Loop 12/IH 35E Project was evaluated based on three Performance Measures: Improved Environmental Protection and Improved Transportation Decision-Making (Environmental Protection) (#1), Improved Transportation Decision-Making (Project Coordination Work Group) (#2), and Improved Transportation

Decision-Making (Time and Cost Savings) (#3). TxDOT submitted the names of eleven Pilot Project stakeholders to the Pilot Project study to serve as participant-reporters. Between November 2002 and February 2003, there were three Performance Measure Reports submitted by three State and local transportation, transportation-related, and environmental agencies, resulting in a response rate of 27 percent. Two of the reports were from transportation or transportation-related stakeholders and one report was from an environmental stakeholder. The low response rate for the Performance Measures was likely because the Loop Pilot Project was nearly complete at the time the Performance Measure reporting period began. Additional information on the Loop 12/IH 35E Project was compiled from study progress reports. Responses to performance measures are summarized and evaluated below.

**Performance Measure #1: Improved Environmental Protection and Improved Transportation Decision-Making (Environmental Protection).** This Performance Measure evaluates the Loop 12/IH 35E Project's Environmental Assessment (EA) process and its goal of improving the results of the transportation planning and project development process through the use of early interagency coordination and public involvement procedures. The evaluative questions for the Performance Measure compare perceptions of the results of the Loop 12/IH 35E Project EA process to the results of the Texas Department of Transportation's (TxDOT's) traditional transportation planning and project development process. The text of the evaluative questions and a summary of responses are presented in Table 29.



**Table 29. The Loop 12/IH 35E Corridor: Improved Environmental Protection and Improved Transportation Decision making (Environmental Protection)**

| Performance Measure  | Data Points | Average Rating |
|--|-------------|----------------|
| <b><i>Performance Baseline</i></b>   |             |                |
| <b>Rate the effectiveness of the “traditional” (pre-Loop 12/IH Project) TxDOT transportation planning and project development process in protecting the human environment.</b>   | <b>3</b>    | <b>2.6</b>     |
| <b>Rate the effectiveness of the “traditional” (pre-Loop 12/IH Project) TxDOT transportation planning and project development process in protecting the natural environment.</b> | <b>3</b>    | <b>2.6</b>     |
| <b><i>Loop Performance</i></b>   |             |                |
| <b>Rate the effectiveness of the transportation planning and project development process used for the Loop 12/IH Project in protecting the human environment.</b>                | <b>3</b>    | <b>4</b>       |
| <b>Rate the effectiveness of the transportation planning and project development process used for the Loop 12/IH Project in protecting the natural environment.</b>              | <b>3</b>    | <b>3.6</b>     |
| Key to data points: Usually very effective=4, Usually effective=3, Usually somewhat effective=2, Usually not effective=1, Not applied=0  |             |                |

Based on the responses to this Performance Measure, the previous TxDOT transportation planning and project development process was perceived as being between “somewhat effective” and “effective” in protecting the human and natural environments. The Loop 12/IH 35E Project process in contrast, was more highly rated as “very effective” in protecting the human environment and “effective” in protecting the natural environment. Comments submitted with Performance Measure responses cited early identification of high-profile issues and early consultation with stakeholders on avoidance of impacts as keys to the success of the Pilot Project.

**Performance Measure #2: Improved Transportation Decision-Making (Project Coordination Work Group).** This Performance Measure evaluates the effectiveness of the Loop 12/IH 35E Project Coordination Work Group (PCWG) and its goals of reducing processing time and costs through earlier identification and resolution of issues affecting the project. The evaluative questions for the Performance Measure examine perceptions of effectiveness of the PCWG over the course of the study period. Participant-reporters were asked to respond to this Performance Measure quarterly. The text of the evaluative questions and a summary of responses are presented in Table 30.

Based on responses to this Performance Measure, the Loop 12/IH 35E Project process was extremely successful in identifying major project issues early in the process; resolving those issues effectively and efficiently; making effective and timely decisions; and preventing unforeseen problems with the potential to cause delays, additional costs, or project terminations.

**Table 30. The Loop 12/IH 35E Corridor: Improved Transportation Decision-making (Project Coordination Work Group)**

| Performance Measure   | Data Points | Average Rating |
|---|-------------|----------------|
| <b>The Project Coordination Work Group (PCWG) process succeeds in identifying early in the project the major issues relating to the Loop project.</b> | <b>3</b>    | <b>4</b>       |
| <b>The PCWG process succeeds in resolving efficiently and effectively those major project issues that the PCWG identifies.</b>                        | <b>3</b>    | <b>4</b>       |
| <b>PCWG participants make decisions in a timely and effective manner.</b>   | <b>3</b>    | <b>4</b>       |
| <b>The PCWG process is a highly useful tool for avoiding “surprises” and “fatal flaws” that can cause delay, extra costs, or project termination.</b> | <b>1</b>    | <b>4</b>       |

Key to data points: Strongly agree=4, Somewhat agree=3, Somewhat disagree=2, Strongly disagree=1, No opinion=0

**Performance Measure #3: Improved Transportation Decision-making (Time and Cost Savings).** This Performance Measure evaluates the Loop 12/IH 35E Project's EA process in terms of improving the environmental review process through increased productivity and/or better environmental results. Participant reporters were asked to respond to this Performance Measure quarterly to enable examination of perceptions of results over the course of the study period. The text of the evaluative questions and a summary of responses are presented in Table 31.

Based on responses to this Performance Measure, the Loop 12/IH 35E Project process was extremely successful in reducing staff and consultant labor time and overall project processing time compared to the previous TxDOT processes. Much of this success was attributed in responder comments to early coordination and the performance of concurrent document reviews.

Comments submitted with Performance Measure Reports and Project Progress Reports, however, noted that, although the concurrent document review process reduced overall processing time, it required an increased level of effort and resources by State and Federal transportation agencies. Some who commented doubted whether concurrent and interim reviews could work on a widespread basis because of this staffing impact. Participants also reported that the early coordination approach required additional staff resources in the early stages of a project. Respondents to this Performance Measure and those submitting Project Progress Reports, however, expressed strong support for the value of the Loop 12/IH 35E Project process, agreeing that the benefits of the process justified its labor and processing time requirements.

**Table 31. The Loop 12/IH 35E Corridor: Improved Transportation Decision-making (Time and Cost Savings)**

| Performance Measure  | Data Points | Average Rating |
|--|-------------|----------------|
| <b>The overall staff and consultant labor (time) requirements of the Loop environmental assessment (EA) process, as compared to the traditional TxDOT planning and project development process, are:</b><br><i>Key to data points: Significantly greater=3, About the same=2, Significantly less=1, No opinion=0</i> | <b>3</b>    | <b>1.6</b>     |
| <b>The overall processing time requirements of the Loop environmental assessment (EA) process, as compared to the traditional TxDOT planning and project development process, are:</b><br><i>Key to data points: Significantly greater=3, About the same=2, Significantly less=1, No opinion=0</i>                   | <b>3</b>    | <b>1</b>       |
| <b>The benefits of the Loop EA process justify its labor and processing time requirements.</b><br><i>Key to data points: Strongly agree=4, Somewhat agree=3, Somewhat disagree=2, Strongly disagree=1, No opinion=0</i>  | <b>3</b>    | <b>3.3</b>     |

**Achievement of Expectations.** TxDOT detailed expectations for the performance of the Loop 12/IH 35E Pilot Project in Project Progress Reports. The changes that the Loop 12/IH 35E Pilot Project made to the TxDOT project development process were expected to help avoid or minimize environment impacts. Successful examples of avoidance and minimization efforts include avoidance of displacing homes and businesses, minimization of Section 4(f) takings, and decreased right-of-way impacts. The Pilot Project processes were also expected to reduce time requirements for EAs because of the participation of the PCWG and the performance of concurrent reviews. Performance Measure Reports and Project Progress Reports indicate that the overall processing time for the Loop 12/IH 35E EA was expedited because of these aspects of the Pilot Project. The use of MIS/EA Option 2 (*i.e.*, combining the MIS and NEPA processes) saved six to twelve months by avoiding the need for negotiations to hire another consultant between the time of completion of the MIS and the start date for the EA. Although stakeholders perceived that the Pilot Project processes resulted in time savings, TxDOT did not provide any baseline data for combined MIS/EA project time frames in Texas, and did not specifically quantify overall time savings made possible through the Pilot Project.

TxDOT also estimated the approaches used in the Loop 12/IH 35E Pilot Project would reduce the time to complete the environmental review process for future projects by approximately 25 percent because of the participation of a PCWG and the performance of concurrent reviews. Data to evaluate time and cost savings on future projects is not expected to be available before the end of the study period.

**Responses to Evaluative Questions.** Responses to evaluative questions for the Loop 12/IH 35E Pilot Project were compiled based on summaries of participant responses to Performance Measures, Pilot Project Progress Reports, and telephone interviews with Pilot Project stakeholders during the research period. The evaluative questions and responses are presented in Table 32.

**Table 32. The Loop 12/IH 35E Corridor: Responses to Evaluative Questions**

| <b>Evaluative Question</b>  | <b>Response</b>   |
|---|---|
| <p>How successful was the Pilot Project in reducing the time frame of the planning and project development process?</p> | <p>Pilot Project stakeholders reported that the processes employed on Loop 12/IH 35E project were successful in reducing the time frame of the planning and project development process. Specific time savings cannot be reported as TxDOT did not provide baseline data for combined MIS/EA project time frames in Texas, and did not quantify overall time savings made possible through the Pilot Project.</p> <p>Early inclusion of stakeholders and the formation of the PCWG were successful in identifying major issues early in the process and preventing unforeseen problems and delays. The use of MIS/EA Option 2 streamlined the planning and project development process by allowing seamless integration of planning and environment processes. Concurrent, rather than sequential, EA reviews also resulted in reduced overall project review times.</p> <p>Despite reports of time savings, the Loop 12/IH 35E Project ended up eighteen months behind its original three-year schedule for completion of the MIS/EA. TxDOT believes the original time frame was unrealistic in light of the project's scope and complexity.</p> |
| <p>How much time was saved or lost in terms of initial expectations?</p>  | <p>TxDOT did not quantify the total time saved or lost as a result of the processes instituted as part of the Loop 12/IH 35E Pilot Project, but did detail specific instances of time savings and loss over the course of the project. For example, the use of the MIS/EA Option 2 saved six to twelve months by avoiding the need for negotiations to hire another consultant between the time of completion of the MIS and the start date for the EA. On the minus side, it unexpectedly took sixteen months to obtain traffic data and approval of that data.</p> <p>TxDOT estimates the approaches used in the Loop 12/IH 35E Pilot Project should reduce the time to complete the environmental review process for future projects by approximately 25 percent because of the participation of a Project Coordination Work Group and the performance of concurrent reviews.</p>  |



| Evaluative Question   | Response  |
|---|---|
| What problems or delays were encountered in achieving the objectives of the Pilot Project?                              | <p>1) It unexpectedly took sixteen months to obtain traffic data and approval of that data.</p> <p>2) Frontage Road Policy Issue delayed the project. New frontage road policies issued by the Texas Transportation Commission in 2001 also minimally delayed the project as TxDOT sought exemptions from the policies.</p>   |
| What factors were responsible for these delays?   | <p>1) TxDOT Transportation Planning and Programming Division was responsible for developing traffic data.</p> <p>2) In late August 2001, the Texas Transportation Commission issued a new policy that stated they will no longer build frontage roads on Interstate highways. This action delayed the Loop 12/IH-35E Project, as it had six-lane frontage roads along some segments.</p>  |
| How were problems resolved when they occurred?  | <p>1) To resolve the problem, TxDOT contracted with the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) to provide the data.</p> <p>2) The PCWG worked to resolve conflicts between the Loop Pilot Project and the new frontage road policy in Texas. Representatives from Dallas and Irving traveled to Austin to reach successful closure on this issue with very minimal delay. In late January 2002, the Texas Transportation Commission approved the use of frontage roads on the Loop 12/IH-35E Project.</p> |
| Did the Pilot Project require increased or decreased levels of resources on the part of sponsors or other stakeholders? | The early coordination approach required additional staff resources in the early stages of a project, but participants appear satisfied that the results justified the extra resource expenditure. Concurrent, rather than sequential, EA reviews resulted in reduced overall project review times. However, it increased the staff time required for multiple reviews by the agencies.   |
| How successful was the Pilot Project in the view of major stakeholders?   | According to Performance Measure Reports, the Pilot Project was successful in producing better environmental protection, better interagency and public coordination, and lower processing time requirements than previous TxDOT processes. Stakeholders also felt that the benefits of the Pilot Project process justified its labor and processing time requirements.  |

| Evaluative Question   | Response   |
|---|--|
| To what extent were environmental resources protected?  | <p>The Loop 12/IH-35E Pilot Project effectively used early agency coordination, a broad stakeholder process, and concurrent document review to avoid and minimize environmental impacts.</p> <p>Examples of the avoidance or minimization of environmental impacts include avoidance of displacing the Tepeyac Apartments (an Environmental Justice issue—3 buildings and 24 units saved), avoidance of displacing DARR Equipment (the largest sales tax generator in the County, with 150 employees), minimization of Section 4(f) takings (less than one acre of Trinity Park affected), and decreased right-of-way impact at the Old Irving Boulevard Bridge.</p> |
| Was this approach better or worse than previous approaches in protecting the environment?   | Based on Performance Measure Reports and Project Progress Reports, the Loop 12/IH-35E Pilot Project was better than previous approaches in protecting the environment because of the early identification of high-profile issues and early consultation with stakeholders to avoid impacts.  |
| Did the Pilot Project result in any environmental enhancements?   | Specific environmental enhancements resulting from the Pilot Project processes employed on the Loop 12/IH-35E project were not reported by project stakeholders.   |
| What approaches taken or problems encountered in the Pilot Project relate to the unique conditions or requirements in the particular state? | The delay caused by the issuance of new frontage road policies by the Texas Transportation Commission in 2001 was an issue unique to this project.   |
| Did the Pilot Project result in process or quality improvements other than time and cost savings?   | The coordination process proved especially successful in building better, on-going coordination between TxDOT and the Metropolitan Planning Organization (North Central Texas Council of Government).  |
| To what extent were transportation decisions improved by the new approaches taken in the Pilot Project?                                     | Pilot Project stakeholders reported that transportation decisions made in the Loop 12/IH-35E Project were more environmentally sound, took less time, and were made in a more organized and informed manner than under previous TxDOT processes. The better quality decisions and decision-making process was made possible by early and consistent agency coordination, broad stakeholder involvement, and the guidance of the PCWG.  |

| Evaluative Question  | Response   |
|--|--|
| <p>What lessons or conclusions can be gained from the results of the Pilot Project that are applicable at the local, state, regional, and national levels?</p> | <p>Coordination should occur early and involve pertinent agencies, elected officials, and the public. This approach saves time by identifying problems and issues early, and can help build public support.</p> <p>Use of the Web as a part of the public participation process is an easy and cost-effective way to disseminate information to a wide audience and to encourage feedback from affected parties. It also helps ensure that the public has access to accurate information about the project and the sponsors' perspectives on issues.</p> |

## **CHAPTER 3: Findings**

This chapter presents findings on the environmental streamlining approaches employed by Pilot Projects. These findings were gained from the Performance Measure results and evaluative questions for each Pilot Project. At the end of the chapter, Table 33 presents a “Toolbox” of streamlining approaches and techniques used in the Pilot Projects and the procedures necessary for optimal streamlining benefits.

This Research Project presented several challenges in coalescing quantitative findings regarding best environmental streamlining practices. The Pilot Project Study is unlike a traditional research project which addresses a single topic. Instead, this study addresses a multitude of possible approaches to environmental streamlining generated by a diverse group of 10 Pilot Projects, each in a different region of the country, with different environmental streamlining goals, different sets of political opportunities and constraints, a different array of State and local planning and environmental policies and laws, and embracing varying levels of complexity in their streamlining approach. The diversity of the Pilot Projects included in this study is reflective of the fact that there is no single path to streamlining environmental planning and review processes, but rather a set of approaches and techniques for streamlining that can be tailored for different needs and circumstances.

As explained at the beginning of Chapter 2, there were limitations to generating quantitative measures of time savings and comprehensively assessing the effects of process change within the research period. Most of the Performance Measure reports dealt with the perceptions of the Pilot Project participants about past and present

performance rather than actual time savings. In some cases, the Research Project assessment of performance and results could not be definitive since the life of certain Pilot Projects exceed the research period or, conversely, were nearly completed before the evaluation period began. Direct Pilot Project-to-Pilot Project comparisons of some Performance Measures were also problematic because of differences in the nature, purpose, and scope of the projects.

Although the Research Project began in 2001 with ten Pilot Projects, the sponsors of two of the Pilot Projects withdrew them from the study. The Portway Project in New Jersey evolved into a number of smaller, individual, less noteworthy projects after its inclusion in the Research Project. The New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) was concerned that this change in concept reduced the opportunities for innovative environmental streamlining measures and requested to withdraw the Pilot Project from the Research Project. The Parallel Processing of Section 106 and Section 4(f) Requirements in New Jersey Pilot Project was found to be legally sufficient in 2000 and was favourably reviewed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in 2001. The NJDOT did not continue with the streamlining effort after that date, however, and the Pilot Project was subsequently excluded from analysis for this study. The final analysis of the Pilot Projects includes only the eight remaining projects.

Many findings presented in this chapter have been mentioned and explored in other research reports on environmental streamlining. For example, the benefits of early coordination, moving environmental considerations into the transportation planning process, aggressive public involvement, and position funding have long been acknowledged. Tiered NEPA processes have also been used in other streamlining efforts.

Many of the techniques used in the Pilot Projects have also been used successfully in other states' streamlining efforts. For example, Arkansas successfully used GIS resource mapping to help streamline the Southeast Arkansas Connector project; a tiered NEPA process successfully streamlined Missouri's I-70 Project; and Maine has successfully implemented an integrated decision-making process similar to the Florida Efficient Transportation Decision-making Process (7).

These findings are organized into three sections. The first section contains general findings on streamlining approaches used by the Pilot Projects. The second section addresses the applicability of the Pilot Project streamlining measures beyond the Pilot Project settings. The third section has specific findings for individual Pilot Projects. A description of the trends that emerged from the analysis of all eight Pilot Projects is presented in Chapter 4, *Conclusions and Suggested Research*.

### **General Findings on Major Project or Planning Efforts**

This section presents general findings on the Pilot Project streamlining efforts, including a summary analysis of the Pilot Projects, general management considerations and specific streamlining techniques.

#### *Summary Pilot Project Analysis*

Among the eight Pilot Projects, four were successful in achieving their streamlining and project goals. These Pilot Projects include the Florida Efficient Transportation Decision Making Process (ETDM), the Caltrans/FHWA/EPA Partnership (Caltrans Partnership), Caltrans State and Federal Agency Position Funding

(Caltrans Position Funding), and The Loop 12/IH 35E Corridor Major Investment Study and Environmental Assessment (The Loop). The remaining four Pilot Projects (The Riverside County Integrated Project (RCIP), the Georgia Rail Passenger Program (GRPP), Integrating NEPA and Statewide Planning in Oregon, and EIS Screening Worksheets in Wisconsin) were mixed successes. Problems in the methodology and implementation of these Pilot Projects hampered overall success.

Although time savings could not be quantified for most of the Pilot Projects, four of the eight projects achieved moderate perceived or real time savings as a result of the streamlining measures (GRPP, EIS Screening Worksheets in Wisconsin, Caltrans Position Funding, and The Loop). The remaining projects had equal project processing times or were unable to determine time savings.

Five of the eight Pilot Projects required the same or increased levels of staffing and funding resources on the part of sponsors and stakeholders as compared to previous transportation planning and project development processes (EIS Screening Worksheets in Wisconsin, The Loop, Integrating NEPA and Statewide Planning in Oregon, RCIP, and Caltrans Partnership). Two other Pilot Projects had mixed results, with some parts of the process requiring fewer resources, and others requiring more resources (GRPP and Florida ETDM). This measure did not apply to the Caltrans Position Funding project.

When problems or delays arose in the Pilot Projects, the most common causes included inadequate communication between stakeholders, a lack of certainty among stakeholders as to their roles and responsibilities, insufficient funding or staffing, and unrealistic Pilot Project schedules. Disagreement among transportation and environmental agencies over the level of environmental data required for

decision-making was a problem for two of the largest Pilot Projects: the Riverside County Integrated Project (RCIP) and Integrating Statewide Planning and NEPA in Oregon.

Successful techniques used to resolve these issues included the use of facilitators and mediators to resolve communication issues and conflicts, engaging more senior staff in the process to ensure buy-in and sufficient project momentum, and employing the project-specific dispute resolution process. The RCIP and Integrating Statewide Planning and NEPA in Oregon Pilot Projects also had to substantially lengthen their schedules.

Six of the eight Pilot Projects achieved at least a moderate improvement in transportation decision-making as a result of the approaches taken in their respective streamlining processes. For these projects, the range of transportation decisions involved with the transportation planning and project development process were more informed, more environmentally sound, and took less time individually. The GRPP Pilot Project noted that thus far, the project components reviewed under the GRPP streamlining measures were proceeding toward implementation without revisiting environmental decisions. Stakeholders in the Caltrans Position Funding Pilot Project felt that having sufficient staffing to review projects and foster early agency involvement would result in better transportation decisions in the future. This measure was not applicable to the EIS Screening Worksheets in Wisconsin project.

All the Pilot Projects provided, or were strongly anticipated to provide, an increased level of environmental resource protection as compared to previous transportation planning and project development processes. The Riverside County Integrated Project and the Georgia Rail Passenger Program resulted in specific and



measurable environmental enhancements. This question was not applicable to the EIS Screening Worksheets in Wisconsin Pilot Project.

Every Pilot Project resulted in improvements to the transportation planning and environmental review process other than time and cost savings. The most common improvement was in the area of interagency understanding, communication, and coordination. The collaborative nature of most of the streamlining Pilot Projects helped foster better relationships between project proponents and Federal, state, and local transportation and environmental review agencies.

*Management Considerations in Streamlining the Transportation Planning and Project Development Process*

**Partnerships and Collaboration.** Successful agency partnering or collaboration provides substantial benefits to planning and environmental streamlining efforts. Having a collaborative or partnering relationship with Federal and State resource and reviewing agencies, elected officials, and the public was essential to gaining support and acceptance for major experimental processes and projects, such as the RCIP and the Tiered NEPA Decision-Making Process in Oregon. Extensive early coordination with stakeholders helps the affected parties understand a project from each others' perspectives, and helps the transportation agency to identify and address project problems, issues, and needs in a timely way and early in the process before they become major problems. Early coordination with stakeholders can also result in a sense of ownership in a major project or process.

To be successful, partnering with agency participants (preferably at a high level) should occur early to obtain buy-in on a major project or planning effort. “Casting a wide net” regarding the stakeholders and decision-makers who should be involved is also important. In collaborative decision-making and review processes, it is important to have a clear understanding among agencies as to their roles and responsibilities in the process, a commitment not to overstep those bounds, and an agreement not to revisit previous discussions and decisions. It is also essential to involve all decision-makers in every step of the process.

**Communication.** Adequate communication, process facilitation, and stakeholder education are essential to a successful streamlining effort. There must be sustained communication among all levels of transportation and environmental agency staff and managers. Keeping senior agency staff informed as to the policies and procedures for a streamlining effort prevents delays in implementing and carrying out the process.

The use of a meeting facilitator, at appropriate points in the process, may be helpful to make the participants feel more comfortable and not hold back information or decisions. It is also vital to have a conflict resolution process built into a streamlining effort, along with guidelines for when and how a decision-making process should be elevated to conflict resolution. Having such a system in place is important to keep project momentum, ensure efficient decision-making, and equitably address stakeholders’ issues.

For multi-year, major project or planning efforts, there will likely be a need for a continuous educational process for agency participants and stakeholders because of lack of knowledge of the project development process, turnover of participants, or complexity of the effort. The RCIP, for example, required an educational process because the agency

participants had to understand the many pieces of the RCIP and how they related to each another. The Florida ETDM also conducted a broad program of education to inform non-transportation and transportation participants on the transportation planning and project development process.

Public communication is also important. The use of the Web as a part of the public participation process is an easy and cost-effective way to disseminate information to a wide audience and to encourage feedback from affected parties. It also helps ensure that the public has access to accurate information about the project and the sponsors' perspectives on issues.

**Leadership and Staff Support.** Leadership from State DOTs and FHWA is vital for complex integrated planning efforts or major project transportation development processes. Such leadership, along with sponsorship from elected officials, aids in timely responses from the agencies, as well as obtaining public and political support. High-level participation is also critical so that policy decisions can be efficiently made at key points in the process. These upper level decisions must travel downward to the staff level early and must be reinforced as the project progresses. It is important to note, however, that it can be challenging to meet an aggressive schedule and to have sustained involvement from the resource agencies on a major project or planning effort given the agency participants' myriad of commitments.

Successful major project or planning efforts can require a high-level project champion, State DOT sponsors and agency participants to speak in "one voice," and a large team with the right mix of people. Support from top management of agencies is needed for field staff to feel comfortable in taking new approaches and "doing business

differently.” Agency champions also ensure that the appropriate agency people attend regularly scheduled meetings. Getting experienced and creative environmental professionals involved, who are able to think “out of the box” and want to improve the process, is exceptionally important.

**Logistical Considerations.** It is important to recognize that streamlining efforts require a substantial commitment of time and funding, typically in the millions of dollars. The RCIP Pilot Project, for example, took 60 months and cost \$36 million. The Florida ETDM Pilot Project cost an estimated \$3 million and five years to develop and implement. The Caltrans Agency Position Funding Pilot Project had an annual allocation of \$2.25 million to fund 21 positions.

Realistic and thoughtful scheduling of the streamlining process is essential to its success in terms of time savings and environmental quality. Successful streamlining measures can take years to implement and institutionalize among the participating agencies. Several of the Pilot Projects set unrealistic schedules for project development and review, with direct consequences to environmental quality. With the RCIP, the overly ambitious schedule resulted in agency dissatisfaction with the quality of environmental analysis offered as participants struggled to meet unrealistic deadlines.

In processes that require substantial coordination or education, the ability for process participants to travel is an important issue. This problem can be addressed through upfront funding for agency positions dedicated to participating in or work or development of alternative communication methods rather than just regularly scheduled meetings.

If a streamlining process involves revising or creating programmatic agreements or MOUs, it is important to acknowledge that these are substantial undertakings. Given staff shortages at the DOTs and other agencies, the use of consultants can help facilitate these efforts and prevent delays in implementation.

### *Considerations for Specific Streamlining Techniques*

**Integrating Planning and Environmental Review Processes.** Moving environmental considerations into the planning process helps overall project flow and time requirements. This technique allows early identification of issues and development of a plan to address them. NEPA/404 merger agreements need to be kept current to reflect this type of process change and to eliminate future conflicts among other planning or project development processes.

**Corridor Preservation.** The goal of corridor preservation is laudable and logical, but challenging. The process requires substantial funding and a significant time investment from all participants. The process takes years to accomplish and it is important to be realistic about scheduling. The keys are public involvement, agency involvement, and proper coordination among environmental review agencies to ensure compliance with Federal, state, and local environmental regulations and planning policies.

**Tiered NEPA Processes.** Tiered EISs may help to streamline the project development process, but their use, such as in the RCIP and in the Integrated NEPA/State Planning Pilot Project, present challenges.

The use of tiered EISs requires substantial coordination and clear communication between project proponents and reviewing agencies. The use of tiered EISs requires substantial coordination and clear communication between project proponents and reviewing agencies as to the decisions to be made in a Tier 1 versus a Tier 2 document, and the goals (*i.e.* the decisions to be made). For example, Tier 1 evaluations could be effectively used to narrow a wide range of alternatives to a few that would likely be less environmentally damaging to be evaluated in greater detail in a Tier 2 evaluation. Also, there should be firm agreement among the project proponents and reviewing agencies regarding the level of information presented in the NEPA documents, and how closely the information should be tailored to suit the pending decision at each tier.

The Federal resource agencies have difficulty applying their current regulations and guidelines to a Tier I EIS approach. As there is no uniform interpretation among the agencies as to the level of information that is necessary for a Tier I EIS, project proponents must clarify with reviewing agencies the level of detail necessary in each document. Agencies may need to rethink policy and guidance on how to prepare a Tier 1 EIS under NEPA that meets the data level requirements of other regulations, such as Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

The use of a Tier 1 EIS is also often contrary to public expectations of more information and more disclosure.

**Agency Position Funding.** FHWA has issued recent guidance about Federal funding of agency positions (*Interagency Guidance: Transportation Funding for Federal Agency Coordination with Environmental Streamlining Activities* (33)).

If a DOT is going to fund positions in another agency, master agreements or interagency contracts that delineate roles, responsibilities, priorities, dispute resolution, and performance measures are imperative. Master agreements with the agencies can be used to facilitate shifting positions among various geographic agency offices, as required. However, these agreements or contracts can take much time to develop and execute. This is partly because getting DOT-funded agency positions into place is not highest priority in overworked agencies.

Attracting quality, experienced personnel is essential to achieving the goals of position funding efforts. Positions should offer attractive terms for applicants, such as a multi-year contract (3-year minimum), pay grades equivalent to those of permanent positions, and access to the full range of professional benefits afforded to permanent positions within the respective agency. Funding for positions must also be stable in order to attract qualified staff. Establishing the minimum professional abilities or experience level for the person to be hired to fill the DOT-funded agency position is critical. DOTs may wish to reach agreement with the hiring agency on the qualifications of potential hires for DOT-funded agency positions.

It is important to have performance measures (*e.g.*, timeliness of reviews and expectations for travel) and a clear understanding among the parties about the expectations for performance. Performance measures and expectations should be a part of the interagency contracts or work scopes. It may be necessary to prioritize the projects that the DOT-funded agency staff will work on to measure success and failure. A system of communication, coordination and, ultimately, personnel action, if necessary, to handle any DOT-funded agency employee performance issues is very important.

When vacancies open, there needs to be a system for filling the agency positions to avoid problems of both production and financial accounting. Flexible funding mechanisms, such as the ability to reallocate funds within agencies, are one strategy for solving this problem. Position funding efforts are also the vulnerable to hiring freezes and funding shortages, making them difficult to implement in some states.

### **Transferability of Pilot Project Streamlining Measures to Other Settings**

Four of the eight Pilot Projects included in the Research Project employed streamlining measures that could be successfully transferred to other states or localities: The Florida ETDM Process, the RCIP, the Caltrans/FHWA/EPA Partnership Effort, and Caltrans Agency Position Funding Effort. The remaining Pilot Projects addressed problems or projects specific to the states of origin, or had mixed success. This section discusses elements of the four Pilot Projects that could be successfully transferred to other settings and the necessary parameters or considerations in replicating the processes.

#### *The Florida ETDM Process*

The Florida ETDM Process successfully used agency agreements, Environmental Technical Advisory Teams (ETATs), an interactive database system (the Florida Geographic Data Library (FGDL) Environmental Screening Tool), and increased public involvement to streamline the Florida Department of Transportation's (FDOT's) transportation planning and project development process, improve environmental protection, and increasing collaboration between process stakeholders.



The Florida ETDM process could be adapted to work in other states if certain parameters were in place or could be developed. From a technical perspective, a Geographic Information System (GIS) should be available in the state, and ideally there should be a central repository for the GIS data to ensure data consistency. From a management perspective, there must be a foundation for agency cooperation and a commitment from senior agency officials to participate in and support the project development process. Costs and logistics are also major factors in successful adoption of the Florida ETDM process elsewhere. FDOT estimated that the agency spent \$3 million in Federal and State funds over the five-year project development phase, which did not include travel and salary expenses. The high number of meetings and related travel and time expenditures required to begin a process like ETDM carry significant costs, and must be acceptable to all agencies involved to ensure a collaborative environment. Costs associated with implementing the ETDM process in other states may be less however, as Florida has already developed much of the framework and technology necessary for the ETDM process.

#### *Riverside County Integrated Project (RCIP)*

The Riverside County Integrated Project (RCIP) Pilot Project sought to integrate four planning efforts in Riverside County, California: the Riverside County General Plan guiding public and private development in the County, the Community and Environmental Transportation Acceptability Process (CETAP) addressing transportation corridor selection and preservation, the Western Riverside County Multi-Species Habitat

Conservation Plan (MSHCP), and the Special Area Management Plan (SAMP), a regional management plan for aquatic resources.

The integrated approach to planning for local community development, transportation, and habitat conservation could be replicated in other localities. The process can be particularly effective in locales similar to Riverside County with strong local decision-making power, a large number of agencies with review authority over transportation projects, substantial natural resources requiring consideration, and intense growth pressures. These elements created a substantial need for such a planning effort in Riverside County and enabled the RCIP to attract the funding and interest required for the major undertaking. As reflected in Chapter 2, *Interpretation of Results*, major integrated planning efforts require a long period of time to complete adequately and necessitate careful consideration of sequencing of component plans and planning activities to ensure appropriate levels of information for dependent activities. Major planning processes such as the RCIP also require a substantial amount of money to implement (\$36 million for the RCIP process) and reliable sources of funding to ensure that the component plans can be completed on schedule to ensure process continuity.

#### *Caltrans/FHWA/EPA Partnership Effort*

The Caltrans/FHWA/EPA Partnership Effort sought to foster mutual understanding of the partnership agencies' missions, legal mandates, and authorities with an aim toward understanding why conflicts in the transportation planning and project development process developed and finding potential solutions to these conflicts.

The State DOT, FHWA, and EPA partnership model could be easily adopted in other states with common, sustained points of conflict on transportation planning processes to assist in resolving those conflicts. As shown in Chapter 2, *Interpretation of Results*, partnerships should be initiated with an inter-agency agreement stating the goals of the partnership and outlining an implementation policy to achieve those goals. It is important that the partnership effort be institutionalized within the participating agencies so that in the event of staff turnover, the partnership process continues. In addition, one agency should be charged with leading and continuing the partnership steering process to ensure that there is continued involvement from the partnering agencies. Partnership efforts can often be affected by budget and staffing shortfalls, particularly in implementing activities such as inter-agency trainings.

#### *Caltrans Agency Position Funding Effort*

The practice of a State DOT providing funding for positions in other federal and state agencies has been adopted in many states. As detailed in the General Findings section of this chapter, successful funding of agency positions requires a combination of specificity in the agency master agreements regarding performance measures, methods for prioritization of projects, and the process for filling agency positions and flexibility in the position funding mechanisms. Other considerations include the often substantial amount of time required to develop the master agreements for position funding and ensuring that funded positions are structured to attract quality applicants.

## **Pilot Project –Specific Findings**

There are a number of findings or observations that are unique to each of the Pilot Projects or have more limited applicability than the general findings. These findings are discussed in the following paragraphs.

### *Riverside County Integrated Project*

For projects with multiple reliant components like the RCIP, development of multiple plans should be started simultaneously in order to avoid delays. Sequencing was a major obstacle in the successful completion of the RCIP. Concurrent decision-making by different agencies for different types of permits and development of multiple plans are challenging. There must be continual changes to the plans to achieve consistency across the decisions. For example, in the RCIP, while the selection of the corridors in the CETAP process was based upon consideration of the environmentally sensitive areas in the MSHCP, all the corridors crossed areas that are proposed to be preserved in the MSHCP.

### *Integrating NEPA and Statewide Planning in Oregon*

In processes combining statewide planning and NEPA, differing standards for the level of data required to satisfy each process is a major obstacle, and may make integration of the efforts in Oregon infeasible without substantial reorganization of the planning process at the state and local levels.

The Project Oversight Steering Team (POST) for the Newberg-Dundee Transportation Improvement Project was composed of eleven local, State, and Federal officials. The CETAS Group consists of the Federal and State environmental resource agencies and the State Historic Preservation Officer. Communication on the Newberg-Dundee Transportation Improvement Project may have been improved, and delays avoided or minimized, if Yamhill County was included as a member of the CETAS Group for this specific project.

#### *The Caltrans/FHWA/EPA Partnership Effort*

Complex partnerships like the Caltrans/FHWA/EPA Partnership Effort require significant coordination efforts and strong management commitments to maintain momentum. At the outset, there was no plan for process continuity with the Partnership Steering Committee when drafters of the organizational Mare Island Accord changed staffing positions, and no single agency was designated to lead the effort. In California, it was necessary to get “buy-in” and a desire to participate in the Partnership Effort from the highest level of the organization.

#### *Developing an Environmental Streamlining Process for Use in Florida (The ETDM Process)*

Major efforts like the ETDM Process require significant preparation. Before FDOT began the ETDM Process, they performed a lengthy research of other new ventures that they successfully implemented, including “lessons learned” through these initiatives, to overcome potential obstacles in developing and implementing the ETDM

Process. FDOT also spent significant time educating non-transportation (and transportation) ETDM participants on FDOT's planning and project development process and on participating agency programs and processes.

One of the keys to successfully moving the ETDM discussions forward and reaching decisions was having high-level agency champions commit to the process and sell it to other key agency participants. Florida's Governor and its Secretaries of DOT and DEP, as well as other State agency heads, were critical in supporting the ETDM Process, especially in the areas of funding and management. Another key to success has been FDOT's institutionalization of the ETDM Process by delivering a constant and consistent message to their employees, to participating agencies, and to consultants.

The data-intensive nature of the Florida ETDM process required a significant investment of time for quality control, data collection, and maintenance. FDOT's GIS Interactive Database System required more planning and upkeep than anticipated, and suffered from a lack of universal standards for GIS data accuracy and coverage and data input. Despite these challenges, the technology provided significant benefits to reviewers and assessment of environmental impacts.

**Table 33. Environmental Streamlining Toolbox**

| Management Considerations                     | Best Practices  |
|---|---|
| Partnerships and Collaboration                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement early in the project or planning timeline</li> <li>• Involve high-level staff</li> <li>• Cast a wide net</li> <li>• Establish guidelines for roles and responsibilities</li> <li>• Involve all decision-makers in all steps</li> </ul>                                   |
| Communication                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employ facilitators and mediators</li> <li>• Develop a conflict resolution plan and procedures</li> <li>• Develop educational process</li> <li>• Consider use of electronic communications</li> </ul>  |
| Leadership and Staffing                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage elected officials and key agency leaders</li> <li>• Engage experienced and creative environmental professionals</li> </ul>  |
| Logistics                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be realistic about scheduling</li> <li>• Factor issues such as travel into project and process budgets</li> </ul>  |
| Technical Approach                            | Requirements  |
| Integrating Planning and Environmental Review | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear communication and collaboration</li> <li>• Realistic schedule</li> <li>• Clear expectations on level of data needed</li> <li>• Education of the process</li> <li>• Clear understanding of agency roles and responsibilities</li> <li>• Dispute resolution process</li> </ul> |
| Corridor Preservation                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sufficient funding</li> <li>• Realistic schedule</li> <li>• Public involvement</li> </ul>  |
| Tiered NEPA Process                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarify decisions to be made at each tier</li> <li>• Clarify level of data needed at each tier</li> </ul>  |
| Agency Position Funding                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Master agreement</li> <li>• Position or agency-specific multi-year contracts</li> <li>• Clear minimum professional requirements</li> <li>• Performance measures</li> <li>• Progress tracking system and procedures</li> <li>• Flexible funding</li> </ul>                          |

## **CHAPTER 4: Conclusions and Suggested Research**

This section discusses the conclusions and trends that can be gained from the performance and results of the Pilot Projects. The conclusions address common streamlining practices used in many of the Pilot Projects, issues of time savings versus environmental quality, benefits beyond time savings and environmental quality, and the use of technology.

### **Conclusions**

The eight Pilot Projects included in the Research Project used a variety of approaches to implement practices essential to a successful streamlining effort. Each of the Pilot Projects included techniques designed to:

- Promote early consultation between Federal, State, and local government entities,
- Advance concurrent, rather than sequential, review of plans and projects, and
- Foster stakeholder participation.

Most of the Pilot Projects also stressed providing adequate levels of information, funding, and staff for environmental review. The persistence of these practices across the Pilot Projects indicates that they are key components to streamlining the transportation planning, project development, and environmental review processes. Analysis of the final results or outcomes to date for the eight Pilot Projects also showed that streamlining is hard work, time consuming, labor intensive, and expensive.

Assessment of the eight Pilot Projects also demonstrated that streamlining of the planning and environmental review processes does not sacrifice the quality of transportation decision-making or environmental protection. In fact, improved



environmental protection was a more reliable outcome across the Pilot Projects than time savings. Only half of the Pilot Projects could quantify real time savings or report perceived time savings within the research period, while all the Pilot Projects that restructured the way environmental resources were considered and reviewed showed at least modest improvements in protecting the human and natural environments. This trend was largely the result of increased coordination between transportation and environmental agencies and between those agencies and the public, better awareness of the location of environmental resources, and more focused and targeted approaches to resource review.

The key benefits of the environmental streamlining efforts of the eight Pilot Projects extended beyond time savings and improved environmental protection to improved relationships among Federal and State transportation and environmental agencies and between these agencies and the public. Benefits of the improved relationships included becoming educated on environmental and planning issues beyond agency jurisdictional boundaries and greater responsiveness between agencies. These benefits were expected to improve the transportation planning, project development, and environmental permitting processes on other projects in the future.

Analysis of the Pilot Projects also determined that environmental streamlining does not necessarily reduce process costs or staff time expenditures. Moving environmental considerations into the transportation planning process, for example, contributes to better transportation decisions, but also requires intensive time commitments from all stakeholders. Regardless of the streamlining approach taken, all the Pilot Projects reported equal or greater expenditures of staff time and funding to

accommodate the higher level of coordination and data gathering required for the streamlining process. These costs were particularly high at the outset of the process when the learning curve was the steepest. Despite increased commitments of staff time and funding, most stakeholders reported that the benefits of the streamlined transportation planning and environmental review processes justified the expenditures.

Several Pilot Projects relied on the strategic and creative use of technology to aid streamlining efforts. The Florida Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Process, Riverside County Integrated Project, and the Merced County Partnership for Integrated Planning (part of the Caltrans/FHWA/EPA Partnership Effort) used GIS technology to assess potential impacts, to consider cumulative and indirect effects, and to forecast future development trends. The Georgia Rail Passenger Project (GRPP) Pilot Project used Web-based applications to aid in the public participation process and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Position Funding Effort both used the Web to facilitate easier and more consistent quarterly tracking and reporting on position performance. Using these technologies for the “heavy lifting” of the implementation of the streamlining processes provided added time savings, improved communication with the public, and allowed more comprehensive environmental impact assessment.

Several of the streamlining measures employed by the Pilot Projects could be successfully applied to other locales. These include partnership agreements between State DOTs, FHWA, and EPA; position funding agreements between State DOTs and federal and state transportation and environmental review agencies; integrating regional transportation and environmental planning processes; and centralized, concurrent review

practices, such as those used in the Florida Efficient Transportation Decision Making Process.

## **Research Products**

The results of the Research Project include a Research Project Web Site and tools that transportation professionals can apply to their work. Each of these is discussed in the following paragraphs.

### *Research Project Web Site*

The NCHRP 25-24 and Pilot Project Web Sites will act as long-term educational resources for a broad range of users. Although the primary target audiences for the research products were groups comprising the transportation community, the accessibility and format of the Web-based materials create a potential for general educational usage. The project development process description, Pilot Project case studies, and results summaries all can function as a primer on the evolving state of transportation and the environment.

### *Tools for State Transportation Agencies*

The Research Team used the research results to create a toolbox for transportation practitioners (presented in Chapter 3, *Findings*). The toolbox delineates concrete recommendations and methods that transportation agencies can use to improve their processes and on-the-ground environmental results. The tools are those items that Pilot Project evaluations showed to be the most productive and transferable.

## **Suggested Research**

Because the life of some Pilot Projects exceeded the research period, the Research Project assessment of performance and results, in some cases, produced intermediate, rather than final, results. For example, the Oregon Department of Transportation has not completed any transportation planning projects with the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process; FDOT has not completed any projects through the ETDM Pilot Project process; and no major projects from Merced County Regional Transportation Plan, derived via the Merced County Partnership for Integrated Planning as part of the Caltrans/FHWA/EPA Partnership Pilot Project, have completed the NEPA review process. Similarly, the Riverside County Integrated Project Community and Environmental Transportation Acceptability Process has not been completed. For these reasons, NCHRP may wish to consider longer-term monitoring of the Pilot Project efforts as a separate research project following its review of the results of this Research Project.

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## **APPENDIX A: Project Development Process Description**

### **Introduction**

This Appendix provides a broad description of the major steps in the Project Development Process that are generally common among all states across the country. The information is provided here to give readers, who are unfamiliar with these processes, a basic understanding of existing procedures so that they can better understand why existing time frames for the project development process may be lengthy and how the streamlining being undertaken by the ten Pilot Projects may differ from previous actions.

The Project Development Process comprises five major and generally sequential steps:

- Transportation Planning,
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Documentation  
(Categorical Exclusion (CE), Environmental Assessment (EA), and  
Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)),
- Design (Preliminary Design; Environmental Permits; and Plans,  
Specifications and Estimate (PS&E)),
- Right-of-Way (title work, appraisals, ROW plans, acquisitions/relocations),  
and
- Construction.

This Appendix focuses on the first two steps because it is those areas where streamlining measures are being promoted and undertaken throughout the country.

## **Transportation Planning Process**

Decisions about how state and Federal transportation funds are to be used on a variety of proposed rail, roadway, transit and bicycle transportation projects are made through a highly structured transportation planning process. This process corresponds to the demands of the Federal government, receives input from regional entities and the public, and is coordinated and led by State Departments of Transportation. The elements, products and public participation components of a planning process that is designed to take long-term transportation plans and turn them into specific improvement and maintenance projects is described in the following paragraphs.

Transportation planning is led by Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) in metropolitan areas and by regional planning agencies (RPAs) in rural areas. MPOs are composed of representatives from local government and transportation agencies (*e.g.*, DOTs and transit authorities). The Federal Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1973 required the formation of MPOs for urban areas with a population greater than 50,000 with the purpose of ensuring that transportation planning is conducted through a comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing process. It is through this “3C” process that Federal funds for transportation projects and programs are channelled.

In most metropolitan areas, Federal funding, transferred first to the state to be distributed to metropolitan areas, is the primary funding source for plans and projects. The financing provisions, introduced in 1991 with the enactment of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (ISTEA) and continued in 1998 through the Transportation Equity Act (TEA-21) (33), are obtained through the Federal Highway Trust Fund and supplemented by general funds. Most

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) sources of funding are sent to and administered by the state DOTs. The state DOT then allocates the money to urban and rural areas, based on local priorities and needs. Most transit funds for urban areas are sent directly from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to the transit operator.

Transit funds for rural areas are administered by the state DOTs.

TEA-21 states that project planning should attempt to achieve seven broad, important goals:

- support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency;
- increase the safety and security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
- increase the accessibility and mobility options available to people and for freight;
- protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, and improve quality of life;
- enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight;
- promote efficient system management and operation; and
- emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

TEA-21 also requires that the metropolitan transportation planning process include a proactive public involvement process. This process must provide complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and support early

and continuing involvement of the public in developing plans and TIPs. Each MPO has developed its own public involvement process consistent with the legislation.

#### *MPO Planning Documents*

MPOs produce three key documents that guide transportation planning in both the long and short terms. These are the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

The LRTP is the statement of the way in which the region plans to invest in the transportation system. The plan shall "include both long-range and short-range program strategies/actions that lead to the development of an integrated intermodal transportation system that facilitates the efficient movement of people and goods". The plan should:

- Identify policies, strategies, and projects for the future;
- Determine project demand for transportation services over 20 years;
- Focus at the systems level, including roadways, transit, non-motorized transportation, and intermodal connections;
- Articulate regional land use, development, housing, and employment goals and plans;
- Estimate costs and identify reasonably available financial sources for operation, maintenance, and capital investments;
- Determine ways to preserve existing roads and facilities and make efficient use of the existing system;
- Be consistent with the statewide transportation plan; and

- Be updated every five years or three years in air quality nonattainment and maintenance areas.

In cases where a metropolitan area is designated as a nonattainment or maintenance area for air quality by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the plan must conform to the State Implementation Plan (SIP) for air quality.

The TIP is a subset of the long-term plan that specifies the projects that will be advanced over a three-year time frame. The TIP is financially constrained and covers the most immediate implementation priorities for transportation projects and strategies from the metropolitan transportation plan. It is the region's way of allocating its limited transportation resources among the various capital and operating needs of the area, based on a clear set of short-term transportation priorities.

Under TEA-21, the TIP must:

- Cover a minimum three-year period of investment;
- Be updated at least every two years;
- Be realistic in terms of available funding (known as a fiscally constrained TIP) and is not just a "wish list" of projects;
- Conform with the SIP for air quality if the region is designated a nonattainment or maintenance area;
- Be approved by the MPO and the governor for air quality; and
- Be incorporated into the statewide transportation improvement program (STIP).

The MPOs complete a UPWP every state fiscal year. The UPWP is a statement of proposed work and estimated costs that document the eligible activities to be undertaken

with FHWA and FTA planning funds. The UPWP discusses the planning priorities facing the metropolitan area and describes all metropolitan transportation and transportation-related air quality planning activities anticipated within the area during the fiscal year. The UPWP is developed in coordination with state DOTs, FHWA, and FTA.

#### *State-Level Planning Documents*

At the state-level, Long Range Transportation Plans developed by the various MPOs and RPAs within the states are combined to make a Statewide Transportation Plan. The Statewide Transportation Plan sets the long-term, 20-year vision for the state's transportation system. It identifies facilities (highways, transit, intermodal) to be improved, is linked to economic and environmental goals, and is fiscally constrained. The Statewide Transportation Plan is generally updated every five years.

Similarly, Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) from each MPO are combined with rural transportation improvement plans at the state level by the state DOTs to form the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The STIP prioritizes projects by year over a three-year period and is updated every two years. STIPs must be consistent with the Statewide Transportation Plan and conform to the SIP for air quality. STIPs are fiscally constrained and describe projects design and scope.

#### *Outcome of the Planning Process*

Ideally, the planning process is a collaborative public process that results in a proposed program of projects that integrates transportation, land use, and environmental objectives. The projects that arise out of the planning process for implementation should have an initial Project Purpose and Need statement that the project is meant to address; a design concept and scope; as well as a range of alternatives capable of satisfying the

stated need. Planning studies, sometimes referred to as Deficiencies/Needs Analyses, are often conducted as part of the planning process to develop initial Purpose and Need Statements, alternatives, and design concepts. These studies typically have a public participation element, and include preliminary coordination with stakeholders.

## **NEPA Process**

At the completion of the Planning Phase, Federal-aid transportation projects progress into what is commonly called the NEPA phase. NEPA stands for the National Environmental Policy Act, which was enacted by Congress in 1969. NEPA established a national policy to promote the protection of the environment in the actions and programs of Federal agencies. For transportation projects, it is generally the FHWA and FTA that have the role of lead Federal agency responsible for implementing the NEPA process and working with state and local project sponsors during project development. Typically, other agencies with jurisdiction or special expertise (*e.g.*, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, or the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)) serve as cooperating agencies that also participate in the NEPA process.

The FHWA and FTA NEPA processes are intended to lead to project decisions that balance engineering and transportation needs with the consideration of social, economic and environmental factors. NEPA calls for an examination and consideration of impacts of the proposed action on natural and human resources. These impact areas can include, but are not limited to, wetlands; waterbodies; floodplains; water quality (surface and ground); wildlife and fisheries; rare, threatened and endangered species; historic and

archaeological resources; parklands and wildlife refuges; air quality; noise; economic impacts; community impacts; and transportation.

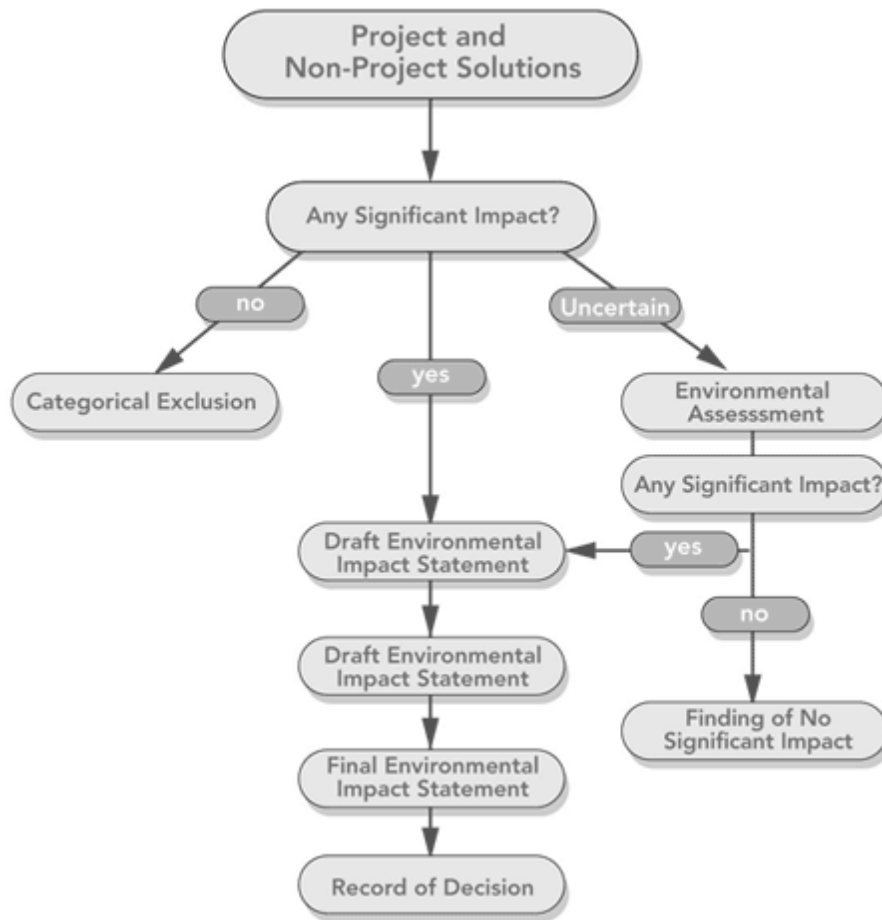
FHWA and FTA's NEPA Regulations prescribe the procedures for processing of highway and transit projects. The regulations allow three types for documents to be used to comply with NEPA: Categorical Exclusion Checklists (CEs), Environmental Assessments (EAs), and Environmental Impact Statements (EISs). CEs are used for minor projects that clearly do not have significant environmental impacts (for example, construction of bike lanes, landscaping, installation of fencing, and pavement markings). An EIS is prepared for projects that have significant impacts on the human environment (for example, a new four-lane highway). EISs lead to the issuance of a Record of Decision (ROD) in which the lead Federal agency presents the preferred alternative the basis for its selection. EAs are prepared for projects that are not CEs and that do not require an EIS, or for which the environmental impacts are not clearly known. The Environmental Assessment leads to either a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) or, if impacts are significant, to an EIS.

Regardless of the type of NEPA document prepared, final selection or approval of a proposed project alternative by FHWA and FTA allows the project to be eligible for Federal funding of subsequent project activities such as final design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction. Figure A-1 presents a simplified flowchart of the NEPA process.

The FHWA and FTA NEPA process is used as an "umbrella" for compliance with other environmental laws, regulations, and executive orders, including, but not limited to, the following:



**Figure A-1. NEPA Process Flowchart**



- Sections 401 and 404 of the Clean Water Act, as regulated by the ACOE through 33 U.S.C. 1251-1376
- Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966, 49 U.S.C. 303 and 23 U.S.C. 138
- Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, 16 U.S.C. 460
- Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966
- Endangered Species Act, as regulated at 50 CFR 17
- Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands, May 24, 1977
- Executive Order 11988, Protection of Floodplains, May 24, 1977
- Farmland Protection Policy Act, 2000 CFR Title 7, Vol. 6, part 658.
- Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low Income Populations, February 11, 1994
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
- Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, 33 U.S.C. 401
- Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, 50 CFR Part 600
- Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Act of 1970, 42 U.S.C. 61.
- Executive Order 13274, Environmental Stewardship and Transportation Infrastructure Project Reviews, September 18, 2002

The Federal agencies, working with state DOTs and/or transit authorities, generally try to work with the Federal agencies that administer these laws during the

NEPA process, *i.e.*, during the preparation of the EA or Draft EIS, to resolve any issues related to these regulatory programs. In addition, there are most often many state laws, regulations, and policies that also are addressed during the NEPA process, rather than later during the design, permitting, and construction phases.

#### How Local and Regional Differences Affect the Project Development Process

There are many factors that affect the basic project development process, and the importance of these factors varies considerably from state to state and project to project. These factors include variations in how the planning process is conducted in relation to other state and regional planning programs; differences in environmental conditions/constraints in the project area; the level of resources available to the project, including staffing and funding; public opposition; engineering design reviews; and differences in construction practices.

In many states, transportation planning is closely linked to other statewide planning programs, such as land use, environmental, economic, and social planning. While these efforts may cause the transportation planning process to take longer, they generally are thought to accelerate the overall Project Development Process by resulting in better decisions that lead to projects that are advanced to construction faster.

Many states have laws similar to NEPA at the state level. These laws often require the preparation of reports similar in scope to that of an EIS even for projects that do not require such documents under NEPA. These reports can be time consuming to prepare and process.

Differences in environmental conditions/constraints in a project's area can greatly affect a project's overall time frame. At the state level, the amount and type of

environmental constraints differs greatly. For example, some states have much more wetland than others, while in other states projects will encounter historic or Native American issues. Even within the jurisdiction of an MPO or DOT District, some projects will affect few to no environmental resources and will move quickly through the NEPA, design, and permitting process, while those that have more significant impacts move much more slowly. Similarly, whether a project is an attainment area or non-attainment area for air quality under the NAAQS can affect its ability to advance. Even the weather can affect overall time to construction, with construction seasons being much shorter in northern states where construction is often not performed in the winter, compared to southern states with warm weather year round.

Regardless of the magnitude of the project (*e.g.*, length and cost), those with significant impacts will generally require an EIS, which can take considerable time to prepare. Those with little impacts, may be processed with a CE and move quickly through the design process.

Just as environmental natural conditions vary widely from state to state, so do environmental regulations. States' regulations in the areas of wetland, rare species, water quality, air, noise, historic consultation, public participation, and others all vary, with some being more stringent than others. For example, in New England, the ACOE has suspended the Nationwide Permit Program under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and replaced it with State General Permit Programs that are more stringent.

Finally, perhaps one of the biggest factors affecting construction is the level of public support for or opposition against a project. The level of support a project enjoys depends on many things, including but not limited to: the perceived level of need for the

project, it's environmental and social impacts, cost, ability of the state DOT or other agency to educate the public about its benefits. Many projects have been stalled for years or completely dropped because of public opposition.

## **APPENDIX B: Project Narratives**

### **Introduction**

This section briefly describes the status of each of the ten Pilot Projects and the approaches that each of the Pilot Projects take to improve efficiency and reduce the time frame of the project development process while ensuring compliance with environmental laws, regulations, and guidelines. It also discusses current expectations of the Pilot Project participants to improve the project development process. Individual Pilot Project profiles are included in Appendix B. The individual Pilot Project profiles discuss:

- The problem that the project was intended to address.
- Environmental permits and approvals, if any, which are being addressed by the project.
- Unique approaches or processes that are being used to achieve environmental streamlining in the transportation planning and project development process.
- The goals or objectives of the sponsor for this project.
- How the sponsors intend to measure and evaluate success or failure.
- Agencies or stakeholders that were involved in developing the Pilot Project.
- Steps being taken to ensure appropriate communication, coordination, and cooperation among the stakeholders.
- The public participation process that was used in the project.
- The schedule of key activities.

- Elements of the planning and project development process that are unique to the conditions or requirements in the particular state.

### **Pilot Project Approaches, Expectations and Status**

#### *Riverside County Integrated Project*

**RCIP Background.** Riverside County is one of the largest counties in the nation, approximately 7,310 square miles (18,933 square kilometers) in area. The county is within the southeastern portion of the Greater Los Angeles metropolitan area and is one of the fastest growing counties in California and the United States. The county population is projected to double from 1.5 million to 3 million in the next 15 to 20 years. Everyone, including developers, is concerned about leapfrog growth effects and dynamics from proposed infrastructure improvements. In May 1999, Riverside County embarked on a first-of-a-kind parallel, integrated planning effort to address serious transportation congestion, habitat conservation, open space, land use, and watershed issues. This planning effort was titled *The Riverside County Integrated Project (RCIP)*.

The RCIP integrates and coordinates the activities of stakeholders involved in four previously separate and distinct planning efforts:

- The preparation of a new Riverside County General Plan
- The development of a Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP)
- The identification of four new transportation corridors through the Community and Environmental Transportation Acceptability Process (CETAP)

- The development of a watershed plan for the San Jacinto and Santa Margarita watersheds (referred to as the Special Area Management Plan (SAMP)).

If undertaken in the traditional approach, these four major planning efforts would have been conducted individually and in a manner that, budget permitting, would likely be carried out in a linear fashion, perhaps separated by many years. Because of the competing interests of land use and conservation, the traditional approach often spawned lawsuits between developers and environmentalists. The integrated approach to planning for local community development, transportation, and habitat is intended to provide more efficient processes and better environmental and transportation results.

**RCIP Approaches.** The RCIP's processes were based on the extensive use of stakeholder participation, early coordination, data-sharing, and public involvement. Since the vast majority of the County's current and future population resides in western Riverside County, the western county area is the primary focus of the RCIP. The following paragraphs discuss the four major elements of the RCIP in more detail. Table B-1 summarizes the components of the RCIP and the goals or expected outcomes of each component.

Riverside County General Plan. California law requires each city and county in the state to prepare and periodically update a general plan to serve as a guide for public and private land development activities within its jurisdiction. Riverside County had adopted a countywide general plan in 1984 and had updated it numerous times since then. A comprehensive revision of the Riverside County General Plan for the unincorporated portion of the county was undertaken to establish future land use and housing needs. The



General Plan integrates habitat conservation, transportation corridors, watershed protection, affordable housing, recreation, and open space. It places limits on growth areas to satisfy sprawl concerns, while providing developers and landowners a predictable level of acceptable development. The General Plan has a 20-year horizon and had to be adopted before the other elements of the RCIP.

**Table B-1. Summary of RCIP Components**

| RCIP Component   | Goals or Outcomes   |
|--|---|
| <b>Riverside County General Plan<br/>(20-year horizon)</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Guides public and private land development activities within Riverside County</b></li> <li>• <b>Integrates habitat conservation, transportation corridors, watershed protection, affordable housing, recreation, and open space</b></li> <li>• <b>Places limits on growth areas</b></li> <li>• <b>Provides a predictable level of acceptable development</b></li> </ul>   |
| <b>Community and Environmental Transportation Acceptability Process (CETAP)<br/>(10-year time frame)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Locate and preserve rights-of-way for four major new multimodal transportation facilities in the western part of the County</b></li> <li>• <b>Relieve current traffic congestion</b></li> <li>• <b>Provide for the County's future transportation and circulation needs</b></li> <li>• <b>Minimize environmental impacts</b></li> </ul>   |
| <b>Western Riverside County Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP)</b>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Streamline the regulatory review related to endangered species</b></li> <li>• <b>Establish significant corridors of undisturbed lands for the conservation of sensitive habitats</b></li> <li>• <b>Preserve approximately 500,000 acres (40%) of the land in western Riverside County for habitat, open space, and recreational opportunities</b></li> <li>• <b>Issue a 75-year Federal and State Umbrella Permit to Riverside County, Caltrans, and Metropolitan Water District</b></li> </ul> |
| <b>Special Area Management Plan (SAMP)</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Regional-level planning tool for aquatic resources</b></li> <li>• <b>Develop a map of preservation areas, restoration areas, and areas for mitigation</b></li> <li>• <b>Establish No Impact Areas, General Permit Areas and Individual Permit Areas</b></li> <li>• <b>Allow issuance of Regional General Permits for projects in the SAMP watersheds</b></li> </ul>   |

### Community and Environmental Transportation Acceptability Process (CETAP)

The CETAP is the transportation element of the RCIP. It is a multimodal effort that considers highway options, mass transit, other forms of travel demand management, and communication. The primary purpose of CETAP is to locate and preserve rights-of-way for four major new multimodal transportation facilities in the western part of the County to relieve current traffic congestion and provide for the County's future transportation and circulation needs, while minimizing environmental impacts. This effort is paramount to shaping sensible growth patterns for Riverside County. If these key corridor locations are not defined, it would become more difficult as development continues and as land for locating transportation facilities is committed to other uses. In addition, RCTC is attempting to shorten the CETAP process from a 30-year time frame to a 10-year time frame.

In November 2002, the CETAP portion of the RCIP was named as one of the projects on the initial list of seven high-priority transportation infrastructure projects selected by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation for expedited environmental review under Executive Order 13274, *Environmental Stewardship and Transportation Infrastructure Project Review* (issued September 18, 2002) (8).

Executive Order 13274 requires executives of Federal departments and agencies to expedite their reviews for relevant permits or other approvals to the maximum extent practicable for these projects selected.

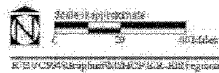
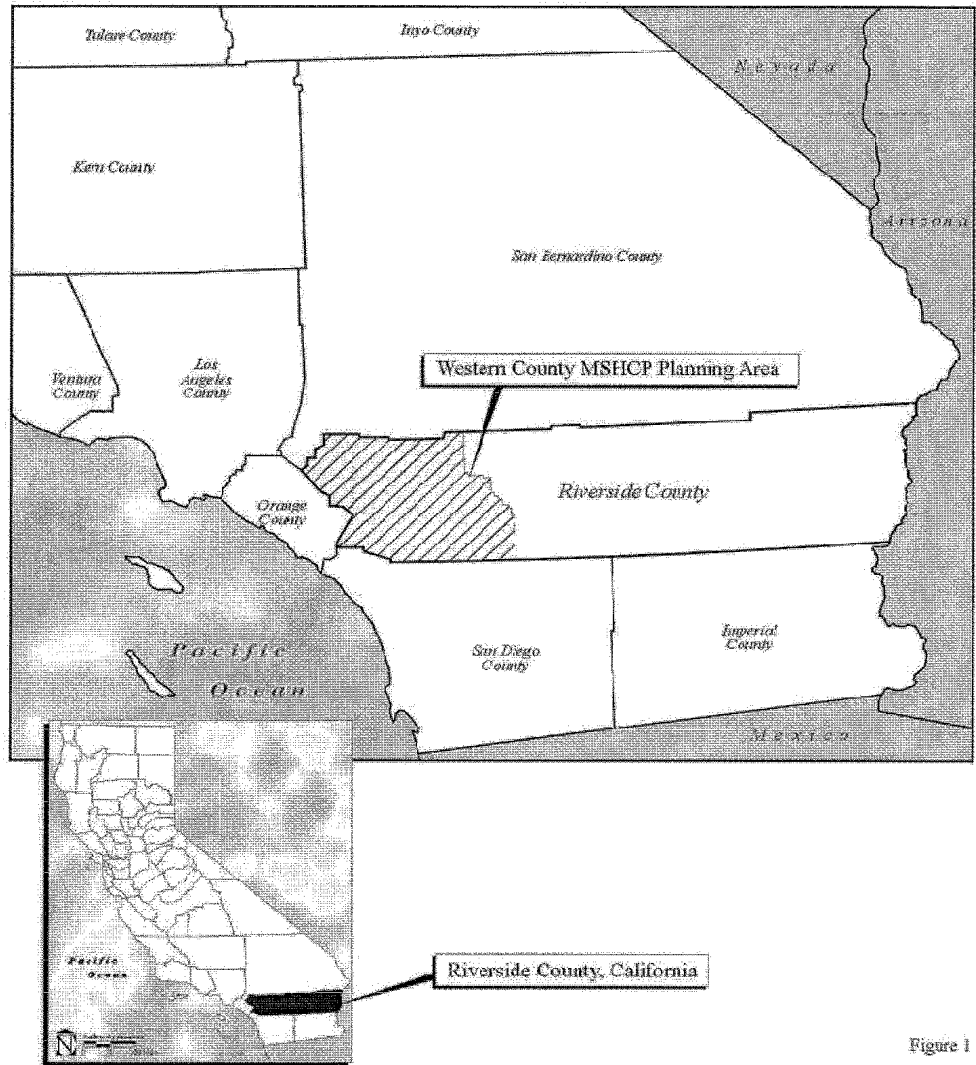
### Western Riverside County Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP)

Riverside County has 29 Federally listed endangered species, the highest of any county in California. There are a total of 146 Federal and State endangered and threatened species in the County. The MSHCP was performed pursuant to the Endangered Species Act and the California Natural Communities Conservation Planning Act. This plan establishes significant corridors of undisturbed lands to be set aside for the conservation of sensitive habitats while preserving open space and recreational opportunities. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the California Department of Fish and Game wanted to perform multi-species planning because there are many species/habitat issues, there had been too frequent battles between land use and conservation, and there was no gain in a permit-by-permit or species-by-species process.

The MSHCP was developed for the western portion of Riverside County (see Figure B-1 (9) for map of western Riverside County). Approximately 150,000 additional acres (607,030 additional hectares) would need to be acquired under the alternative proposed for the MSHCP. In addition to 350,000 additional acres (141,640 additional hectares) of existing publicly owned lands, this would result in approximately 500,000 acres (202,340 additional hectares) or forty percent of the land in western Riverside County being preserved.

The goal of the MSHCP is to streamline the regulatory review related to endangered species. The USFWS and the California Department of Fish and Game issued a Federal and State Umbrella Permit to the permit signatories (*e.g.*, Riverside County, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and the Metropolitan Water District). This Umbrella Permit is valid for 75 years and discusses permitted activities design

Figure B-1



Regional Location for  
Western Riverside County MSHCP



Map showing western Riverside County MSHCP Planning Area.  
Source: RCIP, 2001

criteria, management commitments, funding, funding priorities, and a process for USFWS and the California Department of Fish and Game to review the administration of the permit.

The Western Riverside Council of Governments (WRCOG) has agreed to serve as the “Regional Conservation Authority” for implementing and administering the Umbrella Permit and will grant Individual Project Permits under it. There will be no more need for full Section 7 coordination or Individual Permits from the Federal or State resource agencies, but some continuing coordination will probably occur. For Endangered Species Act issues, the Umbrella Permit could reduce review and consultation time by up to three years. The Umbrella Permit is an endangered species permit only and does not cover Section 404 Permit activities. Section 404 Permit activities would be addressed through the SAMP.

Special Area Management Plan (SAMP). The SAMP is a state-of-the-art regional-level planning tool for aquatic resources being performed pursuant to the Coastal Zone Management Act and the Clean Water Act. It covers two of the three watersheds in Riverside County (the San Jacinto Watershed and the San Margarita Watershed) and part of the third, the Santa Ana Watershed.

The SAMP will develop a map of preservation areas, restoration areas, and areas for mitigation. As a result of the SAMP, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) will be able to issue Regional General Permits for projects in the watersheds covered by the SAMP that meet specific criteria. Developers would also be able to apply for Individual Section 404 Permits and, if the specific criteria in the Individual Section 404 Permit were met, then the USACE would issue the permit. Thus, the SAMP would

establish No Impact Areas, General Permit Areas and Individual Permit Areas. In addition, a Programmatic 1600 Streambed Alteration Agreement will be developed in conjunction with the California Department of Fish and Game.

As the General Plan and the overall RCIP process evolved, the General Plan Advisory Committee plus the MSHCP and CETAP Advisory Committees agreed to form a Steering Committee to assist in providing direction and share information to ensure that the General Plan, MSHCP, and CETAP plan proceeded in an integrated manner. The RCIP Web site also featured an electronic library section housing information on the progress and content of each of the four elements of the RCIP.

**Expectations of the RCIP.** Caltrans was optimistic that the RCIP would achieve the “paradigm leap” from being reactive in coordinating growth and transportation planning to being proactive. The long-term results were expected to include a consensus-based process that saved time and money.

The USACE anticipated that the collaborative effort with other local, State, and Federal stakeholders would yield a balanced decision-making process that adhered to existing laws and also gave full and equal consideration to transportation infrastructure improvements, economic growth, aquatic resources protection, and other key environmental factors within western Riverside County.

It was anticipated that the Pilot Project would also produce a much-improved county-level GIS system. The goal was to have consistent data sets for all four plans. There were over 100 different GIS layers. The GIS system was to be transferred to Riverside County at the end of the RCIP and would be available to the public (except for certain layers, such as cultural resources, that would maintain confidentiality).

**RCIP Status.** Over 1,400 RCIP-related meetings have been held in Riverside County since its inception in August 1999. More than half of the plan components have reached completion. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process for the General Plan was completed in March 2003 and the Riverside County Board of Supervisors adopted the plan in October 2003. The MSHCP is now in the implementation phase with the NEPA process completed in June 2003 and the umbrella permit issued in June 2004. The NEPA process for one of the corridors in the CETAP (Winchester to Temecula) has been completed, while a Tier II Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and two Tier I Final Environmental Impact Reports (FEIRs) for the final three CETAP corridors are in progress. The SAMP is scheduled for completion in 2005

Given its scope, the RCIP process carried numerous challenges related to schedule and sequencing. The RCIP process was originally scoped to take 36 months, but was subsequently rescheduled as a 54-month process projected to end in February 2004. As noted, this process has now been extended into 2007. The Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) initially decided to lengthen the schedule to continue the stakeholder process, gain further stakeholder support, and resolve Federal resource agency issues with the CETAP corridors. Subsequent delays have been the result of a lack of Federal funding and delays in earlier stages of the NEPA process. Further details on the status of each of the RCIP components are in the following paragraphs.

General Plan The General Plan Draft Program EIR was made available for public review on August 20, 2002 and the General Plan Final Program EIR was issued in



March 2003. The Riverside County Planning Commission and Riverside County Board of Supervisors conducted public hearings on the new General Plan from September 2002 through September 2003.

The Board of Supervisors adopted the General Plan and adopted and certified the General Plan Final Program EIR on October 7, 2003, twelve months from the original approval date of October 2002. Riverside County Planning Commission needed the additional time to work on the land use and substantial policy changes included in the Plan. The General Plan was published and distributed to the public in January 2004.

CETAP The CETAP identified four priority corridors for study:

- Winchester to Temecula (I-10 to I-15) to accommodate intra-county traffic flow along State Route 79, I-215, and I-15 (north-south travel demand)
- Hemet to Corona/Lake Elsinore Corridor to improve east-west intra-county travel in the western part of Riverside County
- Moreno Valley to San Bernardino County to provide a north-south inter-county link and address current and future congestion problems on I-215
- Riverside County to Orange County to address current and future congestion problems on State Route 91

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) was the lead agency for the NEPA analysis on the Tier 1 EISs in the CETAP. Records of Decision (RODs) for the two “interior corridors” (Hemet to Corona/Lake Elsinore and Winchester to Temecula) would allow right-of-way acquisition and preservation, although the first phases of construction would not occur for at least another five to ten years.

The Tier I Draft EIS/EIRs for the two interior corridors in the CETAP were originally scheduled for public review in June 2002, but were actually issued for public review on July 19, 2002 (see Figures B-2 (10) and B-3 (11), respectively, for maps of these corridors). There was to be a 60-day review period for the two Tier I Draft EIS/EIRs, but in September 2002, the comment period was extended another 60 days in response to public and government agency requests. Five public hearings were held between December 2002 and January 2003.

During the NEPA/404 process, there were challenges in gaining concurrences between Federal resource and county agencies. It took a year of discussions to obtain concurrences on the Alternatives and Evaluation Criteria. Additional resources and a concerted push from FHWA were instrumental in accelerating the review process. The USACE and other Federal resource agencies believed that the smaller length of time they were given to complete agency reviews caused the overly aggressive original 36-month schedule developed and championed by the RCTC. They felt that fieldwork, research, analysis, and report preparation were hurried through in order to meet deadlines, and that the quality and completeness of the information often suffered. This in turn contributed to the difficulty of timely, responsible, and informed decision-making by the Federal resource agencies at key milestones in the NEPA/404 integration process. Other environmental agency staff agreed that the schedule set by RCTC and the County was “oppressive.” They believed the schedule was driven by political deadlines, particularly having a preferred alternative completed by a November 2002 election in order to propose a 5-cent sales tax increase to fund the measure.

Figure B-2

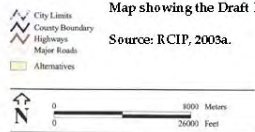
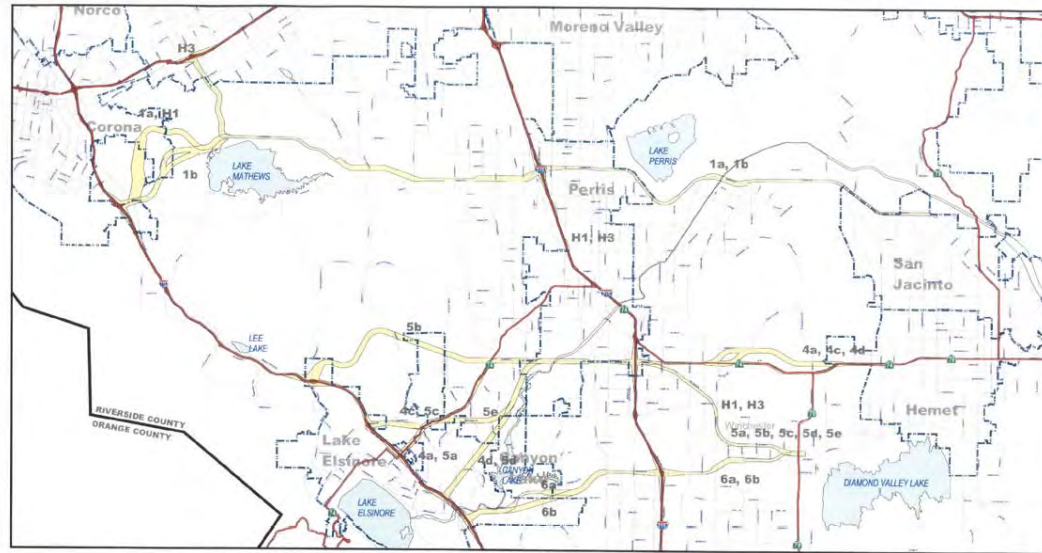
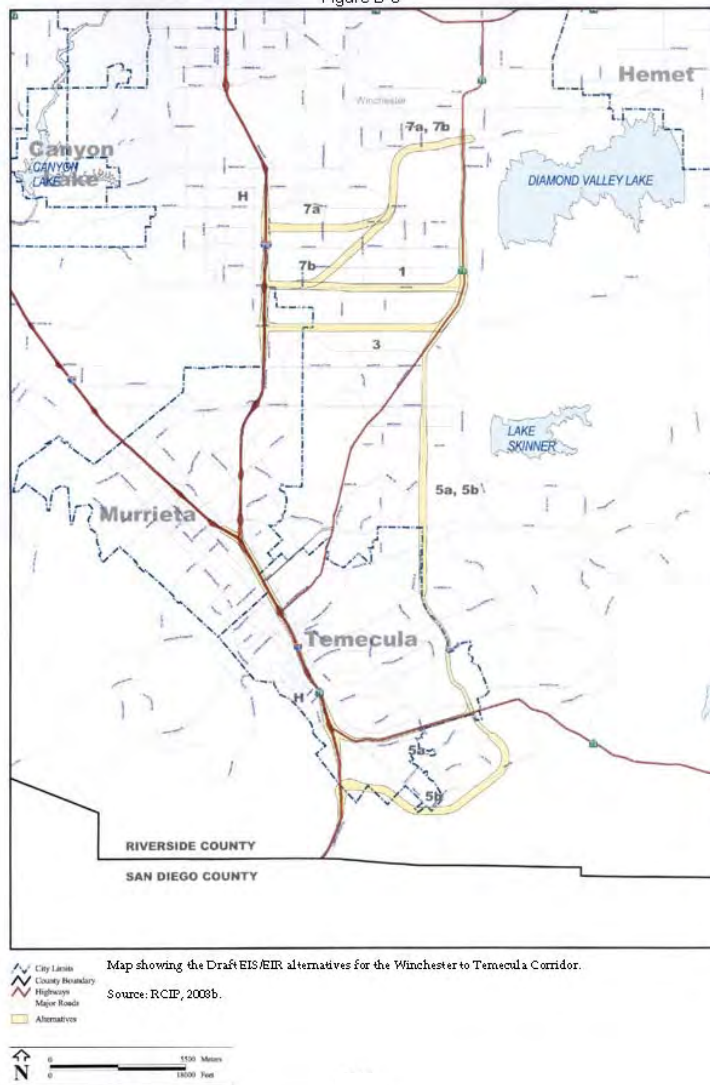


Figure B-3



The USACE and other environmental agency staff also indicated that the overall approach to problem solving was never explicitly articulated, nor did it follow the consensus-based process envisioned by the RCIP. The process continued without resolution when problems and questions arose. USACE felt that having a neutral third party to facilitate the meetings might have aided in establishing an interagency team mission statement or a common understanding of agencies' legal responsibilities, overall expectations, and ground rules, including a decision-making/dispute resolution process.

Because of the CETAP schedule, the RCTC, FHWA, and Caltrans decided against integration of the SAMP with the CETAP environmental evaluation. The USACE expected that the CETAP would capitalize on the SAMP's scientific information to help provide the baseline assessment, functional assessment, and impact analysis for the Draft EISs/EIRs. Omission of these components generated a great number of formal review comments from the Federal resource agencies (USACE, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and USFWS) on the Draft EISs/EIRs. EPA gave the two Tier I Draft EIS/EIRs a Category 3 rating (Inadequate). EPA contended that the issues they had been raising throughout the project development process had not been addressed (they referred to numerous previous letters) and therefore, the data provided in the Draft EIS was inadequate for Federal decision-making. A Category 3 rating typically requires revision and recirculation of the Draft EIS.

EPA's major comments were:

- Analysis of threats to species and habitat was flawed since maps show areas with General Plan land use designations that were also identified within the MSHCP criteria area.
- Discussion of indirect effects and growth inducement was inadequate because land use cannot be assumed to be the same with and without the CETAP corridors.
- Cumulative impact analysis was inadequate.
- Analysis was not sufficient for purposes of reaching concurrence on a single Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative in each corridor. They requested that the SAMP data be incorporated into the analysis.
- A single revised Draft EIS covering both corridors was needed because two EISs examining two corridors separately hindered their analysis.
- Air quality analysis was inadequate because of concerns on the underlying traffic model assumptions, certain standards not being addressed, and project-level transportation conformity findings being deferred until the Tier II EIS.
- EPA also believed that the schedule was responsible in part for the large number of alternatives analyzed in the Draft EIS, the analyses of environmental impacts before obtaining agency consensus on the Evaluation Criteria for the alternatives, and the omission of pending,

relevant SAMP information about aquatic resources available within a month of the release of the Tier I Draft EIS.

FHWA and RCTC were surprised by the EPA's rating of the Tier I Draft EISs because at each stage in the NEPA/404 process, detailed discussions of data/analysis occurred, with agreements reached on what base data/assumptions would be used, the scope of the analysis, and how the results/findings would be presented. There was prolonged frustration between RCIP proponents and the EPA over levels of responsiveness and guidance.

Federal resource agencies were also surprised because while the publicly distributed Tier I Draft EIS/EIRs indicated there was a range of viable alternatives, Caltrans concluded in their official comment letters addressing the Winchester to Temecula Tier I Draft EIS, that only one alternative out of the seven studied was feasible. Caltrans found all other alternatives infeasible because of an interpretation of Caltrans' policy prohibiting future State funding of those alternatives. USACE believed that Caltrans should have verbally raised the funding constraints as an issue, or fatal flaw, during one of the monthly Small Working Group meetings to alert the team there was a substantial issue with the range of alternatives being evaluated. They felt that waiting until the end of the process to articulate such an important issue was counterproductive to the public disclosure process and overall environmental streamlining.

The FHWA California Division Office believed that there was far more data and analysis provided for CETAP than for any previous route location study decision. On the other hand, USACE felt that, while the level of analysis for the Tier I EISs may have appeared to have been unusually detailed for a programmatic NEPA document, it was not

overly or disproportionately detailed for the type of concurrence being asked of them (*i.e.*, agreement with the alternatives analysis and selection of one alternative that would be the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA). In their opinion, the construction of two regional multi-modal transportation facilities, ranging from 7 to 20 miles in length, would affect a substantial amount of sensitive environmental resources (*e.g.*, special aquatic sites). They believed that the extent, magnitude, and intensity of impacts justified an extensive off-site alternatives analysis to help rebut the presumption of a less environmentally damaging alternative. They also felt that the level of assuredness sought by the FHWA and RCTC for compliance with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (*e.g.*, the alternatives analysis and the LEDPA determination) mandated a robust analysis of environmental impacts. Furthermore, EPA believed that many of the analyses in the Tier 1 Draft EIS/EIR were not useful, and that, because of a lack of synthesis, information was not presented in a way that helped sort and prioritize the results for meaningful decision-making.

In addition to the above issues, there was difficulty in eliminating alternatives. Working Paper No. 7b, dated October 2000, stated that one of the primary objectives of the CETAP was to “...implement strategies to increase the efficiency of moving people and goods throughout the corridor”. The term “corridor” was defined as “a general geographic area linking origins and destinations between which people and goods travel or are transported.” In essence, this objective was an attempt to improve traffic and goods movement from either the east side of the Riverside County to the west side of the Riverside County or from north to south. In light of the geographical extent of the study area and the initial project scope, a correspondingly broad Purpose and Need statement



for the CETAP corridors was developed. This broad Purpose and Need Statement dictated the range of alternatives to be considered and how they would be evaluated. As a result, it was extremely difficult to eliminate alternatives early in the process (and to reach a LEDPA), even though all the parties wanted to reduce the number of alternatives that were examined in the two Tier I EISs (14 Hemet to Corona/Lake Elsinore alternatives and 7 Winchester to Temecula alternatives).

In EPA's opinion, the main problem with the CETAP effort was that FHWA, Caltrans, and RCTC insisted that the Tier I EIS process lead to the selection of a single preferred alternative alignment that could be authorized under Section 404 following a Tier II EIS evaluation, and that this Tier I selection process serve to permanently eliminate the consideration in the Tier II EIS of other alternative alignments. Caltrans and RCTC experienced much frustration and trepidation because of the inability to eliminate alternatives in Tier I based on "practicability" arguments. Caltrans believed that some alternatives should have been eliminated because they were too costly or had too many community impacts. The Federal resource agencies did not believe the Tier I EISs could address practicability, as defined in the Section 404 (b)(1) Guidelines. They believed that practicability determinations would have to occur in the Tier II EISs because there was a lack of detailed project-specific information and analysis on which to make accurate conclusions. Thus, there was a mismatch of the level of information in Tier I EIS with the desired outcome of Tier I. The Tier I process was structured to evaluate the alternatives only based on environmental impact factors.

To address these issues, an initial meeting occurred with EPA in December 2002 that ended with no definitive outcome. One reason that this occurred was that there was

no dispute resolution process established on the RCIP to resolve issues between FHWA and the Federal resource agencies. Key to resolving the issues was the active intervention by the U.S. DOT “champion” appointed to the CETAP by the Interagency Transportation Infrastructure Streamlining Task Force, created by Executive Order 13274. This champion has provided the leadership needed to keep the parties moving.

In January 2003, the U.S. DOT champion arranged to have the FHWA and the Federal resource agencies hold meetings to assist in resolving the impasse. At these meetings, the resource agencies specified the additional information and analyses needed for each agency to be able to identify a preferred alternative in each Tier I EIS, which would lead to the LEDPA in the Tier II EIS. As previously stated, the initial SAMP effort included the San Jacinto Watershed and San Margarita Watersheds. EPA agreed to fund a supplementary field survey of the extent of waters of the United States in the Hemet to Corona/Lake Elsinore Corridor in the part of the Santa Ana Watershed that the SAMP did not cover. FHWA, Caltrans, and RCTC agreed to incorporate this data into the Hemet to Corona/Lake Elsinore Corridor analysis and to perform an impact analysis using its functional assessment methodology.

There was also agreement to provide additional discussion of indirect and cumulative effects. There was agreement to disagree on a number of lesser issues. The resource agencies agreed to continue to have the two internal CETAP corridors handled in separate EISs. If, after the additional information and analyses was provided, the resource agencies could not agree to a preferred alternative for each corridor, the decision would be elevated to successively higher levels within each organization until consensus was reached. The agencies agreed that they would not request additional information

other than that which they had already identified. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between RCTC, Riverside County, Caltrans, USACE, EPA, USFWS and the U.S. DOT that outlined these commitments and that included timelines was agreed to and signed on April 2003. EPA and FHWA also agreed to jointly fund a mediator/ facilitator. EPA believes this person has already afforded a remarkable change in progress and in the way everyone is working together. After the signing of the MOU and the mediation process, RCIP proponents reported a successful resolution to the NEPA process with the EPA.

The resource agencies' issues on the Winchester to Temecula Corridor were addressed in the Tier I Final EIS/EIR. The Record of Decision (ROD) for this corridor was originally scheduled for March 2003, but this schedule was extended. The Tier I Final EIS/EIR was released for public and agency review in mid-August 2003. FHWA signed the ROD on September 17, 2003. Caltrans was drafting a Project Study Report to continue the corridor process.

As previously stated, the CETAP portion of the RCIP was named as one of the projects on the initial list of seven high-priority transportation infrastructure projects selected by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation for expedited environmental review under Executive Order 13274, *Environmental Stewardship and Transportation Infrastructure Project Review*. The U.S. DOT removes priority projects that have successfully navigated the environmental review process from the Priority Project List and places them on an Interagency Transportation Infrastructure Streamlining Task Force "Priority Project Transition List." The "Transition List" is an ongoing tracking tool for the Task Force to insure no new issues arise that could be prevented by

their intervention. With the signing of the ROD for the Winchester to Temecula Corridor Tier I Final EIS/EIR, the U.S. DOT placed the CETAP on the Transition List.

The ROD for the Hemet to Corona/Lake Elsinore Corridor was also originally scheduled for March 2003. Since transportation improvements in this corridor are already needed, on June 11, 2003, the RCTC voted to terminate the Tier I EIS for the Hemet to Corona/Lake Elsinore corridor and to proceed with a project-specific Tier II EIS process. A coalition of cities in the northwest portion Riverside County -- Riverside, Corona and Moreno Valley -- convinced the RCTC to select a proposed 40-mile east-west route between I-15 and Route 79 linking Hemet and Corona south of Lake Mathews. This route, called the Cajalco-Ramona Corridor, would provide better relief of State Route 91

On October 14, 2003, an "Expectations Summit" was held for the CETAP partners who will be involved in the Cajalco-Ramona Corridor Project. The USACE, EPA, FHWA, USFWS, California Department of Fish and Game, Riverside County, WRCOG, RCTC, a facilitator, and others attended the meeting. The participants signed a Partnership Agreement that reaffirmed commitments to the project.

Work on the Cajalco-Ramona Corridor began in December 2003. A new, more focused, Purpose and Need statement was developed and presented to the resource agencies for input as the first major milestone in the project development process in January 2004. As of June 2004, comments on the Purpose and Need statement had been obtained from all appropriate agencies, except the USFWS. Caltrans and the other agencies have been meeting monthly to work on developing alternatives and evaluation criteria. One environmental agency participant noted that several of the alternatives may require an amendment to the recently completed MSHCP, since they would affect

proposed care areas outlined by the plan. The Tier II EIS process is scheduled to begin with a Notice of Intent/Notice of Preparation (NOP) in fall 2004 and is scheduled to take three years. Construction completion is projected to be ten years away.

The NEPA process for the two external CETAP corridors (Moreno Valley to San Bernardino Bi-County Corridor and Riverside County to Orange County Corridor) began in May 2003. In accordance with CEQA, an NOP of an EIR was issued for the Moreno Valley to San Bernardino Bi-County Corridor (See project description and map at [www.rcip.org/transportation\\_riversidesanbernardino.htm](http://www.rcip.org/transportation_riversidesanbernardino.htm)). The NOP described the probable environmental effects of the project to be evaluated in the EIR. Public scoping meetings for the Moreno Valley to San Bernardino County corridor environmental study were held in each county on June 4, 2003 and June 5, 2003. The scoping meetings allowed interested individuals, organizations, and public agencies to discuss issues or questions they may have about the project. A Scoping Summary Report was prepared in July 2003 to describe the details of the scoping process and summarize the issues and comments raised during the scoping period. The alignment of the core facility was reevaluated and refined based on input from the public scoping meetings and requests from the City of Loma Linda City Council. In August 2003, the Bi-County Policy Committee directed that preparation of draft technical reports continue for the arterial improvements only, as defined in the NOP. As of June 2004, the draft technical reports on the arterial improvements were complete and additional discussions were underway to choose the best proposed alignment for the corridor in San Bernardino County. Public review of the Draft EIR and additional public meetings are on hold until 2005. The Final EIR will be prepared with responses to comments received during the public review

period, followed by certification of the Final EIR by RCTC and the San Bernardino Associated Governments (anticipated in fall 2004).

A Bi-County committee has also been formed for the Riverside County to Orange County corridor (See project information at [www.octa.net/freeway/ocrmis/home.asp](http://www.octa.net/freeway/ocrmis/home.asp)). A Draft Request for Proposals was issued in early November 2003 to hire a consultant team to perform a Major Investment Study (MIS). The MIS was originally scheduled to begin by the end of 2003, but was delayed until June 2004. The first meeting with the corridor cities occurred on July 6, 2004, and a contract has since been signed with a consultant. The MIS is anticipated to take 18 months and will focus on development of conceptual alternatives. A policy committee, technical advisory committee, and stakeholders' group have been formed for the MIS. Upon completion of the MIS, a project level Tier II EIS will be prepared for that corridor.

MSHCP The Draft EIS/EIR for the MSHCP was scheduled to be released in October 2002, however the MSHCP Draft Plan, Draft Implementation Agreement, and Draft EIS/EIR were not made available to the public until November 15, 2002. Additional time was needed to resolve policy issues on specific endangered species.

The comment period was originally scheduled to end on January 15, 2003, but was extended for two months until March 14, 2003. Public hearings were held in early May 2003. The Riverside County Board of Supervisors also held public hearings in the first week of June 2003. Many comments were received on the MSHCP. Although all the stakeholders had concerns, they preferred to adopt the MSHCP rather than cause a long delay in reworking the document. Developers, wildlife agencies, and environmental groups were supportive.

The MSHCP Final Plan, Final Implementation Agreement, and Final EIS/EIR processes were scheduled to be completed by December 2002. On June 17, 2003, the Riverside County Board of Supervisors adopted the MSHCP, certified the Final EIS/EIR and signed the Final Implementation Agreement. The next steps in the process involved review and approval of the MSHCP by the 14 cities within the MSHCP Plan Area and preparation and issuance of permits by the USFWS and the California Department of Fish and Game. The USFWS was originally scheduled to issue a Biological Opinion in late November 2003, but the opinion was delayed until June 2004. The umbrella permit was signed in late June 2004 and expires in 2079.

As of June 2004, the County's Regional Conservation Agency has begun implementation and is acquiring property to create reserves. As of August 2004, \$153 million had been designated for habitat acquisition. Four Section 7 consultations and permits have been completed under the plan.

Initial impressions on the degree of success of the MSHCP are mixed. Federal environmental agency officials noted that the plan was complex and covered a large planning area. In hindsight, preparing a NEPA Tier I analysis for the larger MSHCP area and NEPA Tier II analyses for smaller sub-areas may have been more feasible. Because certain habitat areas were more desirable than others, trying to develop viable reserve designs in conjunction with transportation corridor development and residential and commercial development was challenging. The single largest challenge identified by local RCIP participants has been a lack of monies to purchase reserve property during the recent economic downturn in the state.

Environmental agency staff noted that the real measures of success for the plan will come in the future. They expect the plan to result in a streamlined Section 7 process, more consistent assessment, and less work for Federal agencies, such as USFWS. Although the process involved a high initial investment of time, they believe that, in the future, time will be saved on individual projects. The participants also largely agreed that the plan will result in better environmental protection.

SAMP The start of the SAMP, an USACE project, was initially delayed until 2000 because Congressional funding was needed. The SAMP consists of three phases estimated to last a total of approximately four years. Phase I includes identification and characterization of aquatic resources in the western Riverside County. Phase II involves preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement including the Section 404(b)(1) alternatives analysis. Phase III of the SAMP involves finalizing the environmental documents, completion of an aquatic resource restoration plan and, finally, issuance of Programmatic Section 404 permits. A Draft EIS for the SAMP was scheduled to be released October 2003. The SAMP was scheduled for a ROD in August 2004 and permit issuance in October 2004, but a loss of funding forced USACE to discontinue work. As of June 2004, the County and USACE were still in discussions regarding the integration of the SAMP with the MSHCP and RCIP. One million dollars has been allocated in the Congressional budget to complete the SAMP in 2005.

RCIP Process. RCIP stakeholders reported several perceived benefits and successful practices involved in developing and carrying out the RCIP. Most participants agreed that the involvement and support of high-level Federal and State agency officials from the outset was vital to the success of the process. Because the most difficult



obstacles in the process were rooted in Federal, State, and local politics, the engagement of high-level agency staff helped address these issues and bring parties together to the complete the plan. Local agency staff reported that one of the major benefits of the RCIP process was the improved relationships between local governments brought on by the integrated planning approach and stakeholder involvement. Public outreach and education were also noted as positive and essential parts of the process.

Criticisms of the RCIP process are largely related to scheduling, sequencing, oversight, and plan integration. One stakeholder reported that the main reason for the extension of the RCIP time frame was an unrealistic expectation of the time that would be needed to coordinate or integrate the General Plan, MSHCP, CETAP, and SAMP planning efforts. As evidenced by agency comments during the CETAP NEPA process, some environmental agency staff felt that the process was dictated too closely by the proposed schedule, and that the process moved forward regardless of agency comment. Ultimately, what was scoped as a 36-month, \$13 million effort ended up being a 60-month, \$36 million effort.

There was also a general feeling that many of the NEPA-related problems encountered during the CETAP portion of the plan could have been resolved with more involvement and leadership from FHWA and Caltrans earlier in the process. RCTC took on many of the NEPA-related responsibilities in the initial stages of the RCIP.

Several participants had disagreements with the order in which the RCIP components were completed, and the degree to which the plans were actually integrated. They felt that the SAMP and MSHCP should have been completed before the General Plan and CETAP. One environmental agency staff person stated that, although

agencies exchanged information on each project component, there could have been more of a mandate to integrate the information and use it for decision-making. Similarly, he noted that each document could have described or acknowledged the RCIP process and outlined how the document incorporated the RCIP principles.

In reflecting on possible improvements and future steps in the process, RCIP proponents noted that they should have put more effort into planning for the post-process, particularly in the areas of implementation, staffing, and funding. Some cities in Riverside County do not have staff to implement the components of RCIP, which has the potential to cause difficulties in the immediate future.

RCIP participants felt that the chief constraints to replicating the process elsewhere would be the high expense associated with the process and sequencing issues.

**Caltrans/FHWA/EPA Partnership Effort Background.** EPA, Caltrans, and FHWA interact on a variety of issues during the transportation planning, project development and permitting processes. While these interactions can run smoothly, the agencies occasionally clash on how environmental considerations and legal mandates should be considered. In 1997, California Senate Bill 45 changed who controlled transportation funds. This law pushes transportation decision making to the local level closer to where land use decisions are made. As a result, local governments control 75 percent of the transportation funding in the state.

EPA's comments and questions during the NEPA process often centered on land use issues (*e.g.* "Your interchange will cause cumulative impacts."). Since these land use decisions were reached early in the transportation planning process, EPA's comments caused unacceptable project delays as well as personal conflicts between agency personnel.

The agencies felt that a healthier relationship based on mutual understanding of agencies missions, legal mandates, and authorities, and an understanding of why conflicts develop would lead to potential solutions to these conflicts. On April 2, 1999, the three agencies held a facilitated workshop at the University of California at Davis to explore each agency's legal mandates and to determine the issues and factors that led to problems in normal business interactions. EPA was instructed about the land use and transportation planning processes (*i.e.*, how land use decisions were made and Caltrans' lack of influence over land use). The results of the workshop were a set of

recommendations on “communication”, “policy”, and “knowledge and information” issues and the adoption of an implementation plan in March 2000. The Caltrans/FHWA/EPA Partnership Effort became official with the signing of a Partnership Agreement (also known as the Mare Island Accord) on July 14, 2000 (12).

**Caltrans/FHWA/EPA Partnership Effort Approaches.** To accomplish the initiatives envisioned in the Mare Island Accord, the agencies established three Partnership Working Groups: the Partnership Steering Committee, the NEPA/404 Integration Workgroup, and the Partnership for Integrated Planning (PIP) Pilot Project in Merced County.

The Partnership Steering Committee. The Partnership Steering Committee comprises senior management and staff of each agency. The committee’s purpose is to discuss emerging problems, issues, opportunities, and agency priorities and to report and track the status of the Caltrans/FHWA/EPA Partnership Effort initiatives. These initiatives are:

- Training and Outreach Coordination
- Interagency Rotational Assignments
- Funding Coordination
- Joint Guidance Development
- Merced County Partnership for Integrated Planning

These initiatives are discussed in the following paragraphs:

Training and Outreach Coordination The goal is to share internal and external training opportunities among agencies and conduct joint transportation workshops.

Interagency Rotational Assignments The intent of this initiative is to have individuals from one of the partnership agencies spend six months on a “tailored” assignment at another of the partnership agencies (FHWA to EPA, Caltrans to EPA, EPA to Caltrans, and EPA to FHWA). These assignments would give the assignee an on-the-job experience, thereby providing an understanding of that agency’s mission and mandate. This ultimately will help attain the agencies’ mutual goals.

Funding Coordination The Mare Island Accord committed the three agencies to coordinate and share funding resources, where possible, “to create synergies that support the objective of the partnership”.

Joint Guidance Development The Mare Island Accord committed the three agencies to work together to create guidance that integrates transportation and environmental planning.

The NEPA/404 Integration Process Monitoring Workgroup. The Mare Island Accord committed to convening the NEPA/404 Integration Process Monitoring Workgroup to evaluate the existing NEPA/404 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) process established in the *Memorandum of Understanding, National Environmental Policy Act and Clean Water Act Section 404 Integration Process for Surface Transportation Projects in Arizona, California, and Nevada*, dated March 1994 (13), and to improve implementation. The meeting was precipitated by several events that led to the signatory agencies to revise the existing MOU.

Partnership for Integrated Planning (PIP) Pilot Project. The PIP functioned as a broad-based advisory committee established to guide the development of Merced County’s 2030 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). Merced County was chosen as the subject of the PIP Pilot Project because the county is expected to face significant

population growth and development pressures over the next 30 years. Proximity to major inter-regional and interstate highways, the construction of a new University of California campus outside the City of Merced, the presence of prime productive agricultural land, and biodiversity and sensitive habitat characteristic of the state made the county a good candidate for integrated planning efforts related to an RTP. The Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG) directed the Merced County PIP and FHWA, EPA, and Caltrans participated through the Steering Committee and stakeholders' meetings. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service, California Department of Fish and Game, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers also provided guidance. The PIP was established with five specific goals:

- Formulate a regional transportation planning approach that may be used as a statewide and national model
- Improve the delivery of transportation projects through early State and Federal agency participation in the planning process
- Use and evaluate GIS tools to model urban development, habitat, and agriculture land use with transportation projects in the planning process
- Evaluate options for addressing project cumulative growth issues in the MCAG's Regional Transportation Plan through the year 2030
- Develop a progressive public education and involvement process based upon an inclusive philosophy using innovative communication formats and media

At the outset of the development of the MCAG's RTP update in July 2001, large development projects had been proposed that would affect environmentally sensitive areas. MCAG decided to use GIS to analyze potential cumulative impacts in

Merced County from the RTP. This regional analysis would allow participants to evaluate a group of projects and their collective impacts on endangered species and their habitat, wetlands, and important farmlands. The participants would develop recommendations on the optimum locations for development and transportation infrastructure. If significant cumulative impacts were identified, the RTP could be modified. In this way, environmental issues are identified before project development starts. Project-level analyses would refer back to and build upon the regional analysis.

**Expectations for Caltrans/FHWA/EPA Partnership Effort.** Caltrans predicted that the NEPA/404 Integration Process Monitoring Workgroup, the Merced County PIP Pilot Study, and training coordination would be the most valuable initiatives of the Caltrans/FHWA/EPA Partnership Effort. These initiatives began improving interagency understanding and communication almost immediately. Caltrans expected to strengthen those ties further by increasing the frequency of the Partnership Steering Committee meetings, holding an environmental summit, and increasing training and rotational assignment opportunities. Caltrans also anticipated that the revised NEPA/404 MOU would result in a more efficient process by better defining the projects that would be subject to the merger process and by addressing changes in the Section 404 permit requirements since the drafting of the original MOU.

The PIP was expected to result in improved methods for conducting effective multi-party planning processes on a broad scale. The project was also expected to demonstrate the benefits of high-level GIS capabilities. Caltrans was optimistic that the use of the PIP approach to performing cumulative impacts analyses for groups of projects would lead to the development of a standardized method for such analyses that could be

implemented across California and in other states. Even if this goal was not reached, at least there would be better information about cumulative impacts and a better understanding of agency goals and concerns.

**Caltrans/FHWA/EPA Partnership Effort Status.** The three agencies have developed a Guidance Statement stating, “Each agency understands and appreciates the importance and need for a safe and efficient intermodal transportation system and the protection of the natural and human environment (14).” The level of participation of the resource agencies varies with each component of the Pilot Project.

Management Meetings The Partnership Steering Committee had one meeting in October 2000, but the group did not meet quarterly as originally planned because of personnel changes, insufficient involvement of top-level management, and lack of agency lead in planning the meetings. In 2003, Caltrans worked to enhance the activity level of the Partnership Steering Committee. As a result, there were Committee meetings held in April 2003 and July 2003, and two additional meetings in late 2003 and early 2004. The process has since been rejuvenated and the group is meeting regularly.

The Partnership Steering Committee did not believe that the Merced County PIP provided the level of specificity or the short time frame needed to address Indirect and Cumulative Impacts in the context of Land Use and Transportation Planning. It, therefore, created a workgroup comprised of representatives from FHWA, EPA, and Caltrans to develop methods on how to accomplish this task. A consultant assisted the workgroup on literature research and writing. Guidance on specific approaches for assessing cumulative impacts and related trainings began in late 2003 and were completed by the fall of 2004. Work was underway on approaches for assessing indirect



impacts. This portion of the workgroup's task was expected to be completed in late 2004. Some minor disagreements arose between workgroup members in developing the assessment guidance, but the members agreed to work out the remaining issues on a project-by-project basis.

Training and Outreach Coordination Training and outreach efforts moved forward, although they were affected by budget constraints within Caltrans. EPA and Caltrans both offered training to participating agencies. Caltrans developed an Environmental Planners Academy for government representatives to learn about Caltrans operations. EPA, FHWA, California Department of Fish and Game, NMFS, and tribal government representatives attended the Academy. Caltrans worked with the California Department of Fish and Game to prepare training on watershed assessments and on fish passage. Training sessions began but were suspended because of budget constraints at the California Department of Fish and Game.

Caltrans personnel attended five Air Quality Conformity Workshops and a Cumulative Impact Workshop sponsored by EPA. Caltrans also conducted a two-week training session for internal and FHWA cultural resources staff on a new Programmatic Agreement (PA) for compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Executed in January 2004, the PA now governs how FHWA, Caltrans, and local agencies consider historic and archaeological resources during environmental review for State and local road projects receiving FHWA funding or approval. As a corollary to the training, Caltrans and FHWA participated in a monthly teleconference on cultural resource issues. A NEPA/404 training module is also planned after the NEPA/404 Memorandum of Understanding (for California) is signed.

The Training and Outreach efforts were more successful than previous efforts, but training needs to be more formal, long term, and initiated by all three agencies.

Interagency Rotation Assignments As their performance measure, FHWA, EPA and Caltrans targeted having one assignment per agency per fiscal year in place by December 1, 2000. Caltrans assigned and funded positions in FHWA, but staffing shortfalls, budget constraints, and location issues limited other job assignments from occurring. For example, the EPA Regional Office is in San Francisco, while both the FHWA Division Office and Caltrans headquarters are in Sacramento.

Funding Coordination. FHWA, EPA, Caltrans, and MCAG all funded the Merced County PIP Pilot Study. Resource Partnering MOUs are being used to fund positions in different agencies so that the agencies have sufficient staff to expedite the review of transportation projects (see the section titled *Caltrans/State and Federal Agency Position Funding Effort* in this Appendix). EPA Region IX was a recipient of two of these positions.

Joint Guidance Development In December 1999, Caltrans issued revised Regional Transportation Planning (RTP) Guidelines (<http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/offices/orip/rtp/rtpguidelines/Contents.htm>). FHWA, Caltrans Division of Environmental Analysis, and Caltrans Division of Local Assistance also jointly developed an on-line Caltrans Standard Environmental Reference (SER) (<http://www.dot.ca.gov/ser/>). The purpose of the SER is to improve access to environmental laws, regulations, and policies and to provide consistent application of environmental procedures.

The NEPA/404 Integration Process Monitoring Workgroup. The NEPA/404 Integration Process Monitoring Workgroup convened on August 21, 2000. On October 30, 2000, the workgroup established an interim threshold (for California projects only) for determining whether a project is subject to the NEPA/404 Integration Process. This interim threshold will remain in place until the revised NEPA/404 MOU is approved. The interim threshold to invoke the NEPA/404 MOU occurs when a proposed Federal-aid transportation project in California is likely to have impacts greater than 5 acres (2 hectares) to special aquatic sites, or impacts greater than 5 acres (2 hectares) to other waters of the United States. If executed, the revised NEPA/404 MOU would apply only to Federal-aid transportation projects in California.

The negotiation process for the revised NEPA/404 MOU was delayed by other administrative demands. Caltrans believes that hiring a consultant to facilitate such processes in the future would alleviate delays. Caltrans received FHWA's comments on the review draft of the revised NEPA/404 MOU in January 2003 and issued a revised review draft of the MOU. Several rounds of discussions followed, with another round of comments on the review draft.

A draft final version of the MOU was completed in early 2004. Caltrans received comments from the EPA on the draft final MOU approving execution of the MOU, but requesting that the accompanying Guidance Paper be rewritten. Caltrans was awaiting comments from the USACE and USFWS. Caltrans had the option to execute the draft final MOU or issue minimum guidelines. Caltrans was strategizing with FHWA, EPA, and USACE on an approach, but no agreement was reached. Work on revising the

NEPA/404 MOU was halted in 2004 with the issuance of guidelines for Purpose and Need Statements from the Council on Environmental Quality.

Merced County Partnership for Integrated Planning (PIP). No significant work started on the PIP Pilot Study until funding was approved in May 2001 and the study began in July 2001. The parties developed a PIP Agreement (15) that defined the roles and responsibilities of the agencies and committed agency staff resources to review and comment on study documents, attend quarterly PIP meetings, and participate in public outreach sessions. Several agencies ultimately did not sign the agreement, citing conflict of interest and lack of staff. Figure B-4 displays the PIP Agreement.

Work on the UPLAN Urban Growth Model began in 2002. UPLAN is an interactive GIS-based model for that overlays geographic data layers to find the most attractive areas for growth with the least amount of impact. In this manner, various land use scenarios are tested. A Technical Review Board verified the adequacy of the UPLAN data layers and resource agencies provided input on the geographical areas to be protected. The UPLAN model was used for transportation and urban growth scenario analysis, and mapping and graphic presentations at public meetings. The model allowed for changes to various environmental and social attractors, assumed growth rates, and other basic assumptions. The maps generated through UPLAN proved extremely effective in engaging the public in debate on the consequences of land use decisions. The program clearly presented benefits and tradeoffs for planning decisions.

Broad community support was seen as being key to the PIP process. MCAG did an outstanding job with public involvement in the PIP process.



**A PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT**  
**Among**  
**Departments and Agencies of the United States of America,**  
**Departments and Agencies of the State of California,**  
**and the**  
**Merced County Association of Governments**

**Preamble**

We, the undersigned, hereby establish a partnership among Departments and Agencies of the United States, Departments and Agencies of the State of California, and the Merced County Association of Governments to cooperate in a study to evaluate alternative processes, participatory procedures, and analytical tools to better achieve our respective missions and goals.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this Agreement is to engage in concerted, cooperative, and collaborative study relationships among the Parties. The Parties agree that transportation plans and projects should be implemented in timely manner that protect or restore the region's environment.

**Goals**

This Partnership for Integrated Planning-Merced Pilot (PIP-MP) study will specifically seek to develop a process that better achieves these goals:

- \* Formulate a model regional transportation planning process and identifying projects that avoid and/or minimize impacts on sensitive environmental habitats, wetlands, and important agricultural lands.
- \* Develop a progressive public education and involvement process grounded upon an inclusive energetic philosophy using innovative communication formats and media.
- \* Use and evaluate geographic information system tools to model land use scenarios in coordination with regional transportation and air quality models.
- \* Improve the regional transportation planning process and delivery of transportation projects through early participation in that process by local, state and federal agencies.

The PIP agreement among federal and state agencies and Merced County.

Source: NJDOT, 2000.

Figure B-4

- \* Improve the integration of the regional housing needs and housing element planning processes with transportation and environmental planning.

**Commitments**

- \* The Parties agree to establish a senior management task force to develop and implement the study's work program. Appointees to the task force will have the authority to address issues as they arise, and be responsive to the concerns throughout the PIP project. The task force will meet on a regular basis.
- \* The Parties will commit staffing to participate, coordinate and collaborate in support of the study work program including the development and sharing of data, review and comment on study working papers, attendance at partnership working meetings and public participation activities.
- \* The Parties will establish an interagency issue resolution process with appropriate timelines for completion.
- \* The Parties agree to jointly develop as a product of the PIP project, an innovative proposal for state and federal review and approval with the goal of allowing a far more expeditious delivery of transportation projects and accommodate housing development consistent with statutory requirements and local needs while continuing to achieve resource agency missions of preserving, enhancing, and restoring habitat and environmental resources.

**It is further understood that:**

Nothing in this memorandum shall be construed as obligating the partners to expend money or obligate appropriations, including any monies in en excess of that authorized by law and/or administratively allocated for these purposes, and;

This Agreement does not modify any agency's existing authorities be reducing, expanding, or transferring any of the statutory or regulatory authorities and responsibilities of any of the signatory agencies.

Agency/Department Signature Blocks

To ensure that all segments of the community had representation and input into the regional transportation plan, MCAG established eight focus groups (some not traditionally involved in transportation planning). These focus groups were: Business and Education, Southeast Asian Community, Hispanic Community, Environmental and Outdoor Recreation, Seniors, Agriculture, Commuters/Professional Drivers, and Youth. Two members of each focus group served on a PIP Advisory Committee. A series of quarterly community workshops were held between February and March 2003 where the focus groups provided input on the vision for Merced County in 2030. The result was vision themes, for which MCAG asked citizens to help set transportation goals. MCAG approved these transportation goals, which were:

- Provide a good system of roads that are well-maintained, safe, efficient, and meet the transportation demands of people and freight
- Provide a transit system that is a viable choice
- Support full-time employment with livable wages
- Preserve productive agricultural land, maintain a strong agricultural economy, and preserve the quality of life that goes with it
- Support clean air and water and avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts to the environment
- Support orderly and smart growth that enhances the integration and connectivity of various modes of transportation

The transportation goals were used as a foundation on which to build a transportation plan through the year 2030. MCAG took the transportation goals and, in a second series of quarterly focus groups and workshops, involved over 285 citizens in

choosing among potential transportation strategies and solutions to achieve each goal. This process was completed in October 2003, and a stakeholders' meeting with key review agencies was held the same month to update them on the progress of the environmental study and environmental assumptions.

Additional quarterly focus group meetings and workshops were used to package the solutions into a series of alternative transportation scenarios and funding options and to develop a recommended alternative and associated financial plan. The results of the public process were released in March 2004.

In California, RTPs prepared by the MPOs as part of the Federal planning process must also meet California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements. The CEQA document (an Environmental Impact Report (EIR)) precedes the issuance of the RTP. The EIR decides mode choice and examines avoidance and minimization alternatives. The RTP EIR was not structured as a joint NEPA/CEQA document. There were questions as to how binding the decisions based on this document would be, since the Federal review agencies have no legal authority in the process. Nevertheless, Caltrans asked FHWA and EPA to review the EIR.

MCAG was not familiar with preparing EIRs and used Caltrans environmental staff to perform the work. Other completed RTP EIRs served as models. Questions that needed to be resolved in the process included:

- How do you prepare a Purpose and Need discussion for a program document?

- What level of analysis is appropriate for a program document?

Information needed to obtain project level Section 404 permits was not included.

CEQA requires a cumulative impact analysis to be included in the EIR. A Cumulative Impact Advisory Panel was formed with the Federal, State and regional agencies (Caltrans, FHWA, EPA, USACE, USFWS, NOAA Fisheries, and MCAG) to develop recommendations that MCAG could use to address cumulative impacts. MCAG's PIP Advisory Committee also met to address this issue. Challenges in the process included the absence of directly applicable guidance, the difficulty of applying of an assessment model to a regional rather than project-level setting, MCAG's lack of land use authority, and recognition that a project-level analysis will still need to be done later.. MCAG used the UPLAN model for assessing the cumulative impacts with GIS layers from Caltrans and State and Federal resource agencies.

Transportation scenarios for the RTP Draft EIR were expected to be tested in November 2003, but were delayed until January 2004. The Draft EIR on the RTP was completed in early 2004. The MCAG Board selected the Preferred RTP Scenario in March 2004 and finalized and published the RTP in July 2004. The first individual projects from the RTP are likely to go to construction in 2005 or 2006.

During the development of the RTP and the EIR, agencies expressed concerns over biological habitat and animal mitigation corridors between habitats. The MCAG proposed a Phase II of the PIP addressing these concerns. The goals of the process would be to identify available habitat parcels for purchase and develop funding strategies for acquisition.



One of the most successful parts of the PIP process was the significant public involvement. Participants noted that this was made possible by a large influx of funding, and may not be feasible to replicate in other areas.

**Caltrans/State and Federal Agency Position Funding Effort Background and Expectations.** Caltrans and various State and Federal resource and regulatory agencies interact on a variety of issues during the project development process. State and Federal agencies are required by law to review proposals for new transportation projects to ensure compliance with environmental laws. Caltrans' project development workload had increased substantially in recent years, creating a backlog at the resource agencies that affected Caltrans project delivery. Caltrans initiated the Position Funding Effort to take advantage of TEA-21's Section 1309(e) provisions that allow State Departments of Transportation to enter into cost reimbursement agreements to provide Federal-aid funds to Federal agencies to hire additional staff. The Position Funding Effort provides additional staffing resources to selected State and Federal resource and regulatory agencies to allow early and constructive participation in project planning and design decisions, timely field reviews and negotiations, and processing of project and emergency permits. The additional staff helps the resource agencies provide premium service levels, thereby allowing environmental studies and coordination with resource agencies to be completed in a timely manner and shortening project time frames.

**Caltrans/State and Federal Agency Position Funding Effort Approach.**

Before Section 1309 (e) of TEA-21, Caltrans used an alternative approach to position funding that was and still is working well. The USACE has a Caltrans person assigned to its San Francisco Office as an USACE facilitator. This person makes recommendations for USACE action on Caltrans permits and preliminarily reviews Caltrans permit

applications. The position also offers training and guidance to Caltrans on what the USACE needs. The USACE seems happy with this arrangement. However, a number of other agencies did not agree to this approach because of the potential appearance of a conflict of interest.

To initiate the Caltrans/State and Federal Agency Position Funding Effort, Caltrans drafted a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (16) among the FHWA, EPA, and Caltrans outlining the overall system. Figure B-5 displays the first page of this MOU. The draft stipulated that FHWA was not a signatory to the obligations under the agreement, but was signing only as an acknowledgment that the agency had a role in the process, would participate in defining working relationships, and would sign subsidiary agreements covering the positions funded through Federal reimbursement. FHWA had several concerns about being a signatory to the obligations outlined in the MOU. The agency was concerned about potential financial liability if the work performed by funded position holders was not demonstrably in excess of work already funded under the EPA budget. There were also concerns about the relationship between the MOU and subsequent agreements establishing the specific positions and performance measures for the positions. Also, while FHWA's focus of concern was the Federal agencies, Caltrans wanted to extend the position funding to State agencies as well. The mechanics of using Federal funding to support the Caltrans/State and Federal Agency Position Funding Effort were also difficult to administer because the Position Funding Effort is a program, rather than a project, and there was no Federal category of funding that clearly covered the positions. Caltrans, therefore, decided to use State funds for the Position Funding Effort rather than Federal-aid reimbursement.

Figure B-5

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**  
**Between the**  
**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (CALTRANS)**  
**and**  
**U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, REGION 9 (EPA)**  
**REGARDING PRIORITY REVIEW OF TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS**  
**September 26, 2001**

**I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to establish the responsibilities and procedures of the signatory agencies (Parties) relative to the priority review of transportation projects involving the California Department of Transportation (CALTRANS) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 9 (EPA). The goal of this agreement is to obtain timely involvement by the EPA staff in the development of Caltrans projects, so that the proposed actions are sensitive to the protection of natural resources for which the EPA is responsible under federal statutes and regulations, include any conditions necessary to comply with the nation's environmental laws, and are permitted without delay. Through such early consultation and involvement, the Parties hope that transportation projects can be designed and implemented promptly to meet the ever-changing transportation needs of California in a manner that is sensitive to environmental resources and public interests.

**II. BACKGROUND**

- A. The parties acknowledge that the Federal-aid transportation funding to CALTRANS provided by Public Law 105-178, The Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21) has substantially increased the number of transportation projects the EPA must review pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (as amended); the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) NEPA Implementing Regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508); and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act (as amended). In addition, there are other laws, regulations, and executive orders that support this basic mandate. The EPA is responsible for actions, which are subject to federal control, and responsibility, including those financed, assisted, conducted, regulated, or approved by other federal agencies.
- B. CALTRANS would like the EPA to increase its level of early involvement during the project planning and development process, so that final EPA reviews will not constitute an unnecessary delay in CALTRANS project implementation. The EPA has indicated that it cannot, without additional resources, provide CALTRANS with priority reviews of CALTRANS projects, nor increase the EPA's involvement in CALTRANS' transportation planning and development process. The Parties believe

The first page of the MOU among the FHWA, EPA and Caltrans.

Source: MOU, 2001

Caltrans now fills agency positions using three methods:

1. Using Federal/State agency employees
2. Using Caltrans employees hired for the other agency's location
3. Using Caltrans employees on rotation to other agencies

**Caltrans/State and Federal Agency Position Funding Effort Status.**

The California Legislature approved funding, totaling \$2.25 million a year, for 21 agency positions and one Caltrans position on July 1, 1999. Subsequently, there was been a permanent increase in Caltrans' base budget to fund these Section 1309(e) positions.

It took about one year from the passage of the budget amendment in July 1999 to execute contracts with the Federal and State agencies. The various ways in which the State and Federal resource and regulatory agencies accommodated these positions reflect the diversity of agency administrative structures and attitudes within government. Caltrans had to resolve State fiscal year versus Federal fiscal year issues, so the contracts had a variety of cycles. Preferred contract language also varied among Federal and State agencies, preventing consistency between all agency contracts.

The initial contracts had average terms of 2 to 3 years. EPA hired people for two NEPA review positions beginning in June 2000, during the MOU negotiation period. The initial contract for these positions was signed between EPA and Caltrans in May 2000. Caltrans also signed contracts with California Coastal Commission (CCC), California Department of Fish and Game, NMFS, SHPO, USACE and USFWS. These positions were first filled in the summer of 2000. Contracts with the agencies have been renegotiated since the initial round, and some with extended terms of 5 years. One

Federal environmental agency staff person reported that his contract negotiation has been slow, taking in excess of nine months. This is attributable in part to contract freezes imposed on some Federal agencies. Efforts to combine contracts for various hires into one document have also slowed the renewal process.

While Caltrans is authorized to fund 21 positions in 7 agencies, because of high turnover and the difficulties of filling vacant positions, there are only 13 positions (12 agency positions and 1 Caltrans positions) in 5 agencies that are occupied (see Table B-2).

**Table B-2. Allocation of Caltrans-Funded Positions by Agency (As of August 2004)**

| <b>Agency</b>   | <b>Number of Positions Funded by Caltrans</b> |
|---|---|
| U.S. Environmental Protection Agency                                | 2   |
| National Marine Fisheries Service<br>(Santa Rosa Office)            | 2   |
| U.S. Army Corps of Engineers<br>(Los Angeles District)              | 3   |
| U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service<br>(Sacramento and Carlsbad Offices) | 2   |
| California Department of Fish & Game                                | 0   |
| California Coastal Commission                                       | 3   |
| Office of Historic Preservation                                     | 0   |
| Caltrans (Program Coordinator)                                      | 1   |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>13</b>                                     |

Source: Caltrans

The Position Funding Effort has presented a number of administrative challenges in the areas of hiring, employee retention, performance measures, reporting requirements, and funding. Using the Federal civil service hiring process to fill the Caltrans funded positions at Federal agencies caused difficulties by greatly increasing hiring times. Initially, the hiring process took so long that many qualified candidates had taken other jobs by the time an offer could be extended. The Federal agencies' need to adhere to a specific Full Time Equivalent (FTE) allocation of positions was another limitation.

Another challenge the program faced in the initial hiring phase was how to assure that the funding translated into making experienced people available for the transportation work. The CCC, for example, found early on that an entry-level staff person could not meet their needs and expectations for the review process. A more experienced person was necessary to complete the work and to provide training to Caltrans staff on topics such as the permit process and coastal design.

The EPA believes that the challenge in attracting and hiring qualified people has been largely related to the way in which the funded positions are structured. First, the jobs are classified as "limited-term" positions. Term employees are not permanent employees and cannot participate in career rotations, details, or compete for vacancies available only within EPA. Term employees need to find and compete for another job before maximizing the amount of time they remain in a term position. One participant reporter suggested that Caltrans fund these positions for a longer period of time as a solution. Second, the positions are slightly lower in pay grade than most of the EPA employees with whom they work collaboratively. Third, the positions are not entry level and require advanced knowledge of Federal environmental laws, regulations and policies,

especially with respect to NEPA and the Clean Water Act, and a complement of other skills acquired from experience.

As a result, applicants for these positions are likely not to have permanent Federal status. However, these candidates need to have advanced specialized knowledge and skills. Those that are accepted would, understandably, continue seeking more permanent and possibly better paying employment opportunities within EPA. Such was the case with the first person to fill one of EPA's Caltrans positions, who left within six months. Although EPA promptly advertised, interviewed, and selected a candidate, it took six months to refill the position.

Caltrans would like to be able to reach agreement with the hiring agency on the qualifications of potential hires (*e.g.*, number of years of experience and level of position). This could be accomplished through a DOT review of the job announcement for the funded position. One Federal agency does not believe that Caltrans has legal authority to provide this input.

The experience with the Position Funding effort has been inconsistent because the funded positions have been subjected to a high turnover. The Federal FTE allocation, a State hiring freeze set to expire in June 2005, and State layoffs (as is occurring in the California Department of Fish and Game) are creating difficulties with filling vacancies at certain agencies. The position in the Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) was denied an exemption from the State hiring freeze, so it remains vacant. However, Caltrans is providing staff to OHP to work on non-Caltrans projects, to free OHP staff on rotation to review Caltrans projects. The positions at USFWS in Carlsbad were hard to fill because of the cost-of-living in that area and because, before May 2002, the positions were not



classified at the appropriate grade for the work. To meet their current needs, Caltrans wants to find ways to:

- fill vacancies quickly,
- reallocate funds from agencies that could not fill their positions to agencies that could,
- reallocate funds within agencies from office locations that could not fill their positions to office locations that could.

Caltrans recently executed a new MOU with USFWS that gives Caltrans the flexibility to move funds for use at any of the USFWS offices. Caltrans is working on developing a similar MOU with the USACE.

Performance of the funded positions is difficult to measure since some of these positions interact with multiple Caltrans districts. Caltrans would like a better method for having input on performance of the funded positions. Currently, there is no clear method for handling performance issues. Caltrans asks for the host agency's input on performance evaluations for Caltrans employees but they do not have any input on Federal employee performance evaluations. Caltrans is trying to formalize the system so that it fosters more accurate and complete feedback (good and bad). Rotational position performance evaluations work in the same way as for regular Caltrans employees.

The performance measures in the initial agreements with the agencies were not useful and were hard to track. A better system for communication, coordination and, ultimately, personnel action, if necessary, was needed. No one has had to deal with termination/transfer issues yet as a result of performance by funded employees. However, Caltrans reviewed how to handle performance issues and how that system should work.

As Caltrans has been renewing their agreements with the agencies, they have been changing the performance measures contained within the agreements. Caltrans is trying to make the performance measures agency-specific so they are fair and address issues with each agency. Performance measures now address responsiveness and timeliness of reviews. They also will establish targets for requests for additional information, so that those requests go to Caltrans early rather than at the end of the comment period. Caltrans noted that convening Federal and State agencies at the outset of the process to develop reasonable performance measures before contracts were signed would have been beneficial.

Compliance with the reporting requirements in the various MOUs has been inconsistent. In order to help prioritize the Caltrans projects for review, track turnaround times, and track performance by agency personnel filling the funded positions, Caltrans established a consistent quarterly tracking and reporting system. In the early phases, the system consisted of workload spreadsheets containing information such as Project Name/Description, Action Requested, Completion Date for Action Requested, Actual Date for Action Requested, Comments/Status, Agency Contact, and Caltrans Contact. The system was put online at the end of 2003 and Caltrans is in the process of transforming the spreadsheet system into a database with remote access capabilities. A preliminary database application is in beta testing in the Caltrans Districts. Caltrans has also been holding quarterly meetings with the USACE, California Coastal Commission, and USFWS to review commitments, discuss issues, and address outstanding concerns.

Some problems remain with reporting requirements and prioritization of projects from Caltrans. The CCC found the quarterly reporting requirement onerous, and negotiated with Caltrans to reduce the reporting frequency. The CCC uses the spreadsheet system but also provides a narrative on a variety of topics. Several agencies reported that prioritization of Caltrans projects within the review process has been inconsistent, as each District has its own list of priority projects for review. USFWS noted the need for more consultation sessions with Caltrans to clarify priorities, and one State environmental agency staff person suggested that a statewide liaison at Caltrans be appointed to assist in prioritization.

State funding for the Position Funding Effort is often at risk given the economic downturn in the state and California budget policies, creating a situation where Caltrans has to request funding several times a year. Over the first eight months of the program, the funding had to be justified five times. There were concerns at Caltrans about the continuance of funding for the 2005 fiscal year. Economic conditions have also interfered with the intent of the project in some instances. One Federal environmental agency reported that they could no longer provide “premium” service to Caltrans because of the funding problems.

Despite challenges related to administration, most participants report that the Position Funding Effort has met expectations in regard to time savings. USFWS staff found that the Position Funding Effort results in more timely reviews and faster permit processing. The agency pointed to instances where the agency was able to complete a Biological Opinion and Section 7 consultation in less than 135 days. This has been reduced to as little as 60 days when Caltrans indicated the project had high priority.

USFWS attributed the successes to having an experienced person involved in the review process, early familiarity with projects, and a good relationship with Caltrans fostered by the Position Funding Effort. CCC also found significant time savings in project reviews and predicted that they would continue to see time savings in the future. The commission estimated that on one particular project, they saved a year's review time.

EPA staff reported that they are managing a larger volume of Caltrans projects, but have not quantified whether the review times are shorter than before. Based on their feedback, the EPA believes that the Position Funding Effort provided benefits in addition to timely reviews. The Position Funding Effort allows EPA to have dedicated staff with specialized training and experience in transportation issues in general and on the NEPA/404 process in particular. EPA is able to handle a greater volume of transportation projects overall, enabling them to review, when requested, Environmental Assessments in addition to Environmental Impact Statements. The Position Funding Effort is also advantageous in that EPA is able to handle incoming NEPA documents more comprehensively and consistently than they were able to do before having these funded positions.

The experience varies by region on the question whether the project has met expectations for measurable improvement in the availability of agencies to participate in field reviews and meetings.

Participating agencies also report that the Position Funding Effort has resulted in improved environmental protection. EPA believes that, through their additional involvement, the resulting projects will have better environmental outcomes than before. USFWS also felt the project resulted in better protection of environmental resources by

allowing them to invest the proper amount of time in the reviews. The CCC expressed a similar view, stating that the Position Funding Effort provides more opportunities for environmental protection by facilitating greater access to resource protection agencies and professionals. The CCC has quarterly meetings with Caltrans and provides feedback on transportation planning. The Position Funding Effort has resulted in a reorientation of the CCC's typical practices; they are now involved with projects in the planning process, rather than waiting until the permitting stage. The Commission has also started to participate in the project development process and programmatic reviews.

The Position Funding Effort has produced some ancillary benefits. EPA reported that the effort has fostered a more collaborative and responsive relationship with Caltrans, and that the number of project-related conflicts between EPA and Caltrans has been reduced because of early Federal involvement in projects. This effort has also led to a better understanding of Caltrans project development and planning practices. CCC reported similar benefits, citing a greater understanding on both agencies' parts regarding transportation project development and coastal regulations.

The Position Funding Effort has also enabled local agencies and the general public to hear concerns and positions directly from the State and Federal agencies because of the agencies' early participation in projects. Caltrans is no longer in the position of conveying agency comments to the public second-hand, and the State and Federal agencies hear local concerns directly.

Criticisms of the Position Funding Effort are largely related to programmatic inconsistencies, funding and staffing levels, and hiring difficulties. Participants cited time-consuming meeting schedules, low budgets set by Caltrans, high staff turnover

among the agencies, and funding problems as obstacles to project effectiveness. One Federal environmental agency staff person found that position funding worked well in certain Caltrans Districts, but that the level of collaboration and adherence to procedures varied based on personality.

USFWS cited an overall need for more funding and more staffing within the Position Funding Effort. At current staffing and funding levels, the agency was not always able to keep up with the workload. At times, five to six people were using funding for two full-time equivalent positions. One environmental agency staff person in a funded position noted that a full-time, dedicated hire was needed at his agency to accommodate the workload generated by Caltrans projects. CCC cited a greater need for predictability in the funding of positions. EPA also noted that internal transaction costs associated with term positions are often overlooked in the funding, but are not inconsequential.

Conversely, EPA did not find funding to be a problem, except for travel funds. EPA cited the categorization of the Caltrans funded positions as term positions as the biggest challenge, and would prefer to make the funded positions permanent. The agency also sees the need for greater FHWA leadership in the NEPA/404 process, more support from USACE, and greater understanding of how Federal agencies interact. They suggested that an overall discussion among the Federal agencies about the funded positions would be helpful.

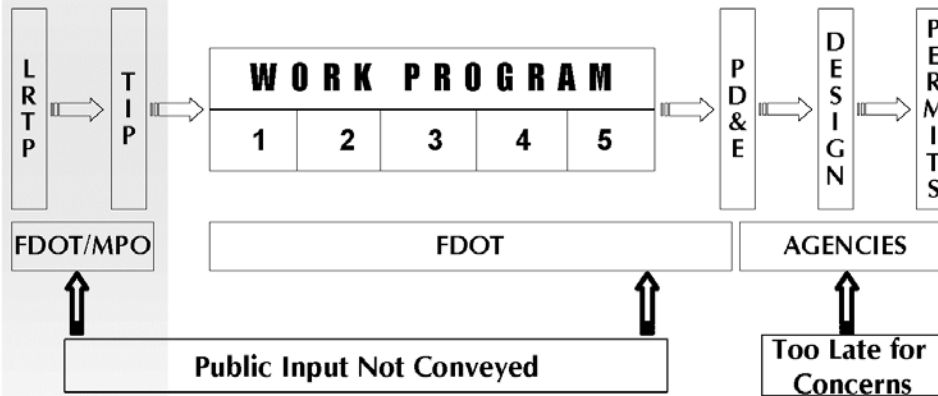
*Developing an Environmental Streamlining Process for Use in Florida (The Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Process)*

**ETDM Background.** In response to the environmental streamlining provisions in the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21), the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) reviewed their transportation planning and project development process (see Figure B-6 (17)). Under the process that FDOT reviewed, the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and FDOT developed a localized Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) based on mobility needs in response to development thresholds allowed under local comprehensive plans. During the comprehensive planning process, minimal consideration was given to potential direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of transportation or land use decisions on the local community's social and natural resources. Highest priority projects entered the new fifth year of FDOT's Five-Year Work Program and remained there for five years before any substantial environmental analyses were conducted. Lower priority projects fell beyond the fifth year of the work program. By the time a project entered the project development phase, it had gained so much public momentum that a decision not to construct a project because of substantial environmental or social impacts was almost never made. Instead, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process (with agency interaction) was initiated and mitigation strategies were identified.

Figure B-6



## The Problem



A flow chart of Florida DOT's current transportation planning and project development process.

Source: FDOT, 2003.



The problematic characteristics with the process were:

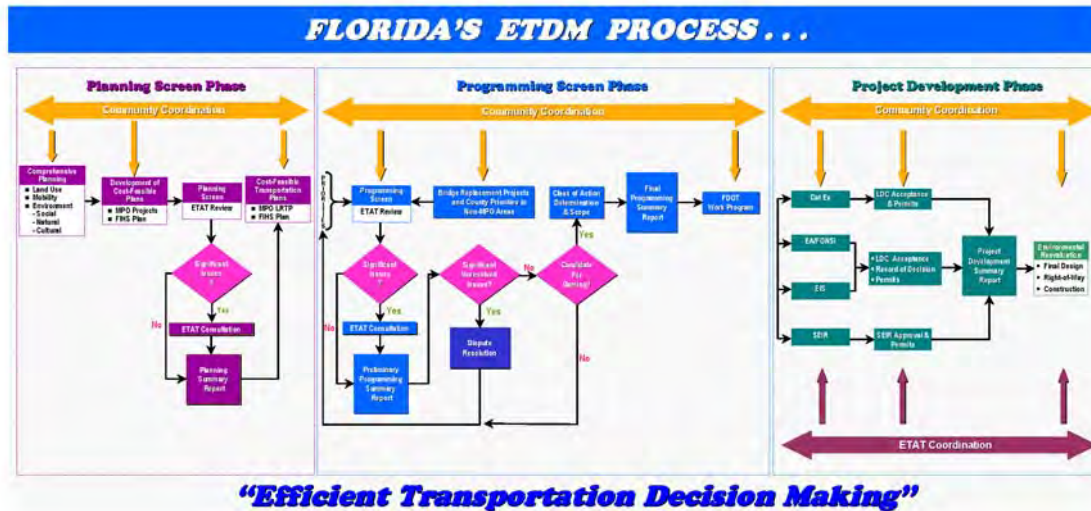
- Sequential, Dependent Actions
- Long Timeline with Gaps
- Late Agency Involvement
- Risk of Late Project Changes

FDOT decided to develop a new innovative process for transportation planning and project development, referred to as Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM), which brings agency interaction forward into the early stages of transportation planning. In this new process, avoidance and minimization strategies are identified much earlier and cost impacts for these strategies can be built into the LRTP (see Figure B-7 (14)). <http://fdotenvironmentalstreamlining.urs-tally.com/Library/ETDMProc-DisplayRoll%20020503%20v3%20letter%20size.pdf>).

Agency interaction occurs with the FDOT and its consultants earlier, before project development. This leads to adjustment in project design concepts to satisfy permitting requirements. Construction permits are consequently issued concurrently with the NEPA final environmental document at completion of the project development phase. Project final design and right-of-way acquisition is then able to proceed with minimized risk of future agency delay.

All participating Federal and State agencies have been very supportive of the ETDM process. Reasons for their support include the process' integrated planning, the staffing opportunities, and the potential for reducing transportation impacts on Florida's environmental resources.

Figure B-7



**ETDM Approach.** There are four main elements of the ETDM process: Agency Agreements, Environmental Technical Advisory Teams (ETATs), an Interactive Database System, and Public Involvement.

Agency Agreements. FDOT envisions that one key to ETDM success will be the three-party relationships among the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), FDOT, and each reviewing agency. The agency agreements are specific to each agency's statutory review requirements. These agreements address funding for any positions, performance measures for all parties, and any specific bases for early issuance of permits. The agreements also include a standardized base agreement accompanied by an appendix containing agency-specific information and address procedural requirements. Where applicable, an agency funding agreement is also included. There are provisions to prevent returning to issues previously decided. This process is designed to create an electronic series of "No Problems" or "Agreement" decisions that parties will be able to point to as the documentation trail.

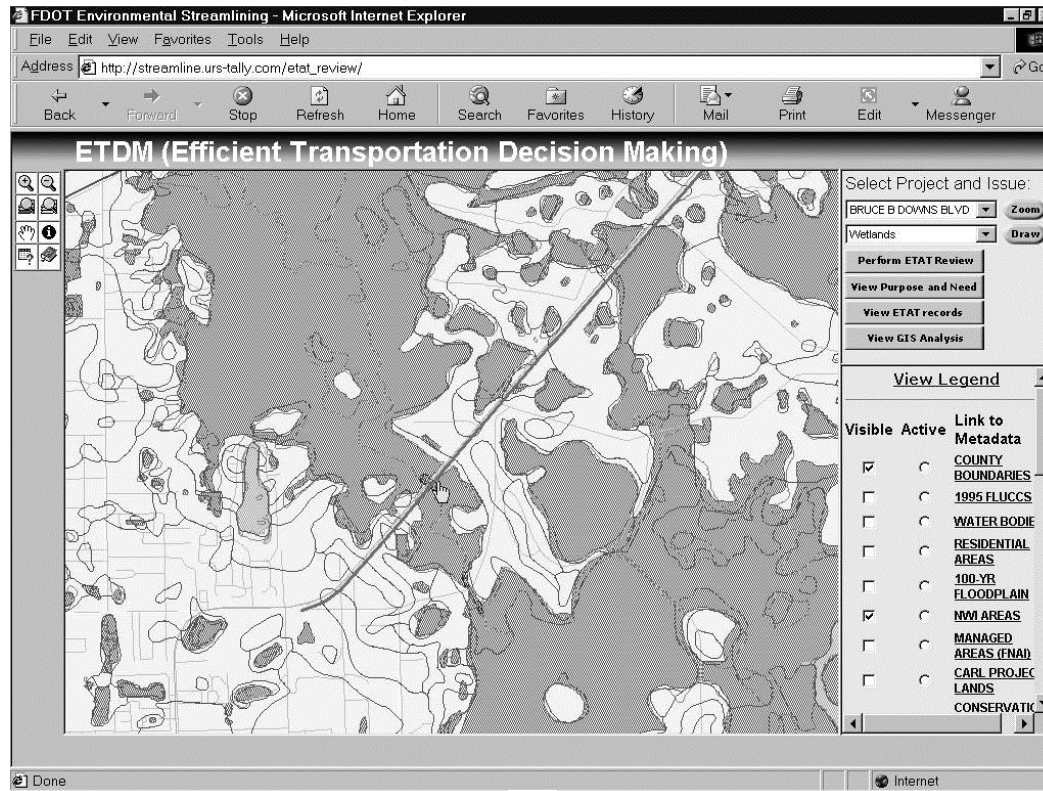
Participants agreed that project disputes must be resolved before projects were eligible for project development by FDOT. A dispute resolution process to support implementation of this commitment was designed for informal resolution of disputes as early as possible, and at the agency staff level, whenever possible. The process includes criteria for red flagging a project for dispute resolution and an elevation path that leads, in the case of unresolved disputes, to the Governor and may also involve the Federal Dispute Resolution Process.

ETAT. The ETDM process involves a multi-agency Environmental Technical Advisory Team (ETAT) for each of the seven FDOT districts. The ETAT is comprised of

12 to 20 members from agencies with statutory responsibility for transportation, land use and ecosystem planning, permitting, or consultation on projects and seeks collaborative decision-making. Each agency appoints a representative with responsibility to coordinate transportation project reviews within their agency. The starting point for the ETDM process is the Planning Screen at the LRTP stage. Figure B-8 (14) displays a screen shot of the ETDM Planning Screen. The Planning Screen allows agencies' ETAT members to advise and comment on the impacts of projects to the natural and human environment, consistent with their agency's regulatory program, very early in the planning process. FDOT reviews the LRTP and uses the results to eventually build the TIP.

A second screen, referred to as the Programming Screen, occurs before a project is put into the FDOT Work Program and initiates the review process for projects not categorically excluded from NEPA. The Programming Screen elicits input from ETAT members on issues such as the scope of appropriate analysis for the project, technical study requirements, and specific agency concerns. Figure B-9 (14) displays a screen shot of the ETAT reviewers' Programming Screen. The Programming Screen reviews 26 categories of effects. The jurisdictional agencies indicate which categories need work and which ones become "Minimal" or "No Further Involvement." The system helps the participants understand each other's issues and how to work together. Using the Programming Screen results, FDOT allocates funds for general engineering consultants to do needed technical studies in the first two years of the five-year FDOT programming process. Funding for design and consultant engineering work on NEPA is approved under more traditional funding programs in the FDOT Work Program.

Figure B-8



A screen shot of the Florida DOT's ETDM planning screen.

Figure B-9

ETAT Reviews - Microsoft Internet Explorer

### Project: BRUCE B DOWNS BLVD

| Issue                    | User          | Org. | Date      | NFI   | Impact      | Comment  |
|--------------------------|---------------|------|-----------|-------|-------------|--|
| TandE Species            | JenniferPaine | FDEP | 4/2/2001  | False | None        | No Comment Yet   |
| Wetlands                 | JenniferPaine | FDEP | 4/2/2001  | False | Substantial | There are 42 acres of high quality wetlands in the corridor. These wetlands are vital to the surrounding biological community including primary function, flood control, wildlife habitat, and erosion control. Further study is required.   |
| Land Use                 | JohnSmith     | FDOT | 4/2/2001  | False | None        |  |
| Historical/Archeological | GeorgeTurney  | SHPO | 3/1/2001  | False | Minimal     | Based on the cultural resource information provided, the properties that have been identified as potentially eligible for the National Register need to be submitted to SHPO and FHWA and Determinations of Eligibility (DOEs) should be prepared.                                 |
| Land Use                 | JerryBoise    | DACS | 2/27/2001 | False | Minimal     | A portion of the project is located outside of the Urban Service Area. This could stimulate undesirable development in the corridor. Limited access should be considered.  |
| Contamination            | JohnSmith     | FDOT | 1/23/2001 | False | Minimal     | Explore further - only appears to be two sites within study area. I contacted DEP Haz. Waste section and have determined deminimus situation with no project impact. Morris Bridge Water Treatment Plant NPDES permit in compliance  |
| Wetlands                 | JohnSmith     | FDOT | 1/23/2001 | False | Substantial | The Corps conducted a study here and have identified high quality wetlands on the east portion of the corridor. Study results can be viewed on our web site at <a href="http://www.lookhere.org">www.lookhere.org</a> . Refer to Joan and Mark at WMD for mitigation opportunities |
| Secondary/Cumulative     | JohnSmith     | FDOT | 1/23/2001 | False | Substantial | wetland impacts are extensive, mitigation is going to be expensive, bring checkbooks. SWFWMD has identified a wetland delineation has been done for a sidewalk job. District may have other potential for mitigation, ie. restoration on public lands.                             |

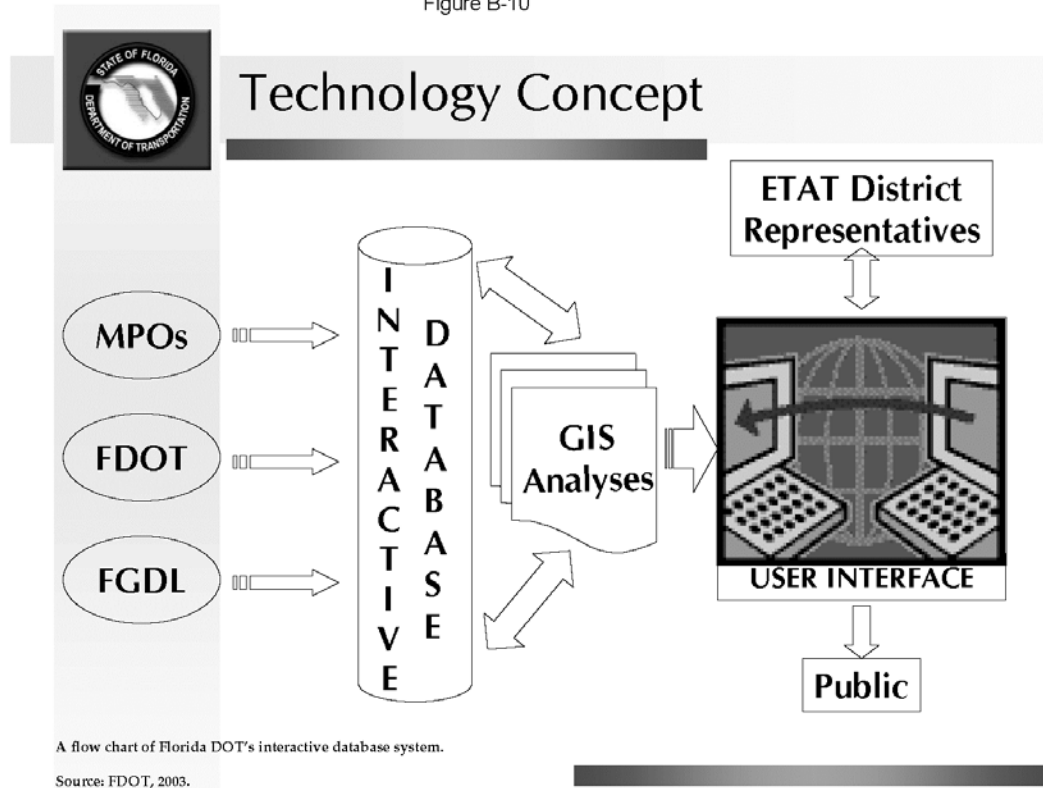
A screen shot of the Florida DOT's ETAT review screen.  
Source: FDOT, 2003.

Throughout the project development stage, each ETAT representative coordinates transportation reviews for their own agency and, in turn, provides FDOT with those results. The objective is to make it possible for agencies to issue the permits needed for construction at the same time that the NEPA final environmental document is approved.

Interactive Database System. Underlying the ETDM process is an electronic database system to support decision-making. FDOT, in conjunction with the University of Florida GeoPlan Center and others, developed the Florida Geographic Data Library (FGDL). The FGDL distributes satellite images, aerial photos, and Geographic Information System (GIS) data of the State of Florida. It allows the sharing of data between State and Federal agencies and the public and private sectors. Figure B-10 (14) displays a screen from the interactive database system. The FGDL Environmental Screening Tool is the prototype for the ETAT review application on the GIS system. It is an Internet-accessible GIS application that permits ETAT members to input and update project data and comments, perform standard GIS analyses, and provide read-only information to the public. The system does not require users to have GIS software or extensive training. The agency agreements require the participating agencies to review their GIS data layers and provide the GeoPlan Center with the most recent information.

FDOT provides most of the funding for the FGDL. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Florida Department of Community Affairs provide smaller segments of the necessary funding. Partial funding also comes from the Coastal Zone Management Office within the DEP.

Figure B-10





Public Involvement. In addition to the increased early involvement of State and Federal agencies, increased coordination with MPOs and local governments is also seen as critical to the process. ETDM is designed to create enhanced opportunities for public involvement. As part of ETDM, FDOT created a Community Outreach Network for MPO and non-MPO areas and has appointed a Community Liaison Coordinator to handle coordination between MPO/FDOT and communities affected by transportation projects.

In the ETDM process, community outreach and public involvement activities begin during the planning phase and continue through project development and subsequent project phases. The public has read-only access to the technical reports, data, and comments through this system. The information that is available to the public includes the project description, project impact analyses, and public comments. The public is able to submit comments to the project sponsor and those comments are loaded into the module. Continuing and effective public involvement and access to project information through an interactive database are the foundations for early issuance of permits concurrently with the NEPA final environmental document.

**Expectations of the ETDM process.** Because of the Planning Screen and the Programming Screen, the expected results from the ETDM process are not just better transportation decisions, but higher quality land use decisions, local community issues addressed, and a higher level of avoidance of environmental impacts. There is a potential long-term benefit because of early and more comprehensive planning and coordination between agencies (and the public). Performing systems level regional and state-wide analyses could enable FDOT to take early avoidance actions, prepare systems level regional and state-wide mitigation plans, and obtain better environmental results. More

innovative mitigation is expected to be possible. There is a potential for increased avoidance of environmental impacts through early indirect and cumulative impact assessment in planning, and better distribution of information. This is expected to be the biggest potential benefit and ETDM may result in a national model in this area. Better documentation of agencies' planned new resource protection areas is also anticipated. Agencies will have a better understanding of their own agency's processes, the processes of other agencies, and a much better appreciation for the transportation planning and project development process as a whole.

The ETDM process is expected to be very effective in decreasing the overall NEPA processing time because of the ability to build upon planning efforts and incorporate planning choices into the NEPA decisions without rehashing unimportant issues or previously dismissed alternatives during NEPA documentation. The overall NEPA time frame is expected to be decreased through the use of concurrent interagency public notices, public involvement, and public hearings, and through expedited issuances of permits and consultation opinions because of interagency coordination beginning in transportation, land use and resource protection, and management planning. ETDM may not eliminate controversial projects, but the issues would be known up front.

It is predicted that, with the ETDM process, FDOT would continue preparing some Type 2 (mitigated) categorical exclusion (CE) projects under NEPA. Those projects have constituted nearly 95 percent of FDOT's major projects. If a project is not a Type 2 CE, a determination will be made whether a project requires an EA or an EIS. FDOT reported that the average duration (calendar days) of the study phase for a typical Type 2 Categorical Exclusion project started and completed in the period from 1998 to 2002

without using the ETDM process was 1.5 years. Overall time savings by using the ETDM process is expected to be significant.

As a result of the ETDM process, FDOT hopes to be able to execute programmatic agreements for certain NEPA procedures and some other environmental laws. This would allow moving projects directly to design in cases where there are no apparent issues found in early reviews. The process is very useful in that the ETDM process is able to generate a summary report of all prior proceedings and issues to be used during the Final Design phase. The following key components comprise the Project Summary Report:

- Project description summary
- Purpose and Need discussion
- Summary of Public Comments
- Discussion of Transportation Planning Consistency
- Supporting Documents
- Alternatives

The Summary Report from the process also gives local government and other agencies important information. The reports could drive more accountability for all public agency decision-makers. The system could also lead to more State and Federal agency cooperation. Ultimately, States using this system may be given delegation of more responsibilities to the State.

It was expected that staff and consultant labor time would increase initially because of the initial uploading of information at the Planning Screen stage, learning its use, and making any needed revisions. Once familiarity with the ETDM occurs, staff time

may be about the same as in the traditional transportation planning and project development process. Staff time for some resource agencies is anticipated to be higher because of the need to learn transportation development. There will be more people involved in that MPO staff will contribute to the effort, whereas they did not coordinate with Federal and State agencies under the traditional process.

FDOT expects a decrease in project level processing time since environmental scoping and some of the studies would occur during planning. They believe the ETDM process justifies any additional labor and time because of the benefits of all participants understanding mobility needs and goals and environmental resources and the need to protect them.

**ETDM Status.** In February 2000, an Executive Summit was held in Tallahassee for State and Federal agencies to obtain support and commitment to create a new process for ETDM. Since the ETDM's inception, FDOT has reached agreement with a variety of stakeholders on the main elements of the ETDM process, trained over 200 review agency staff in ETDM procedures and technology, and implemented the ETDM process with an initial group of approximately 150 projects.

Accomplishments from the first year of process development included the signing of a global multi-agency Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in December 2001; definition of ETDM and Environmental Technical Advisory Team (ETAT) coordinator roles and responsibilities; development of the process framework for ETDM planning, programming, and project development activities; creation of continuous public involvement and community outreach processes; and refinement of the ETDM implementation strategy and schedule. Because of the strong support for

the ETDM process within FDOT, the agency shifted from an implementation plan based on individual Pilot Projects to a plan for widespread implementation of the ETDM process and the ETAT review system.

Training of the ETDM process for ETDM participants occurred between February and May 2003. Training participants included FDOT District personnel, MPO, and agency representatives. A two-day Mock ETAT session also was held with Federal and State agencies to test the effectiveness of the Environmental Screening Tool. In November 2003, the ETDM Interim Environmental Screening Tool User Guide was modified based on comments received and issues raised during the training sessions. Additional training sessions were held at a later date for consultants and ETDM participants who missed the first round. More training sessions on public involvement, cultural resources, indirect and cumulative, and socio-cultural effects were held in September and October 2004. Ongoing training sessions are held as needed, and an online tutorial has been developed for the FGDL Environmental Screening Tool. Most ETDM training participants found the trainings accessible and useful. Some participants thought that more training sessions in the FDOT Districts, rather than a central location, would have allowed greater attendance, while one environmental agency official expressed that separate training sessions for Federal and State agency users would have been beneficial. One environmental agency participant also felt that the time frame between training in the ETDM process and beginning the process was too long.

FDOT completed and provided a draft of the ETDM Interim Guidelines (12 chapters) to ETDM training participants for review and comments. There were major comments on the guidelines as a result of the ETDM participant training sessions. FDOT

began revising and updating the ETDM Interim Guidelines in the summer of 2003 to address these comments and to develop the Guidelines as an ETDM Manual. The Draft ETDM Manual was completed in June 2004. The ETDM Manual now has six chapters which precede Part I of FDOT's Project Development and Environmental Manual. Part I deals with project development and environmental process and administration.

FDOT's original goal was to have all agency agreements developed and approved by June 30, 2003. Twelve agency agreements were signed in the first year of the project. This success was attributed to the involvement of the reviewing agencies and MPOs in the development of the ETDM process from the outset. As of July 2004, FDOT has completed or is near completion on two-year agency agreements with 13 Federal, State, and local entities. Currently, agency agreements (Master Agreement, Agency Operating Agreement, and Funding Agreement, where applicable) have been completed with the following agencies:

- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- National Marine Fisheries Service
- Federal Highway Administration /Federal Transit Administration
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- Florida State Historic Preservation Officer/Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
- Northwest Florida Water Management District
- Florida Department of Community Affairs
- U.S. Coast Guard
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

FDOT is continuing to develop and complete agreements with the National Park Service, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and the Florida Water Management Districts. These agencies are at varying stages of development on agreements, ranging from reviews ongoing to near completion for agency signatures. In some cases, the delay in signing the agreements was caused by concerns about agency staffing, unwillingness to sign the agreement without funding in place, and concerns about the effect of the conflict resolution process on the permitting processes. The delay was also caused by several of the agreements being slow in getting started, and the need to update and inform senior administrative staff on the ETDM process. Eighteen positions have been funded through agency Funding Agreements.

The ETDM project used the Internet to successfully manage the mutual development of agency agreements. FDOT used the ETDM website as a communication tool during agreement negotiations, greatly reducing the amount of paper and individual communication needed to update and refine the agreement text.

FDOT began the implementation of the ETDM process in the seven FDOT Districts on July 1, 2003. Between July 1, 2003 and February 1, 2004, the MPOs (in the MPO areas) and the FDOT Districts (in the counties) uploaded information on more than 150 projects into the initial Planning Screen. Major projects in the “pipeline” (*i.e.*, those with Environmental Assessments or Environmental Impact Statements) were not included. Each FDOT District was instructed to organize their ETATs to begin reviewing projects in the Planning Screen Phase beginning on

January 1, 2004. Agencies not under agreement still have the option to review the 150 projects involved in the ETDM process.

The ETAT GIS review application is active and currently holds 350 data layers. Project Summary Reports for the approximately 150 projects were generated in the Spring of 2004 and were uploaded to the Programming Screen in preparation for the Fiscal Year 2005 FDOT Work Program (begins July 2005) in April 2004.

The FGDL Environmental Screening Tool has proved to be a successful review tool for the approximately 200 agency reviewers participating in the ETDM process, and has been cited for improving process efficiency and making reviewers' jobs easier. The most beneficial aspects of the screening tool are that all reviewers can view the same project data, the agencies can view each other's comments, the project comments are kept in one location for the duration of the project, and the single repository for project information helps ensure that issues are not overlooked. Using the FGDL Environmental Screening Tool is also helpful in allowing agencies to view all projects in the planning phase at once, giving better sense of potential cumulative impacts. The screening tool has also been used for more functions than originally anticipated. Agencies have been using the application to review projects not involved in the ETDM process, and the program has been a catalyst for updating GIS layers.

Because the FGDL Environmental Screening Tool was developed collaboratively among ETDM, built in small modules, and extensively tested for functionality, there have been few criticisms of the system design. Problems and obstacles encountered with the FGDL Environmental Screening Tool have been principally related to system management and the quality of input data and GIS data. Problems reported included



projects being removed before the 45-day agency comment period had ended, no universal reminder system for project commenting deadlines, and no mechanism for requesting an extension of the comment period. Inadequate project descriptions in the Screening Tool presented problems for some users in that it prevented them from eliminating unnecessary reviews for projects that had no potential to affect certain resources types. Inadequate project descriptions also presented barriers for agencies that could not send staff to all project-related meetings. Difficulties with GIS data were largely related to the variability in the quality and coverage of GIS data among resource areas and regions in Florida. Some agencies reported using only their own GIS data in project review rather than using the breadth of the 350-layer library available through the FGDL Environmental Screening Tool.

Progress Report 3, which is to document the further progress of the development of the ETDM process, was scheduled to be issued in May 2004, but was put on hold until because of the emphasis on revising and updating the ETDM Interim Guidelines to transform them into an ETDM Manual. As of February 2005, Progress Report 3 has yet to be issued.

The success of the ETDM process in reducing the time frame for planning and project development has not yet been quantified. A task team of representatives from six agencies, including the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), FDOT Districts, MPOs, and the FHWA are in the process of developing performance measures to assess time and cost savings. Some agency staff reported that the ETDM process took longer than earlier processes and required equal or increased levels of staffing resources. Increased workloads and timelines were attributed

to the addition of planning tasks into the overall screening process, consideration of MPO-sponsored projects as well as state-sponsored projects, and the task of entering large amounts of project information into the Screening Tool. Greater agency involvement in the planning stages of proposed projects has also increased staff workload before the permitting phase begins. At the MPO level, a shortage of staff at some MPOs has led to delays in processing socio-cultural effect reviews. Factors that may affect time efficiency and cost savings in the ETDM process in the future include projects that bog down in review without a mechanism for addressing problems, and training new staff in the ETDM process.

Based on the experiences described above, FDOT predicts that the transportation planning and project development processes will take less time in the future. FDOT believes that it will see positive results on time and cost savings within the next one to two years for Type 2 CEs and within five years for EISs. The anticipated savings are attributable to the electronic review process, greater understanding of the key environmental issues for each project, and early acquisition of necessary permits. Additional time saving benefits include the possibility of using the Project Summary Reports as environmental information in Type 2 CEs for FHWA. FDOT also expects that the typical 10- to 15-year planning period for transportation projects should be reduced through the ETDM process.

The perceived benefits of using the ETDM process in protecting the environment have met project expectations. The involvement of each review agency in the planning process assists in environmental protection and mitigation in that each agency is aware of expected project impacts. Accelerated mitigation performed earlier in the project timeline

also makes projects easier to implement. The ETDM process particularly benefits environmental resource protection in broadening awareness of environmental issues among participating MPOs. Before the implementation of ETDM, the MPOs did not receive agency input in considering environmental protection in project planning.

Some concern was expressed among participants about the degree to which FDOT considered agency comments in the planning and project development phase. There is no direct response mechanism built into the screening process for FDOT to respond to comments. Some participants cited no consistent correlation between the recommendations made during the planning phase and the permitting process. Other participants wondered how the ETDM process would work for larger, more complex projects with more substantial impacts. As of July 2004, no controversial projects, defined as projects with substantial “red” comments, have gone through the ETDM process. One environmental agency participant reported political pressure to give favorable or neutral comments on projects sponsored by MPOs.

Perceived benefits were also found in transportation decision making using the ETDM process. ETDM helped participants understand the proposed projects better and helped MPOs make more informed decisions about project implementation. Earlier involvement between agencies in the project development process also helped avoid surprise delays.

ETDM process participants regularly cited increased collaboration and education as some of the most successful aspects of the pilot project. During the nearly five-year ETDM development phase, FDOT built relationships and obtained input from agencies and MPOs to create a system in which each participant was a stakeholder. The

project received support from the highest levels of the reviewing agencies, who participated in a summit meeting of regional Federal agency administrators and heads of State agencies. Participation in the ETDM process resulted in various agencies learning more about the overall transportation and environmental planning process, which has led to better communication between the agencies. The collaborative process is being continued through periodic ETDM coordinators meetings for coordinators at all the FDOT Districts and at the Florida Turnpike. Community Liaison Coordinators also attend the meetings to review obstacles, successes, and related issues. FDOT also held a statewide ETAT meeting in early October 2004 to discuss issues, such as indirect and cumulative effects. Project participants recommended several methods for improving collaboration in the ETDM process, including inviting military landowners to be members of ETAT and using conflict resolution or outside coordination when disagreements arose.

The Florida ETDM process could be adapted to work in other states if certain parameters were in place or could be developed. There must be a foundation for agency cooperation, a commitment from senior agency officials to participate in and support the project development process, a combined planning and project development process, and a central repository for GIS data. FDOT estimates that the agency spent \$3 million in Federal and State funds over the five year project development phase, which did not include travel and salary expenses. The high number of meetings and related travel and time expenditures required to begin a process like ETDM must be acceptable to all agencies involved in order to ensure a collaborative environment. Costs associated with implementing the ETDM process in other states may be less however, as Florida has

already developed much of the framework and technology necessary for the ETDM process.

Details on the ETDM project, including full descriptions of each element and the Pilot Project's achievements to date are available at <http://fdotenvironmentalstreamlining.urs-tally.com/>.

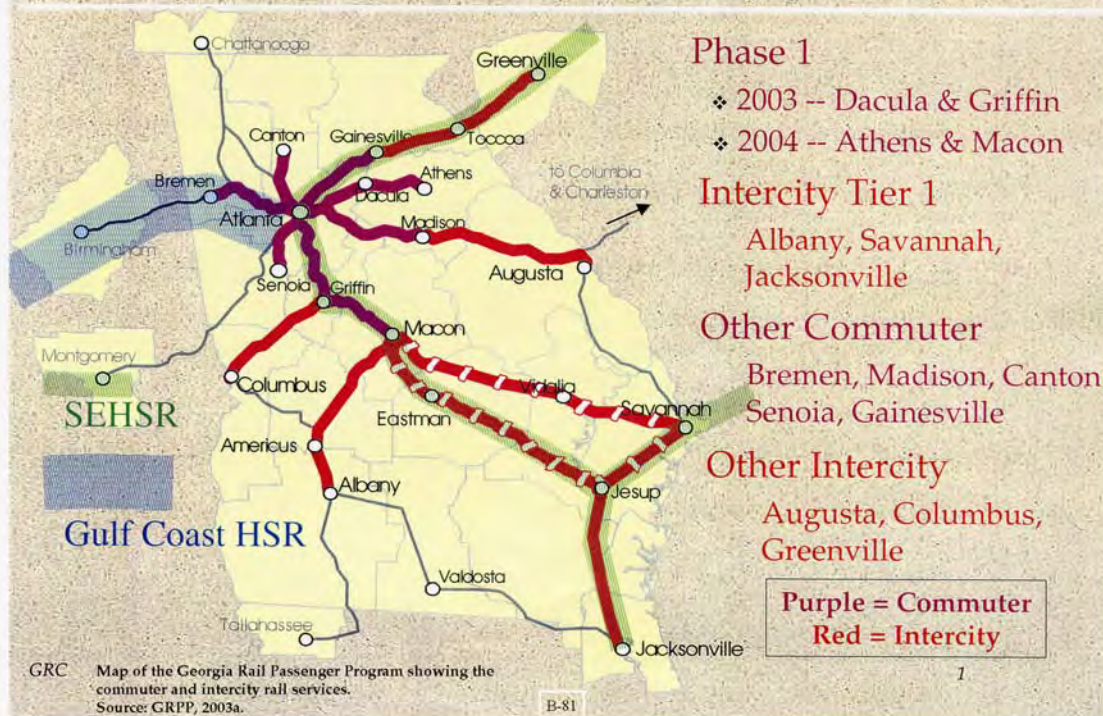
*Environmental Streamlining for the Georgia Rail Passenger Program (GRPP)*

**GRPP Background.** Georgia has a network of over 5,000 miles (8,047 kilometers) of railroad lines, many of which could have capacity added to handle passenger traffic. In response to Georgia's extraordinary rate of growth, traffic congestion, and air quality problems, in January 2000, the State of Georgia developed a comprehensive program to implement rail passenger services along seven existing railroad corridors. The Georgia Rail Passenger Program (GRPP) includes both commuter rail trains in the Atlanta area to help cope with growing peak-hour traffic, and intra-state/intercity trains to provide a multimodal alternative in the state's largest travel markets. The Georgia Rail Passenger Program (GRPP) contains seven commuter rail services, six intercity rail services, and the Multi-Modal Passenger Terminal (MMPT). Figure B-11 (18) displays a map of the GRPP. The Multi-Modal Passenger Terminal in downtown Atlanta will serve the initial commuter rail service from Macon and Athens and new regional bus services, and will provide links to Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA).

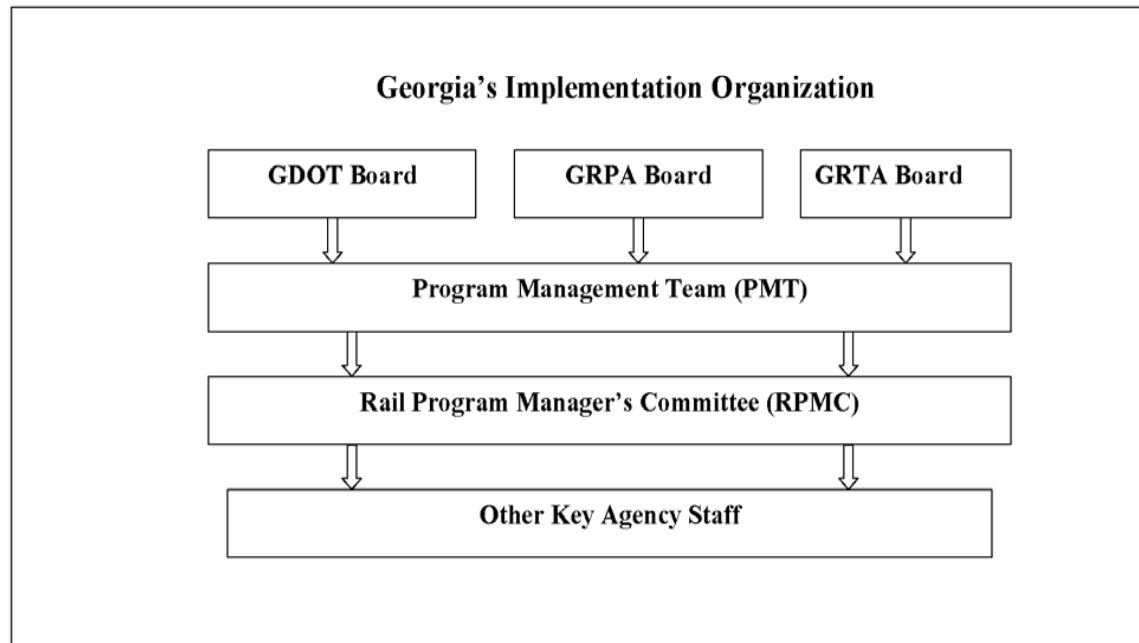
The GRPP requires coordination among a number of State and Federal agencies. The three principal State agencies involved in the project are the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), Georgia Rail Passenger Authority (GRPA) and the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA). Figure B-12 (19) displays an organizational chart for the GRPP. GDOT is the infrastructure provider and also coordinates with the Federal agencies. GRPA is the operator and handles station and facilities location and design.

Figure B-11

## The Georgia Rail Passenger Program & HSR



**Figure B-12**



Organization of the Georgia Rail Passenger Program (GRPP)

Source: GRPP, 2003b



GRTA is the transit and land use coordinator and provides local planning help and funding for transit-oriented development. The main Federal agencies active on the project are the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The original intent of the GRPP Pilot Project was to define a single programmatic process for the environmental review and permit approvals that would have satisfied multiple agency requirements and promoted timely decision-making. The streamlined process would have defined roles, environmental review processes, levels of required analysis, commitment to cooperation, measures for early public involvement, and an efficient and effective conflict and dispute resolution process. There was to have been a single Memorandum of Understanding or a Programmatic Agreement among the State sponsors and Federal partners. The project sponsors/partners included the U.S. DOT agencies, the State transportation agencies, and Federal and State environmental resource agencies. GDOT and the other agencies reconsidered this approach and decided to proceed with the remainder of the GRPP using the informal processes, elaborated on in the following section, that were used effectively for the first elements of the project.

**GRPP Approach.** The approach that is being used for the GRPP involves multi-agency coordination, a concurrent document review process, and early and continuous public involvement.

Multi-Agency Coordination. As previously stated, GDOT decided to use informal processes on the remainder of the GRPP. The smooth working of the informal processes to date is attributable to a number of factors:

1. Rapid selection of FTA as the lead agency in Winter 1999 and its assumption of an active leadership role;
2. High likelihood that existing freight rail corridors (owned by CSX and Norfolk Southern Railroads), rather than corridors on new location, would be the preferred alternatives for nearly all parts of the project; and
3. Transit nature of the program, which is perceived as environmentally-friendly and tends to generate support more easily than major highway construction projects;
4. Early involvement of the necessary agencies and the public.

GRPP did develop a multi-agency agreement at the State level that creates an innovative relationship among the GDOT, GRTA, and GRPA (20). The agreement defined shared decision-making and production responsibilities among those agencies. The objectives of the agreement included helping the three agencies quickly reach program decisions, fostering a unified front when dealing with third parties, and avoiding the time-consuming traditional joint decision-making process. Under the agreement, the three agencies established a Program Management Team comprised of members from each of the three agencies. That team holds responsibility for joint decision-making and program coordination. The Project Management Team appointed a Georgia Rail Passenger Coordinating Committee (GRPCC) to serve in an advisory capacity to the Team. Implementation of the program is the responsibility of the Rail Program Managers

Committee, composed of staff from each of the three agencies. One participant reporter felt that the Committee has not proved to be a forum to settle fundamentally different perspectives between the GDOT and GRTA on the project. This participant reporter believed it would be more effective to dismantle the committee structure and have *one* agency in the lead, either GDOT or GRTA, especially during implementation.

Document Reviews. The seven rail corridors of the GRPP all require Environmental Assessments (EAs) under NEPA, plus an EA for the Atlanta multimodal station. Resource agencies are satisfied with the use of separate EAs for the program components as long as the projects are in existing transportation corridors.

From the selection of FTA as lead agency onward, the preparation and review of the documents have moved forward efficiently and cooperatively. GDOT credits the expeditious preparation of the environmental documents to the cooperation of the principal players in the program: GDOT, GRTA, GRPA, FTA, FHWA, and EPA.

The favorable relationship among the agencies also is illustrated by the ability of GDOT, GRTA, GRPA, FTA, FHWA and FRA to use a concurrent review process for environmental documents. This approach eliminated the pre-release internal review step in the typical sequential review process. Review time was cut substantially through this method.

Public Involvement. The GRPP public involvement process was comprehensive, identified issues early, and contributed to solutions. For example, the GRPP team held a meeting with the NAACP to discuss potential Environmental Justice issues in the Macon to Atlanta corridor. As a result, the GRPP team addressed the issue of gentrification as a side effect of the GRPP.

Public involvement was a key part of the GRPP Public Scoping process. The GRPP originally considered four alternatives but three alternatives were added through the substantial public input during the GRPP Scoping process. New techniques for public involvement on the GRPP include a Web-based system for public comment. While the GRPP team did not measure Web use, as compared to other comment methods, a project mailing list was generated with over 950 names.

Early Agency Involvement GDOT provided funds for positions in the Georgia Historic Preservation Division (GHPD) to allow them to commit the resources required for the GRPP. According to the GHPD, early coordination in the planning and project development phases, while requiring more upfront work and meetings, expeditiously resolved issues and streamlined the review of the Section 106 documentation. Early coordination allowed agreement on the Area of Potential Effects to historic resources and level of effort necessary to identify these resources. This coordination also included extensive technical assistance by the GHPD to ensure identification and resolution of issues thereby minimizing harm to historic resources and reducing delays in the review process. The GHPD believes that the procedures developed for streamlining the environmental review could establish a model for future projects in the state.

**Expectations for the GRPP Pilot Project.** The benefits of the GRPP are expected to carry over to other GDOT efforts. Possible favorable streamlining results include:

1. Identification of Streamlining Needs and Constraints – GDOT surveyed the agencies on receptiveness, obstacles, advantages, review time frames and

resource constraints to advance a formal interagency agreement. All responding agencies were receptive to a streamlining initiative and 75 percent of the responding agencies favored a programmatic agreement. Staff constraints were the primary obstacle, followed by time and budget. There was consensus on a four-week review time of submittals. As previously stated, GDOT and the other agencies reconsidered the necessity of a formal agreement because of the success of the informal processes that had been used. Nevertheless, the survey may be helpful in other studies.

2. Public Involvement Process – The public involvement process used by GRPP has been very comprehensive and the experiences can be applied to other GDOT efforts.
3. State Multi-Agency MOU and Program Management Team Process – This cooperative agreement demonstrates how agencies can work together successfully.
4. Web-Based Public Comment System – GDOT expects to use this tool on other projects.
5. Concurrent Document Review Cycles – By using concurrent reviews by GDOT and the Federal transportation agencies (FTA, FHWA, and FRA), a step was removed and this speeded the review. It is not yet clear whether this can be applied to other GDOT projects, but it is worthy of consideration.

**GRPP Status.** The GRPP will be phased in during the next 14 years. The Multi-Modal Passenger Terminal (MMPT) and rail services along the Macon to Atlanta rail corridor and the Athens to Atlanta rail corridor are the active projects in the first

phase of the program. GRPP milestones include development of an extensive early public involvement process (public meetings in April/May 2000 and October/November 2000) and publication of a report on rail alternatives (Summer 2000).

A study of the impact that passenger service will have on existing freight operations was scheduled to be completed in 2003. As of late 2004, a consultant had been selected for the capacity study, but work had not been started. The study is expected to take 12 months to complete. The Macon to Atlanta rail corridor will not affect through freight operations since no through freight trains are carried along that corridor. Agreements with the CSX and Norfolk Southern Railroads will have to be reached and Federal clearances obtained before rail passenger service can be initiated.

A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was issued on the MMPT in 1995 and reevaluated and determined still to be valid in December 2000. On December 7, 2001, a new conceptual design of the MMPT was reviewed and generally agreed to by the potential users, the City, major adjacent owners of land and air rights, and the State agencies. Phase 1 of the MMPT will accommodate initial commuter rail service from Macon and Athens, and initial regional bus services, and will provide links to MARTA and the surrounding employment centers. Its capital cost (not including land acquisition costs) is estimated at \$50 million, and work could be completed within two years of funding being available. As of summer 2004, the right-of-way for the station was being finalized. Some controversy remains over the demolition of the Constitution Building to accommodate the MMPT.

For Fiscal Year 2003, there was a total of approximately \$26 million for the MMPT. The funds were used to begin acquiring and consolidating land and development

rights for the MMPT, its approaches and associated storage facilities, identifying public/private partnership opportunities, conducting engineering and architectural schematic and preliminary design, and preparing the site for construction.

In November 2001, FTA issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Macon to Atlanta corridor. A kick-off meeting for the Macon Corridor Local Advisory Committee (MACLAC) members along the corridor was held in mid-October 2002 to brief them on the status of the commuter rail implementation for corridor and also to answer questions related to the timeline and funding aspects of the program. The MACLAC has been a good tool to communicate with interested parties and decision makers on rail crossing safety issues. GDOT is continuing to work with local communities to protect station sites along the Macon to Atlanta rail corridor.

A grant application for the Macon to Atlanta Corridor implementation was submitted through GDOT. This application was for money earmarked in TEA-21 for the corridor. FHWA approved the grant and forwarded the application material to FTA for final review and approval. This process was originally expected to be complete by May 2003, but FTA still had not approved the grant application as of July 2004.

Service along the Macon to Atlanta corridor had been anticipated to begin in late 2004 from Griffin and from Macon in 2005, but there were delays in the State funding being supplied as requested. State funding of GRPP operating expenses is the key issue. Provided that State funding continues, late 2005 is now the earliest date that service from Griffin to Atlanta would occur. Service from Macon and Griffin would not occur until 2006.

The early coordination and concurrent review process worked well for the Athens to Atlanta corridor EA preparation. The agency review process with USFWS, GHPD, USACE, and GDOT was very effective since the streamlining process for the Macon to Atlanta corridor EA was followed. The EA for the Athens to Atlanta corridor was issued for public review in June 2003. Additional time was needed because FTA wanted a concurrence letter from the Georgia Historic Preservation Division on the Determination of Effect to be included in the EA. The process was also subject to a four- to six-month delay and a one- to two-month delay as a result of requests for additional funding for completion.

Public hearings were held in mid-July 2003 along the Athens to Atlanta corridor at three locations to obtain public input and comments on the EA. GDOT submitted the document, with agency and public comments and responses, to FTA in fall 2003. FTA issued a FONSI in February 2004. Since the FONSI, some difficulties have arisen with funding and agreements with CSX and Norfolk Southern Rail for the Athens to Atlanta corridor project. The current level of funding will not provide enough service to accommodate the projected ridership. GRPP participants also expect that, to institute passenger rail service, the rail companies will want to add a third track to the rail corridor. This is not feasible given the current level of environmental review. Funding cannot be allocated until an agreement is reached with the rail companies. Service could start in the Athens to Atlanta corridor as early as 2008 and is estimated to cost \$380 million to implement.

Feedback on the GRPP streamlining effort was largely positive and most participants felt that the effort was successful. State transportation agencies attributed the



success of the process to bringing resource agencies into the process early, getting commitments from the agencies to expedite environmental review for the GRPP, and combining planning and alternatives analysis. Early coordination and concurrent review were seen as the key factors in the program's success, as was the higher level of environmental data brought into the process. For example, NEPA scoping meetings were held for the project components, even though the components only required EAs. The EAs also included the same level of environmental analysis as for an EIS. State environmental agency participants, however, noted that coordination between the agencies could be improved and that more effort could have been made to give each agency a better overall understanding of the GRPP. Quarterly meetings or formation of a committee to share information were suggested as potential solutions. One environmental agency also noted that it would have liked feedback on its comments on the EAs.

Time savings from the GRPP streamlining measures have not been specifically quantified. State environmental agency participants reported higher than average staff time spent on GRPP because of additional meetings and increased technical assistance. Although some participants reported expedited consultations under the streamlining procedures for the GRPP, they said there was little change in coordination methods. Participants also noted that the GRPP had few significant impacts, and therefore did not carry many of the complex and time consuming negotiations or avoidance and mitigation strategies necessary in other projects. Participants cited identification of environmental resources before the start of the NEPA process as being one of the positive changes in the process. Although there were differences of opinion as to whether this practice expedited

environmental review in the case of GRPP, they agreed that the practice would save time on projects with more extensive and significant impacts.

The lack of significant impacts associated with the GRPP project made it difficult for participants to assess whether the project improved environmental protection. Noise control measures and wetland mitigation were cited as two of the environmental successes for the GRPP. Noise control measures included developing quieter grade crossings on the Macon to Atlanta corridor and grade separation and prohibition of horns on the Athens to Atlanta line. Criticisms included a lack of flexibility on station locations because of funding for acquisition of right-of-way, a lack of feedback on agency comments on the reviewed documents, and lack of input among the environmental agencies on the corridor design.

**Portway Program Background.** The Portway Project was conceived as a roadway/intermodal connector facility that would improve highway and inter-facility access between the Newark/Elizabeth Seaport and Airport Complex and major intermodal rail and trucking distribution facilities in the region. The Portway “Corridor” extended from the Seaport northward to the rail facilities in Essex, Hudson, and Bergen Counties and eastward to port facilities on the Bayonne Peninsula. These facilities and access routes are the front door to global and domestic commerce for New Jersey and greater metropolitan New York. Initially, the Portway Project was envisioned as a single project with multiple segments that would have been processed with one major EIS addressing the overall corridor. Subsequently, the Portway Project evolved into a number of smaller, individual, and less noteworthy projects having the common purpose of improving truck access to and from major ports in the Newark area. The project is now referred to as the Portway Program.

The Portway Program is comprised of thirteen distinct projects: two by the N.J. Port Authority and the remaining eleven by NJDOT. Some of these projects qualify to be processed as Categorical Exclusions under NEPA. The change in approach did not caused segmentation issues under NEPA. Project elements had independent utility, logical termini, and did not restrict consideration of alternatives for other reasonably foreseeable transportation improvements. However, the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) was concerned that this change in project concept reduced

opportunities for innovative environmental streamlining measures and, therefore wished to withdraw this Pilot Project from the Research Project.

**Portway Program Approach.** The streamlining efforts for the original Portway Project included coordination with other projects in the corridor, finding opportunities to enhance the environment and the quality of life for local community residents, and effective participation of multiple stakeholders. Context Sensitive Design techniques were to be used to ensure that the final project reflected, to the extent possible, local community goals.

If NJDOT did not wish to withdraw this Pilot Project from the Research Project, a measurable streamlining effort may have been the early environmental coordination with resource agencies. NJDOT partnered with the N.J. Institute of Technology (NJIT) for this effort. As part of TEA-21, the NJIT received approximately \$2 million to fund the Intermodal International Transportation Center (IITC). The IITC developed a forum for stakeholders in the Portway Program. Stakeholders included N.J. Port Authority, N.J. Turnpike, port operators, truckers, municipalities, railroads (Conrail, Norfolk Southern, and Amtrak), Federal agencies (EPA, USACE), State agencies (DEP) and local utilities. The IITC stakeholder committee was a separate entity from NJDOT's project-specific official stakeholder lists. Project stakeholder interests were coordinated between the different groups by people who serve on both groups.

Several forum meetings were held. The goal of the meetings was to identify and address issues and concerns of stakeholders about the Portway Program. For example, stakeholders might have identified economic development initiatives as a key issue, but

this issue might not have been within the scope of a project. By having issues identified early, NJDOT could have chosen to act early to address these issues.

Another streamlining possibility for the Portway Program would have been to have the NJ SHPO review the effects from the different projects of the Portway Program concurrently. For example, the SHPO would coordinate their Section 106 review so that different projects that affect the same historic districts were reviewed concurrently without duplication of submittals.

**Expectations for the Portway Program.** The original intent of the Portway Project was to provide a format for the required environmental process on a project with multiple segments, multiple partners, varying degrees of complexity, and varying time frames for implementation. The idea was that, through early and continuous participation of stakeholders; simultaneous pursuit of transportation, environmental, and quality of life goals; and use of the principles of Context Sensitive Design, the environmental process would move faster and with greater predictability and the project itself would enhance transportation and the region's environment.

Because of the shift to smaller individual projects, the Portway Program may only have modest streamlining results. The early coordination with stakeholders should help identify and resolve issues earlier, although with multiple projects this would be difficult to verify. The possible concurrent reviews of projects on the same geographic location should also save time and reduce documentation requirements.

**Portway Program Status.** NJDOT hoped to advance one or two of the component projects to the Final Design or Scope Development stage, where the

NEPA documentation is prepared and where environmental permits are obtained, by 2003, and the rest by 2004.

As of late 2004, one project (the Doremus Avenue Project, from south of Port Street to north of Wilson Avenue in Newark) was completed in December 2003. Four projects are under construction or in the final design stages, and six are in the Feasibility Assessment Stage. The feasibility stage ends with the identification of the Initially Preferred Alternative (IPA). The six projects in the Feasibility Assessment stage are:

- New NJ Turnpike Interchange (Interchange 15E), Newark;
- Central Avenue Improvements to I-9, Kearny;
- Route 1-9 Truck Improvements (Bridge Replacement), Kearny and Newark;
- Possible new bridge across the Passaic River from Central Avenue to Doremus Avenue, Kearny and Newark;
- The rehabilitation of Pennsylvania Avenue and Fish House Road, Kearny; and
- The extension of the Portway to Conrail's Croxton Terminal.

In July 2002, the NJDOT began the Portway Extensions Concept Development Study. The Study identified container/goods movement issues in addition to those addressed by the original Portway Program. The Study also recommended extensions that facilitate goods/container movements from northern New Jersey's ports to their next destination and prioritized implementation. The study was completed in September 2003.

More information on the Portway Extensions Study is available at  
<http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/works/portway/extstudy.shtm>.

### **Parallel Processing of Section 106 and Section 4(f) Requirements**

**Background.** The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) regulations (23 CFR 771) (21), in compliance with Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (Section 4(f)), require that a Section 4(f) Evaluation be prepared for any Federally funded project that uses property from either a significant historic property considered eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places or from a significant publicly owned park, recreational area or wildlife and waterfowl refuge. To reduce the number of Section 4(f) Evaluations, FHWA has prepared four Nationwide Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluations. When a project qualifies for a Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluation, an individual Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation and an individual Final Section 4(f) Evaluation are not required. Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluations allow the FHWA Division Offices to make key determinations on projects that do not require an Environmental Impact Statement and that have only minor impacts on areas protected by Section 4(f). The four Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluations are:

1. Independent Walkway and Bikeways Construction Projects
2. Historic Bridges
3. Minor Involvements with Historic Sites
4. Minor Involvements with Parks, Recreation Areas and Waterfowl and Wildlife Refuges

The Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluation for Historic Bridges (22) covers projects that have an adverse effect on a historic bridge (and do not have an adverse



effect on any other historic property or parkland). The Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluation for Minor Involvements with Historic Sites was prepared for projects that improve existing highways and that use only minor amounts of land (including non-historic improvements thereon) from historic sites that are adjacent to the highways. The impact on the Section 4(f) site from the use of the land must be considered minor. The word minor is narrowly defined as having either a No Effect or No Adverse Effect on the qualities that qualified the site for listing or eligibility on the National Register of Historic Places. The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) must not object to the determination of No Adverse Effect.

Based on the above discussion about the current Section 4(f) process, if a Federal-aid project has an adverse effect on a historic district or a historic site (except bridges), it does not qualify for a Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluation. These projects must go through separate and sequential processes to comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (Section 106) and to comply with Section 4(f). The traditional, sequenced processing follows the steps below:

#### Section 106

- Determination of Eligibility
- Determination of Effect
- Alternatives/Mitigation
- Consultation with SHPO/ACHP
- Public Participation
- Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)

#### Section 4(f)

- Demonstration of No Prudent and Feasible Alternative
- Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation and Final Section 4(f) Evaluation sent to SHPO, Department of Interior, and the public

For a typical Section 106 process, Section 106 documentation must be prepared in accordance with 36 CFR Part 63 (for Determinations of Eligibility) (23) and 36 CFR Part 800.11 (e) (Documentation Standards for Finding of No Adverse Effect or Adverse Effect) (24). Ultimately, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation signs a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). Subsequent to the Section 106 process, an individual Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation and an individual Final Section 4(f) Evaluation are prepared, signed by FHWA, and circulated.

NJDOT begins the Section 106 process very early in the project development process. For projects that have adverse effects on historic districts and historic sites (except bridges) and that are classified as categorical exclusions, the typical Section 106 process, from determination of historic eligibility to MOA, takes three to nine months to complete. After the Section 106 process is completed, the Section 4(f) process (Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation and Final Section 4(f) Evaluation) takes another six to nine months to complete. The total time frame for a project in New Jersey that has an adverse effect on a historic property (except bridges) and that is classified as a categorical exclusion is, therefore, 9 to 18 months.

The Section 4(f) process and the Section 106 process are similar in that they require resource identification, impact considerations, alternatives analyses, coordination, and mitigation. Both the Section 4(f) and Section 106 processes require a rigorous

analysis of alternatives to avoid or lessen adverse effects and both the processes analyze the same alternatives, namely:

- Do Nothing
- Improve the Facility Without Using/Affecting Section 4(f)/Historic Resources
- Build a New Facility On New Location Without Affecting the  
Section 4(f)/Historic Resources

As a result, on projects that have adverse effects on historic districts and historic sites (except bridges) and that are classified as categorical exclusions, NJDOT is required to address essentially the same issues in three different documents (the Section 106 documentation, the Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation, and Final Section 4(f) Evaluation) reviewed by essentially the same entities.

#### **Approach for Parallel Processing of Section 106 and Section 4(f)**

**Requirements.** The Pilot Project involves merging the Section 106 process with the Section 4(f) process to eliminate duplication and redundant coordination. The Pilot Project is designed to expedite the process for projects that have adverse effects on historic districts and historic sites (except bridges) and that are classified as categorical exclusions, since most of the coordination needed to comply with Section 4(f) Evaluations is applicable to the Section 106 process. The Pilot Project Process does not apply to projects that qualify for a Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluation or require an Environmental Assessment or an Environmental Impact Statement because there would not be a substantial time savings in those cases.

The Pilot Project Process, developed by the New Jersey SHPO, FHWA, and NJDOT, makes several of the steps concurrent. The Pilot Project procedure, detailed in a

flow chart, outlines each step of the Pilot Project Process (see Figure B-13 (25)). The flow chart structures the documents, reviews, and approvals to carefully address requirements of Section 106 and Section 4(f) in parallel.

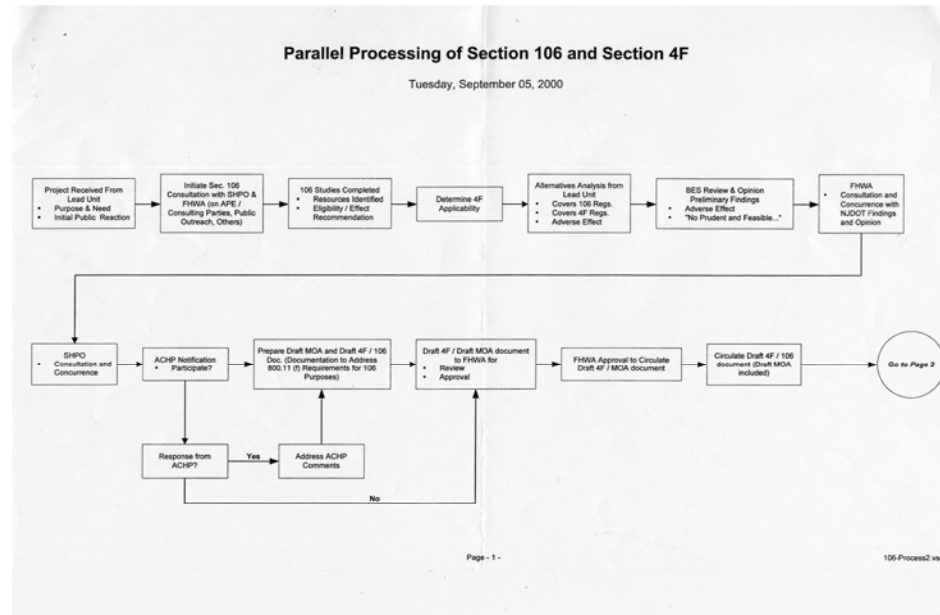
This streamlined process follows the following major steps:

- Determination of Eligibility and Determination of Effect
- Consultation with SHPO/ACHP/Public/Local Government
- Selection of Prudent/Feasible Alternative
- Preparation of Draft Section 106 MOA
- Circulation of Draft Section 4(f)/Section 106 Summary Documentation and Draft Section 106 MOA
- Response to Comments
- Execution of Section 106 MOA
- Approval of Final Section 4(f)

For a project that has an adverse effect on a historic property (except bridges) and that is classified as a categorical exclusion, the Pilot Project would produce one document designed to serve both the Section 4(f) and Section 106 processes rather than requiring three documents.

At times, there are changes in a project design or changes in determinations of eligibility that occur after the Section 106 process is completed or during or after the Section 4(f) process. If this situation occurred under the current Section 4(f) and Section 106 processes, both processes would have to be reopened and there would have to be additional consultation. The Pilot Project Process flow chart does not specifically indicate how to handle such a situation.

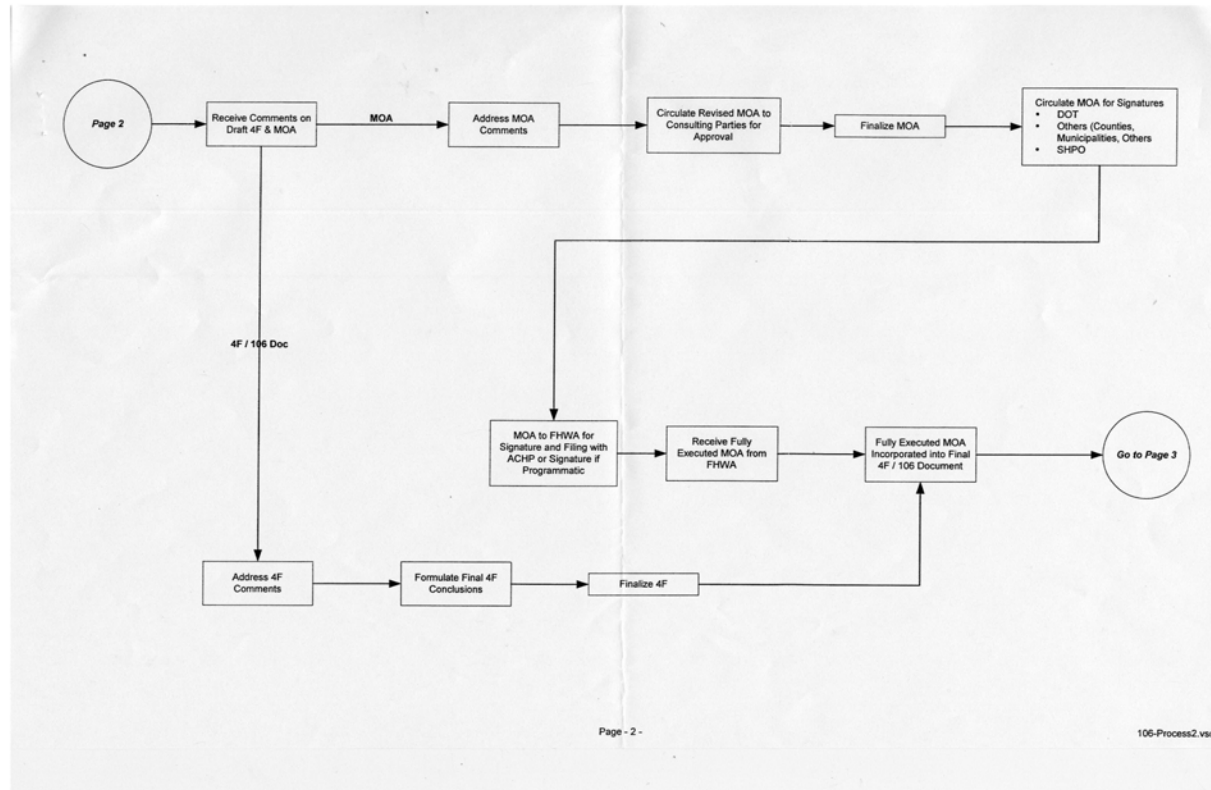
Figure B-13



Flow chart of New Jersey's Parallel Processing of Section 106 and Section 4F.

Source: NJDOT, 2000.

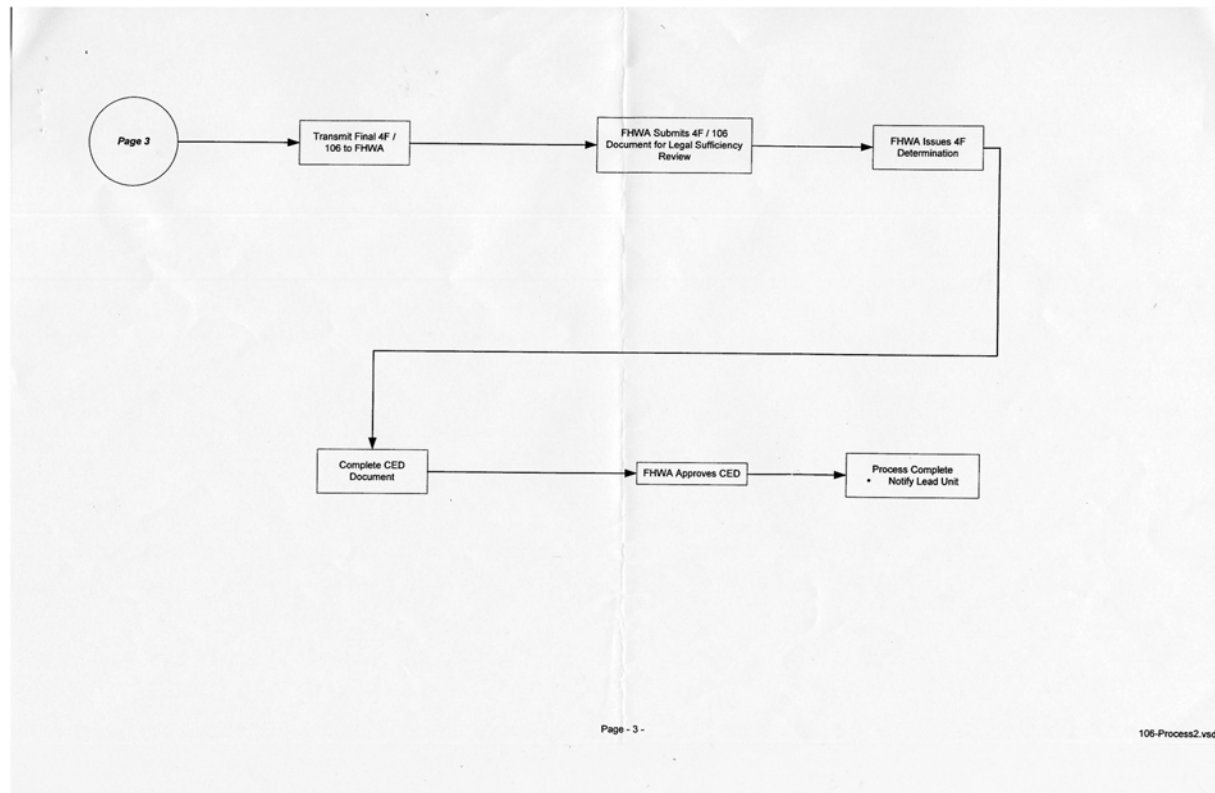
Figure B-13 (cont.)



Flow chart of New Jersey's Parallel Processing of Section 106 and Section 4F.

Source: NJDOT, 2000.

Figure B-13 (cont.)



Flow chart of New Jersey's Parallel Processing of Section 106 and Section 4F.

Source: NJDOT, 2000.

However, the idea is that this additional consultation would also be able to be handled in parallel and that it would take less time than under the current Section 4(f) and Section 106 processes. Another advantage is that it is more likely that the same reviewer would be involved. NJDOT may revise the flow chart to address this situation. Another FHWA Legal Sufficiency review may not be necessary for this revision.

For the Pilot Project, NJDOT looked for test case projects that:

- Had adverse effects on historic properties that were not historic bridges.
- Were not extremely controversial
- Would qualify for a Categorical Exclusion
- Did not qualify for a Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluation

The Route 57 Bridge Replacement over Merrill Creek Project in Greenwich Township in Warren County was a project that fit the above criteria, and NJDOT chose it as the first test case for this Pilot Project. The Route 57 Bridge lies within the boundaries of the National Register-listed Morris Canal Historic District and the National Register-eligible Stewartsville Historic District. The Route 57 Bridge itself was found to be not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and also is not a contributing element to either of the historic districts. The Section 106 process resulted in concurrence that the project would have an adverse effect on both the Morris Canal and Stewartsville Village Historic Districts because it would mean acquiring a minor amount of right-of-way from both historic districts. The right-of-way is required for the widening of the bridge and for adding a center lane within the vicinity of the bridge.

**Expectations for the Parallel Processing of Section 106 and Section 4(f) Requirements Pilot Project.** Under the new process, the time frame to complete both



the Section 106 process and the Section 4(f) process was expected to be reduced by 6 months to a total of 3 to 12 months. Annually, there are three to four projects in New Jersey that have an adverse effect on historic districts, are classified as categorical exclusions, and that are processed in sequence. The Pilot Project was expected, therefore, to result in an aggregate savings per year of two project-years in New Jersey. These savings would include:

- Costs and staff-hour savings (because there is less time needed for preparation of the document and less time needed to review it)
- No duplicate review by public/stakeholders and regulators

The Pilot Project could be applied as a model nationwide. FHWA has several options on how to implement this Pilot Project. It could:

- Issue the Parallel Processing of Section 106 and Section 4(f) flow chart
- Amend the Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluation for Minor Involvements with Historic Sites
- Issue a new Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluation in the *Federal Register*

#### **Status of the Parallel Processing of Section 106 and Section 4(f)**

**Requirements Pilot Project.** FHWA found the Pilot Project Process to be legally sufficient and approved the procedure in November 2000. In December 2001, NJDOT prepared and submitted a document titled *Draft Self-Standing Section 4(f)/Section 106 Documentation for Historic District Impacts* (26) for this project to FHWA for review. FHWA approved and issued the document in October 2002. Few agency comments were received on the "new" process and FHWA was pleased with the results. The Pilot Project then became inactive.

The Senate and House of Representatives have since proposed measures to streamline the processing of Section 4(f) evaluations and better integrate them with Section 106 determinations. The measures were put forth in Congressional legislation reauthorizing Federal surface transportation programs for Federal Fiscal Years 2004-2009. The Senate bill, known as the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA), proposed to amend Section 4(f) to allow use of Section 4(f) resources for transportation projects if the use would have “de minimus” impacts to the resource. The degree of impact found by the Secretary of Transportation to public, recreational, and natural resources would require concurrence from the corresponding jurisdictional agency. The degree of impact to historic resources would be determined based upon the standards of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and would require concurrence from the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation or State or Tribal Historic Preservation Officers. The bill also called upon the Secretary to clarify standards used to determine the prudence and feasibility of a project’s alternatives. The Senate passed SAFETEA in February 2004.

The House bill, known as the Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (TEA-LU), proposed similar amendments to Section 4(f) pertaining only to historic sites. The House bill would allow the use of an historic site if the use is determined to have No Adverse Effect on the property under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The House passed TEA-LU April 2004.

Conference agreement on the Federal highway and transit program reauthorization must still occur.

*Integrating the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Statewide Planning in Oregon*

**Background for Integrating Statewide Planning in Oregon.** Oregon has an extensive and detailed mandatory statewide planning process. The State's planning program focuses on Local Comprehensive Plans, which are developed by local governments with citizen input and set forth the long-range policies on how a community's future development should occur.

The Oregon Transportation Planning Rule requires the creation of a Transportation System Plan for communities of 10,000 or more; much in the same way that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) requires plans for Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). A Transportation System Plan must be compatible with the Land Use Plan Element of a Local Comprehensive Plan. Oregon's requirements for comprehensive land use planning to be harmonious with transportation planning compel the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to engage early in transportation decision-making.

Five years ago, corridor planning (or "Refinement Planning" as it is called in Oregon) resulted in decisions on projects that were advanced in the absence of NEPA, with a definitive location and with no environmental work performed on them. This was because an environmental analysis of planning decisions was thought to require extensive design detail and investment of funds in such an analysis on projects that were years away from construction was not considered prudent.

Once the projects were funded, resource agencies raised questions that should have been addressed in the planning phase. The location and land use decisions, which both local government and the public felt were already made, had to be revisited because of these environmental concerns. Moreover, ODOT developed two to five projects as Major Investment Studies (MISs), then found FHWA would not accept the MIS as the NEPA decision when ODOT tried to advance the project. Consequently, ODOT began to consider earlier implementation of the NEPA process and a NEPA-Statewide Planning merger. The goals of the Pilot Project to integrate the NEPA and Statewide Planning processes are to:

- Reduce public frustration with redundant processes by combining the alternative analysis and selection process required by both the Refinement Planning and NEPA documentation into one process, rather than consecutive processes.
- Reduce resource agency frustration by incorporating their concerns early in the process of planning and alternative consideration.
- Improve decision-making during Refinement Planning by having the appropriate information available at the point of decision.
- Improve ability to preserve corridors for future transportation development.
- Shorten overall time required to advance from planning product to completed transportation facility.

**Approach to Integrating Statewide Planning in Oregon.** ODOT developed two new approaches to integrate the NEPA and Statewide Planning processes: an early

coordination process, dubbed the Collaborative Environmental and Transportation Agreement on Streamlining (CETAS), and a Tiered NEPA Decision-Making Approach. The ODOT system for integrating NEPA into planning is very close to the Mid-Atlantic Region's (Region III) integrated transportation and environmental process, except that ODOT uses a Two-Tiered Environmental Impact Statement process. The CETAS process and Tiered NEPA Decision-Making Approach are in their infancy and are evolving.

CETAS. The CETAS process was developed to revise and replace the Oregon NEPA/404 Merger Agreement (27), signed in 1996 by ten Federal and State agencies. These agencies included FHWA, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS, now the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA Fisheries), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), ODOT, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DCLD), the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Oregon Division of State Lands. The Oregon NEPA/404 Merger Agreement contained specific concurrence points in the NEPA process, such as Purpose and Need, Range of Alternatives, Selection Criteria, and Preferred Alternative. The objective was to engage the resource agencies earlier in the NEPA process and to merge the reviews needed for compliance with NEPA and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

The problem was that land use planning, transportation systems planning, and Refinement Planning, in which modal and location decisions were made, all occurred before any resource agency involvement. The resource agency involvement under the

Oregon NEPA/404 Merger Agreement did not occur until the project development phase, which was too late in the process to affect land use and transportation planning decision-making.

The CETAS process streamlines the environmental process by expanding the original 1996 agreement to include a broader definition than integration of NEPA and the Clean Water Act Section 404 Procedures. The result of the CETAS process was a new charter, a new process agreement, and a vision that fully integrates land use planning, transportation planning, environmental review, and project development.

The ten Federal and State agencies signed the new Collaborative Environmental Group Charter on February 6, 2001 (28), and the State Historic Preservation Officer was added on December 6, 2001. The Collaborative Environmental Group Charter is an umbrella agreement among the agencies that sets the stage for further collaborative work to achieve their collective vision. The Vision Statement contains partnering elements and a work plan to identify and implement collaborative opportunities (*e.g.*, programmatic agreements, environmental management system, and mitigation banking) that help meet the mission of environmental stewardship, while providing for a safe and efficient transportation system.

The newly chartered group is called the *Collaborative Environmental and Transportation Agreement for Streamlining* (CETAS) and the new process agreement is referred to as the Major Transportation Projects Agreement (MTPA) (29), usually referred to as the “CETAS process”. The objectives of the MTPA are to ensure full communication, participation, and early involvement in ODOT major transportation projects. The MTPA applies to projects that are included in the State Transportation

Improvement Plan (STIP) either as planning project or as a development project, and are likely to have an impact on cultural or natural resources.

The CETAS process is structured to make reviews of ODOT transportation projects easier for the resource agencies and the State Historic Preservation Officer. At each concurrence point (Purpose and Need, Range of Alternatives, Selection Criteria, and Preferred Alternative), the agencies receive a presentation and each agency is then asked to document to ODOT their concurrence. The attendees are usually agency supervisors or senior staff with the authority to make decisions.

The CETAS Group reviews a roster of projects and decides the projects they want to examine so they can allocate their time appropriately. If only one or two agencies are interested in a project, then those agencies may choose to deal with it outside the CETAS process. FHWA has agreed not to advance a project if a CETAS agency has not signed off on a concurrence point.

Tiered NEPA Decision-Making Process. The CETAS MTPA is an implementing tool for the Tiered NEPA Decision-Making Process. The process outlined in the MTPA covers both projects in the Refinement Planning stage, which is equivalent to a NEPA Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process and projects in the Project Development Stage, which is equivalent to a NEPA Tier 2 EIS process. Figure B-14 displays the process of integrating the Statewide Planning and the NEPA process. Refinement plans are typically used for very large, long-term projects that have major location decisions and land use issues, with no immediate expectation of implementation. The Tier 1 EISs are called Location EISs and the Tier 2 EISs are referred to as Design EISs (see Figure B-15).

Figure B-14

Planning and Project Identification Process

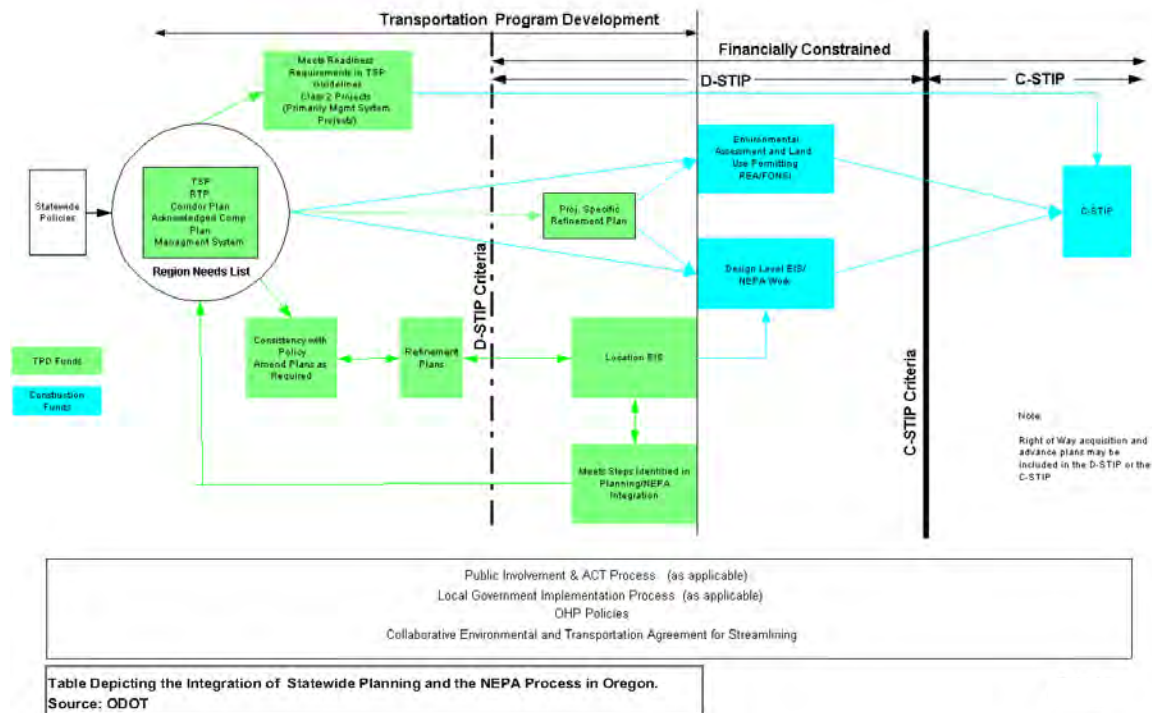
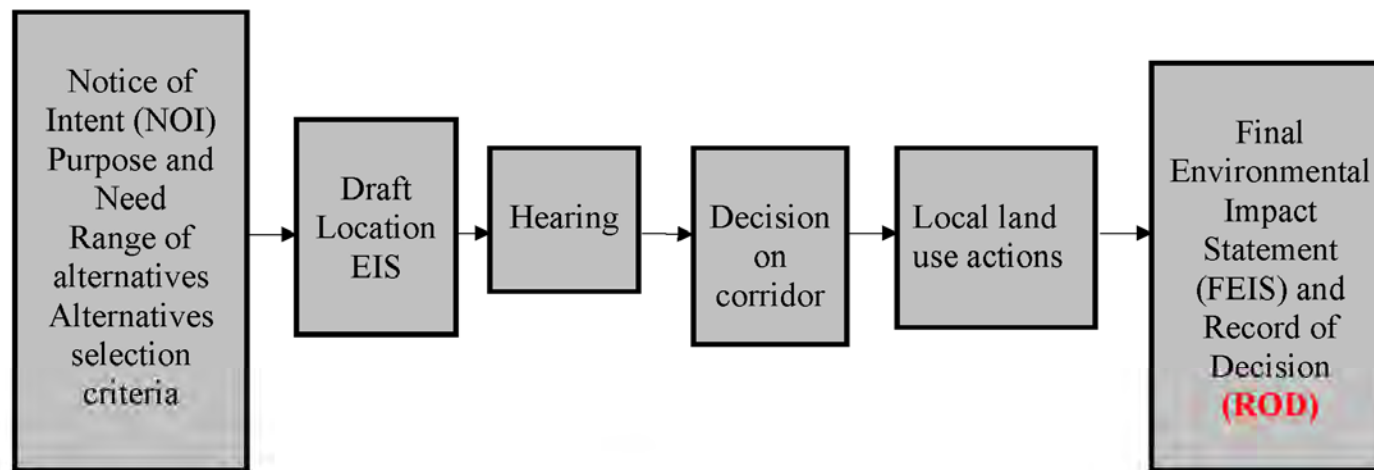




Figure B-15

**Oregon's Integrating Statewide Planning and NEPA Process**



Flow chart of Oregon's Integrating Statewide Planning and NEPA Process.

Source: Oregon Department of Transportation

NEPA studies are being funded through several approaches, including the use of Refinement Planning funds, congressionally earmarked funds, local funding, and private funding.

Location EISs are completed on projects that have not been identified for funding for the next 10 to 20 years. ODOT developed a method for preparing a Location EIS at the planning stage to support decision-making on purpose and need, type of facility, corridor location, and transportation modal choice. Location EISs use a 10 percent level of engineering design (as compared to a 30 percent level of engineering design in the traditional NEPA process), 100-meter corridors, and coarse-level impact data (using Geographic Information System (GIS) data, where available, aerial photography, National Wetland Inventory (NWI) maps, and site visits). A 10 percent design consists of centerline and basic preliminary engineering work. A Design EIS, prepared when the project is later funded for construction, addresses design alternatives that are within the selected corridor alternative (derived from the Location EIS) and develops environmental data and analysis sufficient to gain the construction permits. There is agency concurrence at key decision points (Purpose and Need, Range of Alternatives, Selection Criteria, and Preferred Alternative) during both the Location EIS and the Design EIS processes, except that Purpose and Need concurrence occurs only if the project did not go through Refinement Planning (*i.e.*, did not have a Location EIS). The Federal and State resource agencies support the Tiered NEPA Decision-Making Process and are generally satisfied with analyzing corridors with broad-brush information in the Location EIS.

At the same time that ODOT developed the new Tiered NEPA Decision-Making Process, the ODOT Planning Section was developing new Transportation System Plan

(TSP) Guidelines (30) to implement the Oregon Transportation Planning Rule. The MTPA and the Tiered NEPA Decision-Making Approach were incorporated into the new TSP Guidelines, issued in 2001.

State planning law mandates that ODOT projects be consistent with Local Comprehensive Plans and statewide planning goals. Local governments must concur with a project and adopt comprehensive plan amendments and goal exceptions to authorize a facility within a proposed corridor. For example, if there is a preferred alternative outside the urban growth boundaries or in protected resource lands, Oregon requires a goal exception to the statewide land use goals based on demonstration that there is no other location for the highway. The TSP Guidelines require these comprehensive plan amendments and goal exceptions to be passed between the time of the Location Draft EIS and publishing of the Location Final EIS.

ODOT expects that local governments will act to preserve a selected corridor derived from the Location EIS process by designating it for transportation development in their comprehensive plans and local ordinances. ODOT's expectations of local government actions are conveyed through intergovernmental agreements (IGAs). It is preferable for funds to be available to strategically purchase right-of-way to preserve the corridor; however, even if there were no funds to purchase right-of-way immediately, businesses and local governments would follow the comprehensive plan. The plan should, therefore, help to preserve the corridor designation.

The process to amend the Local Comprehensive Plan can take a year or more, even under favorable circumstances. As part of the process to amend the Local Comprehensive Plan, a local government approving a proposed exception to the

statewide goals must prepare findings of fact and a statement of reasons that demonstrate that the standards for an exception have been met. These standards are (1) Reasons justify why the State policy embodied in the applicable goals cannot or should not apply to a particular area or situation; (2) Areas that do not require a new exception cannot reasonably accommodate the use; (3) The long-term environmental, economic, social, and energy consequences from the use of the proposed site with measures designed to reduce adverse impacts are not significantly more adverse than would typically result from the same proposal being in areas requiring a goal exception other than the proposed site; and (4) The proposed uses are compatible with other adjacent uses or will be so rendered through measures designed to reduce adverse impacts.

The Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) is responsible for reviewing all amendments to Local Comprehensive Plans to determine whether or not they satisfy the Oregon's Statewide Planning Goals. When a local government proposes to make major changes to a Local Comprehensive Plan, it must submit a copy of the proposal to the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) 45 days before the final adoption hearing. The DLCD is the administrative arm of the LCDC. Twice a month, DLCD circulates notices of proposed plan amendments to interested agencies, groups, and other persons. The notice includes a brief description of the pending amendment allowing reviewers to decide whether or not they are interested in or affected by the proposed amendment.

DLCD reviews all amendments to determine whether or not they comply with the goals, other plan provisions, and statutory requirements. When DLCD believes a proposed amendment would not comply with the goals or wishes to provide technical

assistance or advice, it participates in the local proceeding. DLCD provides the local government with a statement of its position on the amendment and recommends changes that would make the amendment comply with the goals or any other relevant requirement. DLCD or any other interested person or agency may appeal an adopted amendment to the Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA) if the person participated in the local consideration of the amendment. LUBA may reverse or remand an amendment that does not comply with the goals, another plan provision, or a statutory or constitutional requirement (31).

ODOT has also found through application of the Tiered NEPA Decision-Making Process that there are several parts of Oregon's existing administrative rules about the State land use process that are unclear. One issue is the appropriate (and effective) land use actions to take at the Location EIS level versus the Design EIS level, the timing of these actions, and how to manage the interface with local government to accomplish them. Oregon's statewide planning agency, the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) wants ODOT to influence local governments to apply certain land use measures before there is a specific design for the project. Then, when the design is known, DLCD wants the local governments to apply more specific measures before the facility is actually constructed. Once it is constructed, land use measures would continue so that the facility function is not degraded by inappropriate access and usage patterns. ODOT's position is that it cannot force the local agencies to "lock down" land use at this point in the process. ODOT believes that an appropriate action on their part, at this point in the process, may be to purchase critical parcels of land along the preferred alternative

corridor. ODOT and the DLCD have had many meetings to discuss this issue and are converging toward mutually acceptable processes and agreements.

Once a corridor is chosen, it goes into the Transportation System Plan and is eligible for further development consideration. Once the project is funded for development, ODOT uses the Location EIS as the basis for proceeding to consideration of alternatives within the selected corridor (Design EIS).

**Expectations for Integrating Statewide Planning in Oregon.** Expectations of using a Location EIS during the transportation planning stage were that 1) the planning decision will be sustainable and will not have to be revisited later when the facility is funded, 2) land use decisions can safely be made based on the first assumptions, 3) when the funding is secured and the Design EIS is prepared, that the decision in the Location EIS can be assumed, and that the design can focus on design alternatives and issues within the selected location alternative, and 4) right-of-way can be purchased or otherwise preserved to protect the corridor decision based on the Location EIS.

ODOT believes that the time savings generated by the Tiered NEPA Decision-Making Process will occur at the Design EIS stage. That process will avoid the dynamic of trying to solve both the “big picture” and “small picture” issues at the same time. Also, ODOT believes that money is saved by not preparing 30 percent design on multiple corridors (typically four) in the Location EIS, as might occur in a regular EIS. In addition, by focusing on the general issues at first, ODOT can get local community buy-in before having to address the very localized issues of individual property owners. These are addressed later, and at the necessary detail level once the corridor alternative is selected.

ODOT expects the early coordination process to continue strengthening its relationships with regulatory agencies and local communities, and to develop increased understanding of each other's interests and needs. The quality of those relationships is crucial to efficient decision-making on transportation projects.

**Status of Integrating NEPA and Statewide Planning in Oregon.** An early version of the Tiered NEPA Decision-Making Process was used on the Mount Hood Corridor Study Project. ODOT ended up with a mix of roadway improvement and transit options. The study gave the previously opposed environmental and economic development forces a forum to start talking to each other and now these stakeholders come to ODOT together with common solutions. The Draft Corridor Location EIS for the Mount Hood project was finished in 1996 and categorical exclusion projects have been completed to implement the plan. ODOT applied the lessons learned from the Mount Hood Corridor Study to refine the new integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning process.

ODOT has not had any new projects that have completed the Tiered NEPA Decision-Making Process, and the CETAS process is still evolving. A current large bypass project using the new process, the Newberg-Dundee Transportation Improvement Project, involves eight corridors.

Preparation and Review of the Location Draft EIS. ODOT drafted a satisfactory Purpose and Need statement for the project and gained concurrence from reviewing agencies on the range of alternatives and the criteria (*e.g.*, categories and measures) for selection of the preferred alternative. Through the Major Transportation Projects Agreement, the resource agencies were given an opportunity to review the text of the

Location Draft EIS before its release. In October 2002, the Location Draft EIS was formally issued to the public and agencies for review and comment. Four public hearings for the project were held in the last weeks of October 2002. The comment period for the Location Draft EIS was to have closed on November 15, 2002, but was extended thirty days to December 16, 2002 to give the public time to review a Supplemental Land Use Technical Memorandum. The supplemental study examined how well each alternative was likely to fare in the land use exception process.

Review of the Preferred Alternative for the Location Final EIS. In January 2003, the project team forwarded a recommendation that a hybrid of two alternatives in the Location Draft EIS be advanced to the Location Final EIS as the preferred alternative corridor. The Project Oversight Steering Team (POST) agreed with the recommendation. The POST is composed of eleven local, State, and Federal officials who make key decisions on the Newberg-Dundee Transportation Improvement Project. Resource agencies were not included on the POST.

In May 2003, the recommended alternative was presented to CETAS agencies at the Preferred Alternative Concurrence Point. In July 2003, ODOT received non-concurrence letters from six agencies. The lack of concurrence among the agencies highlighted broader problematic issues with the Tiered NEPA process that needed to be addressed. The process caused conflict between the agencies' needs for upfront specificity and for commitment to the implementation of mitigation measures and the inability of ODOT to provide that level of specificity during the location phase of a project.



One agency (DLCD) withheld concurrence pending review of the material supporting the required land use actions, but ultimately did not concur with the recommended alternative. DLCD's objections were primarily centered on the proposed bypass interchanges, one of which would be outside an urban growth boundary. The agency wanted more analysis of reasonable alternatives that would not require a goal exception.

Five other agencies (USFWS, EPA, NOAA Fisheries, DEQ and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW)) did not concur with the Preferred Alternative. According to Pilot Project Progress Reports and telephone interviews with ODOT staff, the agencies did not concur primarily because they disagreed with the criteria developed to assess impacts, wanted more discussion of mitigation measures, were concerned about cumulative and indirect impacts, and preferred a different alternative. Specifically, they were uncomfortable with how fish habitat was identified, with induced growth impacts from ODOT's preferred alternative, and with how mitigation for the alternative that they preferred was assessed. NOAA Fisheries conducted its own analysis of induced growth. There was also a perception among some agencies that the preferred alternative had been chosen before the environmental review process was completed based on local political pressure. As evidence of their perception, participating environmental agencies cited issues such as ODOT negotiating land use agreements when alternatives were still being analyzed, and not offering field walks for all proposed alternatives.

ODOT's position was that the non-concurrence by the five agencies was based on factors other than those agreed upon in their concurrence, nearly two years previous, with

the Criteria for Selection of the Preferred Alternative. For example, induced growth was not one of the criteria. Furthermore, none of these issues were raised by the agencies during review of the preliminary Location Draft EIS. Therefore, ODOT believed the agencies were changing the ground rules and not complying with the CETAS agreement.

Resolution of Non-Concurrence on Preferred Alternative for Location Final EIS.

Subsequently, ODOT met with the non-concurring agencies but we were not able to resolve the issue at the technical team level. In September 2003, the agencies requested elevation to higher levels in their respective organizations. Elevation is part of the CETAS protocol. On November 6, 2003, ODOT met with four of the non-concurring agencies (NOAA Fisheries, ODFW, EPA, and USFWS) to develop an approach that would allow for concurrence with the preferred alternative. The meeting goals included developing a way to resolve the conflict between the agencies' need for early specificity and the inability of ODOT to provide that information in the location phase of a project, and determination of an approach for identification and implementation of measures to avoid or mitigate potential impacts from the preferred alternative. The solution was to draft a document in which ODOT would commit to avoidance and mitigation measures during the design phase of the project. The measures would be broadly outlined in the document, with specificity only as necessary to establish expectations for measuring future consistency with the agreement. ODOT drafted a Record of Agreement/Consensus to this effect, which was signed by all CETAS participants in January 2004.

With the concurrence issues resolved, the subsequent goals for the Newberg-Dundee Transportation Improvement Project, originally scheduled to occur between July 2003 and early 2004, were:

- to decide which various actions and tools available for interchange and intersection access control and for trip generation control are appropriate. These actions should preserve the corridor until the time that ODOT has money to purchase right-of-way.
- to obtain the required exceptions to certain State land use planning goals to allow the facility to be constructed partially outside the urban growth boundary,
- to obtain the required land use and transportation amendments to the Local Comprehensive Plan from the appropriate approval bodies in order to support the bypass location recommendation, and
- to prepare and release the Location Final EIS.

Drafting and Passage of Goal Exceptions to the Statewide Land Use Goals and Proposed Local Comprehensive Plan Amendments. ODOT worked with focus groups comprised of Newberg, Dundee, and Yamhill County officials and planning staffs on how to achieve land use compatibility around future interchange sites before the design and construction of the facility. Materials were developed in support of the required land use actions and intergovernmental agreements with local jurisdictions. ODOT drafted three goal exceptions to the statewide land use goals and proposed Local Comprehensive Plan amendments for the Newberg-Dundee Transportation Improvement Project and submitted them in March 2004. Public hearings were held in Yamhill, Newberg, and Dundee in June and July 2004. Adoption of the exceptions and amendments were expected in August 2004, however, it was not September 30, 2004 that the

Yamhill County Commissioners voted to approve an exception to the Statewide Planning Goals and to amend the County's land use plans and ordinances.

Location Final EIS Preparation and Preparation for Preliminary Planning for the Design EIS. The Location Final EIS for the Newberg-Dundee Transportation Improvement Project is scheduled for early 2005, one year after it was initially projected to be completed. In the meantime, to keep project momentum, ODOT has worked on context-sensitive design concepts for the corridor and has solicited public input pending the Record of Decision (ROD). The Design EIS will probably begin immediately after the ROD. Since the Scoping Process for the Design EIS will not begin until after the research period ends, the Research Team will not be able to see whether the decisions that were made in the Location EIS will hold and do not need to be revisited. Completion of the preliminary design and the Design EIS is expected to be completed in spring 2007.

CETAS conducted a retrospective study on the tiered NEPA process to date for the Newberg-Dundee Transportation Improvement Project and identified several factors that contributed to the delay of the project. One factor was the large number of selection criteria involved in choosing the preferred alternative. Many factors were too vague or were not strong indicators of environmental quality. The elevation process beyond the technical team level was also slow, taking six months from non-concurrence to the official request for elevation. Environmental and planning agencies independently cited communication problems as being a major factor in delaying the project. Specifically, there was no communication between the POST and CETAS Group regarding the analysis prepared during the Draft EIS phase until receipt of the document. There was

similarly no opportunity for the resource agencies to coordinate with environmental consultants on the project.

While perhaps not applicable to the Newberg-Dundee Transportation Improvement Project, there are a variety of regulatory techniques that local governments can use to control development attributable to transportation improvements (32). Not all regulatory techniques are available for use in all jurisdictions because of local land use laws and State statutes. These techniques include:

Land Acquisition/Conservation Easements In this technique, government agencies, non-profit groups, or other private initiatives purchase or accept donations of land and pledge to keep the land permanently undeveloped.

Access Controls Development and regional development shifts can be controlled to some extent through modifications to the access plan for the facility. For highway facilities, aspects of the project that can be modified include traffic patterns on connecting roadways, and curb cut regulations on connecting roadways.

Zoning The action involves the regulation of both the density and use to which land may be put.

Transfer of Development Rights This regulatory scheme allows property owners in areas where development has been restricted to sell a portion of the unusable development potential of their land (*e.g.*, such as units per acre or floor area ratio) to properties in areas where the government would like to encourage more intensive development.

Growth Management Regulation Examples of growth management techniques include:

*Adequate Public Facilities Ordinances* This type of growth management strategy links approval for certain types of projects to a review of the capacity of infrastructure to serve those projects. Projects exceeding the capacity of infrastructure before improvements will be in place do not receive approval.

*Development Moratoria.* Moratoria give local jurisdictions the authority to halt new development projects until public facilities are improved to an appropriate level.

*Extraterritorial Zoning/Annexation* In some fast growing metropolitan regions, cities are given special authority over zoning issues and development applications in unincorporated areas outside city limits. Policies meant to ease the process of annexation of incorporated or unincorporated suburban or fringe lands into a city's jurisdiction can mitigate against the induced growth impacts of transportation improvements by allowing planning, zoning, and growth management strategies to be implemented on a regional basis.

Resource Management and Preservation Regulations Examples of resource regulations include:

- Coastal zone management areas where development is permitted only under special circumstances in critical areas.
- Watershed management areas where development is regulated to protect the quality and quantity of water resources, prevent flooding, and promote water-related tourism and recreation.
- Agricultural districts where incentives such as lower property tax assessment levels are combined with low-density zoning and use regulation to promote the continuation of agricultural uses.

- Special architectural districts where development is permitted as long as strict standards designed to preserve existing aesthetic and cultural resources are followed.

Incentives for Brownfield/Infill Development Tax abatements, low-interest loans, density bonuses, and relaxation of site cleanup requirements are strategies employed to make former industrial sites (brownfields) or other infill locations more competitive with greenfield sites in the vicinity of transportation improvements, thus reducing the likelihood of growth in outlying areas.

Dealing with the Newberg-Dundee Transportation Improvement Project and the Tiered NEPA Decision-Making Process has spurred ODOT to make several permanent and positive process changes. The primary issue in the process was how to assure that the environmental data and engineering design evaluation would be accepted by regulatory agencies and the public as valid and sufficient for the level of decision being made. Since the Newberg-Dundee Transportation Improvement Project was the first very large project that has been engaged in the Tiered NEPA Decision-Making process, ODOT found that the concurrence points in the Major Transportation Projects Agreement and in the Standard Operating Procedures that supplement the Agreement required much more definition and process development than anticipated. A team of ODOT planning and project development members, along with CETAS Group members, developed Guidance Papers on the approach to use on each concurrence point (Purpose and Need, Range of Alternatives, Selection Criteria, and Preferred Alternative). ODOT will issue notices to adopt the Guidance Papers and to incorporate them into operational manuals

and approved operating procedures to institutionalize the Tiered NEPA Decision-Making Process into the project development process.

The timing of passage of statewide planning goal exceptions and amendments of local comprehensive plans in conjunction with the Tiered NEPA Decision-Making Process continues to be a challenge. It is difficult to address the goal exception standards with the level of information generated for a Location EIS, however TSP Guidelines require passage of the exceptions and local comprehensive plan amendments at this stage of the process. Oregon is considering shifting the responsibility of preparing goal exception findings to towns and counties, allowing local entities to complete the process before ODOT becomes involved in the transportation planning process.

ODOT is developing a selection process for the next candidate projects for the Tiered NEPA Decision-Making Process approach. ODOT noted that the agency may not consider another large corridor project for the tiered NEPA process in the near future, as the time and cost savings have not been realized thus far. The focus for future tiered NEPA projects is on projects with location issues. Another type of project that may be a good candidate for tiering is where the project area has a significant interface with Federal lands, involving either the U.S. Forest Service or the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). An example would be were a new facility or realignment would cross Federal land. BLM rules require a management plan and it has a NEPA process that is different than FHWA's. ODOT could partner with BLM to include the Tier 1 analysis in the BLM management plan, with a design level document to follow once the project was better defined.



ODOT is also discussing other aspects of early planning and project development such as how the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) is developed; what should be required of a project before it is allowed on the STIP (*e.g.*, a Purpose and Need Review); the organization of the STIP (having a Planning Program, a Development STIP (D-STIP), and a Construction STIP (C-STIP), and how a project qualifies for each; and integration of its management systems so that projects of different types (*e.g.*, modernization or preservation) can be appropriately prioritized for development or construction.

Views among participating agencies on the overall success of the integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning process in Oregon are mixed. The perception among many State and Federal agency participants is that the integrated process has the potential to streamline the environmental process and improve environmental protection, but that these goals have not yet been achieved due to coordination problems with CETAS and the use of the Tiered NEPA Decision-Making Process. Because ODOT has not had any projects completed through the Integration process, the agency's expectations for the process cannot be evaluated. Portland State University is conducting a study funded by FHWA to determine if the CETAS process is shortening project time frames. Informally reported changes in staff time spent on the process ranged from negligible to substantial.

Positive outcomes of the integration process identified by participants include greater consideration of environmental quality on the part of ODOT, bringing environmental issues into focus early in the review process, and providing more opportunity to identify mitigation opportunities.

Criticisms of the integration process ranged from fundamental disagreement with the concept of environmental streamlining to dissatisfaction with how various agencies conducted the CETAS and Tiered NEPA processes. At the most basic level, some participants saw a conflict between the holistic planning processes envisioned in State policies and the environmental streamlining process. They felt that the real need in Oregon was to integrate NEPA and land use planning, rather than to determine ways to save time during the review process. Planning and environmental agency participants consistently noted the need for better, more collaborative, rather than faster solutions to transportation problems.

Lack of collaboration was a key criticism of the CETAS component of the Pilot Project, particularly regarding the levels of communication and coordination between ODOT, CETAS participants, and local entities. As shown by the Newberg-Dundee Transportation Improvement Project, when projects in the CETAS “pipeline” do not come to CETAS for review until the location phase, there can be delays, and potentially elevation, if agencies disagree with ODOT and POST decisions. POSTs do not include environmental professionals, and there is no interaction between the POST and the CETAS Group during any phase of the project. State and Federal regulatory and resource agencies believe that having more involvement in the decision making and integrated planning for complex transportation projects through the POSTs could resolve many of the non-concurrence issues encountered on the Newberg-Dundee Transportation Improvement Project. In addition, some regulatory agencies felt that ODOT should be more assertive in communicating environmental concerns and constraints to the public and be more willing to disagree with local planning efforts if they are at odds with

environmental policy. Given the strong local planning model developed in Oregon, ODOT is reluctant to go against local preferences. Because of this impasse, regulatory agencies believe that more involvement from local transportation agencies in the CETAS process would be beneficial.

Elevation procedures and CETAS coordination at ODOT were also identified as areas for improvement. CETAS participants found that when problems arose with the Newberg-Dundee Transportation Improvement Project, the ODOT staff coordinating the CETAS process for the project had no power to make project changes in response to CETAS concerns. Many felt elevation should have happened much sooner in the process, and that higher levels of management should have been involved as soon as disputes arose. This may have saved approximately six months over the course of the process.

Several flaws in the CETAS Charter were also noted. Given the experience with the Newberg-Dundee Transportation Improvement Project, some participants identified the need for a clear understanding among agencies as to their roles and responsibilities in the CETAS process, a commitment not to overstep those bounds, and an agreement not to revisit previous discussions and decisions. Federal environmental review agencies noted that greater involvement by FHWA in the process would also help facilitate the CETAS process. An additional weakness of the CETAS Charter is that it does not outline quantifiable performance measures to assess the effectiveness of the streamlining effort. Some participants saw a need to develop specific, measurable objectives linked to success criteria and an implementation plan directly linked to the objectives.

The use of Location EISs as part of the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process has been problematic. The largest obstacle to the success of the Tiered NEPA

process has been resource agencies' discomfort with the low level of detail presented in environmental analysis during the location phase. Though an agreement was reached on the necessary level of detail for the Newberg-Dundee Transportation Improvement Project, the issue has yet to be completely resolved. ODOT has also encountered confusion from the public on the mechanics of the tiered NEPA process and the need for two levels of environmental analysis for a corridor project.

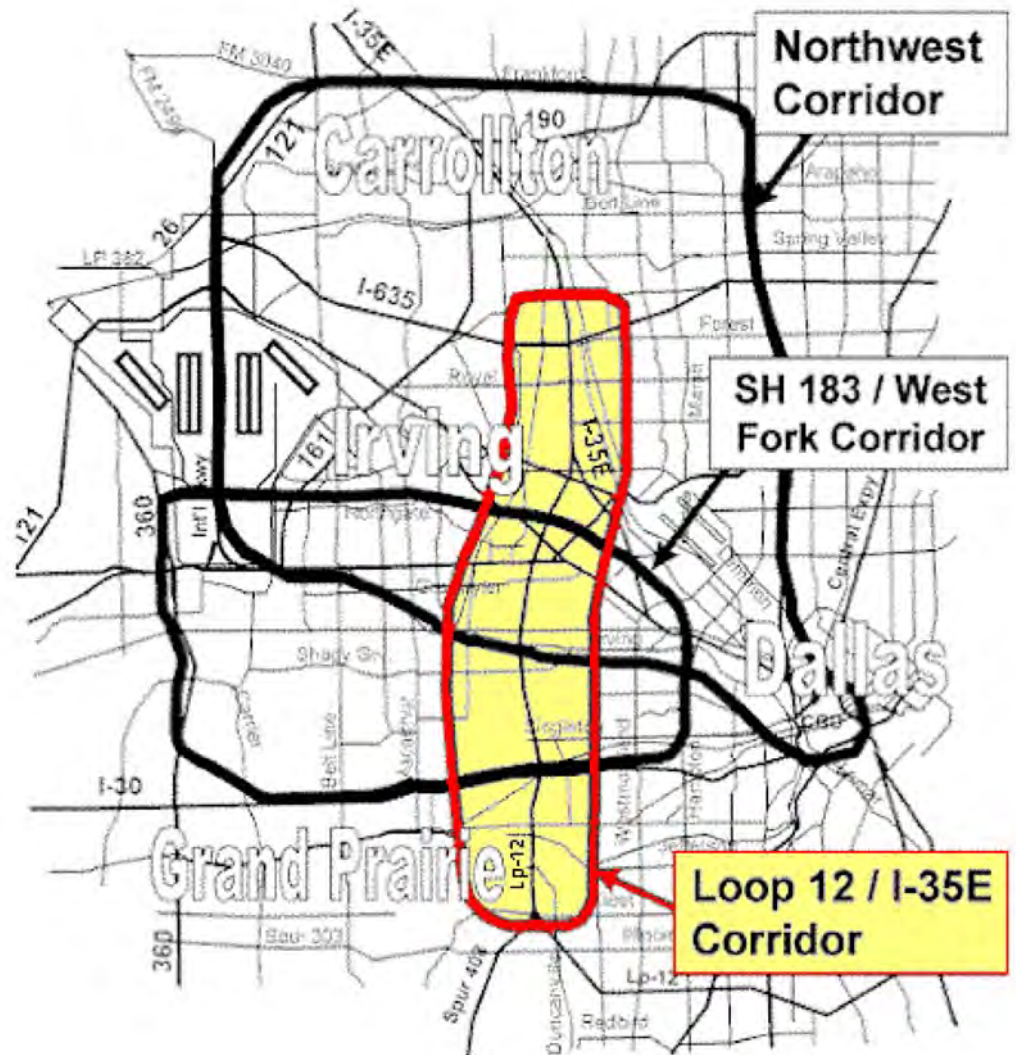
*The Loop 12/IH 35E Corridor Major Investment Study and Environmental Assessment  
Project in Texas*

**Loop 12/IH 35E Corridor Pilot Project Background.** The Loop 12/IH 35E Project was a concurrent Major Investment Study (MIS) and Environmental Assessment (EA) of a 13.5-mile (21.7-kilometer) corridor. The Loop 12/IH 35E Project lies entirely within Dallas County following a primarily north-south route that passes through mixed land uses in the cities of Dallas and Irving. The corridor's southern limit is at the Loop 12 (Walton Walker Freeway) and Spur 408 split, while its northern limit is at IH 35E (Stemmons Freeway) and IH 635 (LBJ Freeway) Interchange (see Figure B-16 (33)).

With the population boom in the area expected to continue, improvements in the corridor were needed to reduce traffic congestion. Based on the evaluation of all alternatives and coordination with the public and work group, the Recommended Alternative was a combination of:

- TDM/TSM (Alternative B) – 13 intersection improvements; 204 signal improvements; 1 Park-n-Ride facility; and Employee Trip Reduction programs.
- Highway (Alternative D)
  - Segment I (Loop 12 from Spur 408 to IH 30): eight mainline lanes, six frontage road lanes, and a two-lane reversible managed HOV system.

Figure B-16



Map of Texas' Loop 12/IH35E Project Corridor.

Source: TxDOT, 2002.

○

- Segment II (Loop 12 from IH 30 to SH 183): for the portion from IH 30 north to Shady Grove: eight mainline lanes, six frontage road lanes, and a two-lane at-grade reversible managed HOV system; for the portion from Shady Grove north to SH 183: the managed HOV system is elevated to minimize right-of-way impacts.
- Segment III (Loop 12 from SH 183 to IH 35E): eight mainline lanes, six frontage road lanes, and a two-lane reversible managed HOV system.
- Segment IV (IH 35E from Loop 12 to IH 635): eight mainline lanes, six frontage road lanes, elevated three-lane direct connectors, two at-grade concurrent managed HOV lanes on each side, and one elevated reversible managed HOV lane.
- Rail (Alternative E) – The rail alternative consists of the recommendations from the Northwest Corridor MIS. As of October 2003, the Dallas Area Rapid Transit issued the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Northwest Corridor LRT line to Farmers Branch and Carrollton.
- Bicycle/Pedestrian (Alternative F) – improved sidewalks in the Las Colinas and Stemmons/ Harry Hines areas and parallel routes; improved bicycle on-street facilities along corridor, Regional VELOWEB (interregional routes primarily for fast-moving bicyclists), and Bicycle Transportation Districts.

The preliminary cost estimate for the Recommended Alternative using 2002 cost data was \$1.6 billion. This cost did not include the rail improvement costs. According to

DART, the estimated cost for the LRT line to Farmers Branch and Carrollton was \$160 million.

**Approaches Used in the Loop 12/IH 35E Corridor Pilot Project.** Streamlining aspects of this project focused on early coordination with involved agencies and the use of a broad stakeholder process. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) established a Loop 12/IH 35E Project Coordination Work Group (PCWG), which included Federal and State transportation and resource agencies, city officials, the county, and the public. TxDOT involved these entities in the project development process, and the public was involved in finding solutions and contributing to the project's direction.

TxDOT held early quarterly public meetings to identify potential stumbling blocks (*e.g.*, elevated sections and access issues). All citizens living within 200 feet (61 meters) of the corridor were invited to these quarterly public meetings (over 800 invitations). They also tried more flexible methods, such as meeting with the stakeholders at a location, time, and date of the stakeholders' choosing. In addition, TxDOT developed a Loop 12/IH 35E Web Site to keep the involved agencies informed.

When issues were raised, TxDOT and the PCWG confronted them and resolved them early in the review process. Local and State officials were kept well informed of the process. This approach gave TxDOT the ability to respond to concerns because the project's design was still in its early stages. Early inclusion of stakeholders also helped to avoid the problem of "late-comers" raising unexpected issues at the later phases of project development.

The coordination process proved especially successful in building better, on-going coordination with the Metropolitan Planning Organization (North Central Texas Council



of Governments). This early coordination approach required additional staff resources in the early stages of a project, but participants appear satisfied that the results justified the extra resource expenditure.

Additional streamlining approaches involved the use of “evergreen” (on-call) contracts for consultants, the use of a combined MIS-NEPA process and contracts, and reviews of NEPA documents concurrently and at interim stages of project development. TxDOT developed the evergreen contracts because traffic information was not available when needed from the TxDOT Transportation Planning and Programming Division. To resolve the problem, TxDOT contracted with the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) to provide the data. Using TTI had good results and led to TxDOT having more tools to obtain traffic data. TxDOT now uses two-year evergreen contracts with selected traffic consultants. This makes it much easier to generate traffic data when needed.

The use of MIS/EA Option 2 (*i.e.*, combining the MIS and NEPA processes) also provided streamlining benefits. Stakeholders believed that Option 2 allowed seamless integration of the planning and environment processes. This option saved six to twelve months by avoiding the need for negotiations to hire another consultant between the time of completion of the MIS and the start date for the EA. This approach had the added benefit of maintaining “public momentum,” by keeping the project in front of the public.

On a typical TxDOT project involving the preparation of an EA, the TxDOT District would prepare the EA and send it to the TxDOT Environmental Affairs Division for review. After any necessary revisions are made to the document as a result of this review, the Environmental Affairs Division would send the EA to the resource

agencies for review and coordination. After any necessary revisions were made to the document as a result of the resource agency review, the Environmental Affairs Division would send the EA to FHWA for review. After any necessary revisions were made to the document as a result of the FHWA review, FHWA would approve the document as "satisfactory for further processing".

For the Loop 12/IH 35E Corridor Pilot Project, FHWA and the TxDOT Environmental Affairs Division performed concurrent, rather than sequential, EA reviews and they performed these reviews at the both the 60% and 90% Design Schematic stages. (A Design Schematic is Preliminary Engineering plan that shows the project "footprint".) The 60% stage EA also was sent to resource agencies for review. This resulted in reduced overall project review times. However, it raised concerns because it increased the staff time required for multiple reviews by the agencies. Some expressed doubts whether concurrent and interim reviews could work on a widespread basis because of this staffing impact.

**Expectations for the Loop 12/IH 35E Corridor Pilot Project.** TxDOT estimated the approaches used in the Loop 12/IH 35E Pilot Project would reduce the time to complete the environmental review process for future projects by approximately 25 percent because of the participation of a PCWG and the performance of concurrent reviews. These processes required an increased level of effort, but this increase was considered appropriate. There was no anticipated decline in document quality by not having TxDOT Environmental Affairs Division review documents in advance of FHWA review.

Generally, the changes that the Loop 12/IH 35E Project made to the project development process helped to avoid or minimize environment impacts. Examples include avoidance of displacing the Tepeyac Apartments (an Environmental Justice issue—3 buildings and 24 units saved), avoidance of displacing DARR Equipment (one of the largest sales tax generators in the City of Irving, with 150 employees. HOLT Caterpillar has since purchased DARR Equipment), minimization of Section 4(f) takings (less than one acre of Trinity Park affected), and decreased right-of-way impact at the Old Irving Boulevard Bridge. The Loop 12/IH 35E Project itself was expected to improve air quality and transportation safety.

Being a designated Pilot Project resulted in good response levels from the participants and gave the project a greater sense of urgency. TxDOT planned to use the successful practices of the Loop 12/I-35E Pilot Project on future projects.

**Status of the Loop 12/IH 35E Corridor Pilot Project.** The Loop 12/IH 35E Project ended up eighteen months behind its original three-year schedule for completion of the MIS/EA, but TxDOT believed the original time frame was unrealistic in light of the project's scope and complexity (TxDOT believed four years would have been a more appropriate schedule). There were two issues that slowed the project substantially. First, it unexpectedly took sixteen months to obtain traffic data and approval of that data. Second, the Frontage Road Policy Issue also delayed the project. In late August 2001, the Texas Transportation Commission issued a new policy that stated they would no longer build frontage roads on Interstate highways. This action delayed the Loop 12/IH-35E Project, as it had six-lane frontage roads along some segments. The issue of the frontage roads was another good example of the usefulness of the PCWG. Representatives from

both Dallas and Irving traveled to Austin to reach successful closure on this issue with very minimal delay. In late January 2002, the Commission approved the use of frontage roads on the Loop 12/IH-35E Project.

On July 3, 2002, FHWA approved the Design Schematic and the EA for the Loop 12/IH-35E Project. Public Hearings were held on August 19 and 20, 2002. Public hearing comments suggested overall support for construction of the recommended alternative and desire for the project to proceed immediately. Also, in August 2002, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials presented the Environmental Streamlining Partnering Award to TxDOT for its outreach and partnership building work associated with the Loop 12/IH 35E Project. Based on the Final EA, FHWA determined that this project will not have any significant impact on the human environment and, on December 11, 2002, the FHWA issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). The last Project Coordination Work Group meeting was held on November 14, 2002. The Public Hearing summary and analysis and responses to the public comments were presented to the project work group members.

By receiving the FONSI, the Loop 12/IH 35E Corridor Major Investment Study and Environmental Assessment Project was completed. To move the project forward to construction, TxDOT held a project streamlining coordination meeting on November 6, 2002 to find the ways to streamline the funding, preparation of right-of-way map/acquisition, PS&E, and construction phasing areas. Several construction options and ways that the local governments can work with TxDOT in the right-of-way acquisitions and preparation of detail construction plans were discussed. TxDOT proposed to the local governments that a Loop 12/IH 35E Task Force Group (similar to Project Coordination

Work Group) be created to keep the project active in the post-MIS/EA stage and to keep all parties informed and coordinated. The City of Irving offered to host future coordination meetings for the Loop 12/IH 35E project. As of August 2003, TxDOT was well underway with the right-of-way mapping, and the City of Irving was seeking to complete some right-of-way purchases also. The Loop 12/IH 35E Task Force Group was also pursuing the possibility of constructing interim projects. Originally scheduled for advertising in Fiscal Year 2009, the Loop 12/IH 35E Project should now move up to letting in Fiscal Year 2005 or 2006.

**EIS Screening Worksheets Background.** WisDOT has used Screening Worksheets (SWs) (34) for Environmental Assessments (EAs) for more than 20 years. The SWs describe the proposed action and document all the direct, indirect, and cumulative effect evaluations and mitigation measures in an easy-to-complete question and answer format. The worksheets have been an effective tool for determining whether a given project will require an EIS. The Pilot Project is to take these worksheets to the next level and use them to create an EIS.

**EIS Screening Worksheets Approach.** There are three types of worksheets for the EIS: Basic, Factor, and EIS. The “Basic Sheets”, which must be completed for all projects, include such sections as Executive Summary, Purpose and Need, and Alternatives. The “Factor Sheets” are project-specific sheets that focus on a specific resource and are completed only for those resources that would be affected. Impacts and mitigation are described on these sheets. Lastly, “EIS Sheets” are required for the information that is specific to the EIS, such as the list of agencies and organizations to whom the document was sent. Figure B-17 at the end of this narrative displays a set of EIS Screening Worksheets. Comment letters are appended to the forms. The EIS content generated through the SWs will satisfy FHWA EIS regulations while taking an innovative approach to format and organization.

The SWs can be easily modified in response to comments from agencies to add new issues. WisDOT was open to feedback from the agencies. WisDOT is preparing Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) using SWs for two highway projects as part the

Pilot Project. The first project is State Route 23, a 21-mile (34-kilometer), mostly rural corridor between Fond du Lac and Sheboygan. The corridor has an Average Daily Traffic of approximately 8,000 to 9,000 vehicles.

The second project is the Verona Road (Route 151)/West Beltline (U.S. 12/14) Project in Madison, a much more urban corridor with heavier traffic. This project will widen the Beltline and eliminate four signals.

**Expectations for EIS Screening Worksheet Pilot Project.** Using the EIS SWs was expected to result in streamlining of the National Environmental Policy review process by standardizing the format of EISs and requiring only the information needed to identify, evaluate, and mitigate adverse environmental effects. WisDOT hoped to reduce the EIS length to approximately 150 to 300 pages (not including technical appendices or comment letters) and to increase the uniformity of the documents.

A typical EIS process for a new major project in Wisconsin takes approximately five years to complete and the EISs are voluminous documents. WisDOT believed the EIS SWs would shorten environmental review times by focusing on the issues that were of consequence and by making the documents easier to review and, at the same time, foster increased public awareness. WisDOT expected that the level of environmental impacts on projects that used SWs for EISs would be the same as would occur if the projects had traditional EISs. The SWs simply represent a different way of reporting the same information that has always been gathered.

**Status of EIS Screening Worksheet Pilot Project.** There have been delays in completing Screening Worksheet EISs for the State Route 23 Project and for the Verona Road (Route 151)/West Beltline (U.S. 12/14) Project. Some of these delays were

unrelated to the EIS SW Pilot Project. Public and agency involvement refined the purpose and need, focused on the alternatives to be considered, and identified the environmental issues and concerns that were addressed in the EISs. WisDOT's implementation of Context Sensitive Design also required more meetings to occur than initially expected and there was some delay in waiting for the City of Sheboygan's plans for an area affected by the State Route 23 Project.

The Verona Road (Route 151)/West Beltline (U.S.12/14) Project began in February 2001. At the outset of the project, there were a number of issues to be considered in adapting the SWs for use on an EIS. The Verona Road Project had a number of alternatives and options, while the EA SWs were designed to present only one alternative. WisDOT was concerned that use of the SWs with multiple alternatives would be confusing, and had to develop a methodology to present the information in a clear manner on the forms. There was also a question about how to differentiate the impacts from the interchanges from the impacts from the roadway. WisDOT ultimately decided to use a Basic Sheet to summarize the whole project and additional Basic Sheets for each alternative. The Factor Sheets discussed the details of the impacts of each of the alternatives. WisDOT tried to combine Factor Sheets for alternatives when feasible.

The Draft EIS for the project was originally scheduled to be issued in October 2002, and the Final EIS in April 2003. In mid-May 2003, WisDOT issued a review draft of the Draft EIS using the SWs to the EPA and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. They asked the participant reviewers for their input on the organization of the document.



One of the participant reviewers reported on the Research Project Website that the readability of the EIS using the SWs was improved because the SW format seemed to encourage the authors to place a graphic on the same page as the text explaining it. This reviewer did not believe that the Draft EIS using the SWs was any shorter than traditional EISs (in fact, it was 438 pages), but it seemed to have less irrelevant information in it. WisDOT, however, believes that this document would be three times longer if it were written as a traditional EIS.

This participant reviewer indicated that there were opportunities to make the EIS shorter and more concise. The reviewer thought that the concept of having Basic Sheets to discuss the whole project and then separate sections devoted to the alternatives was good, but felt that many of the figures and text were redundant, resulting in a Summary and Overview that was too long.

The same participant reviewer found it difficult to navigate through the document. The terminology used in the worksheets (Summary Sheets, Basic Sheets, Project Summary Sheets, etc.) was confusing. This reviewer suggested just using page numbers when cross referencing from one sheet to another.

This participant reviewer indicated that WisDOT should identify those areas (such as Environmental Justice or Land Use impacts) that cannot easily use a Yes/No format and consider modifying the questions, if needed. The reviewer suggested that it might be better to phrase some questions in an open ended way rather than as a Yes/No question and then direct the reader to the analysis that was conducted.

Another participant reviewer observed that the Verona Road Project Draft EIS did not resemble the original vision for an EIS generated with SWs because of the level of

detail needed to present alternatives and impacts. This participant found the document hard to navigate and experienced difficulty in presenting data in a sensible way within the format.

An agency respondent later noted that their staff did not see the SWs until the final document stage on the project, and believed the worksheets would have been more useful if they were shared with the agencies as the document was being developed.

Upon receipt of agency and internal comments, WisDOT revised the Verona Road Draft EIS to better accommodate review of the document and to improve its clarity. Minor reorganization, additional tabs, and color coding of section's table of contents were included to improve navigation within the EIS. One respondent noted that WisDOT's effort to accommodate reviewers' concerns was one of the keys to the successful use of the forms.

WisDOT submitted the Draft EIS for the Verona Road Project to FHWA in early 2004, and FHWA approved the document on March 5, 2004. Public hearings were held on the Draft EIS in May 2004 and the comment period ended June 8, 2004. EPA reviewed the document in June 2004 and had no objections to the preferred alternative. WisDOT expected the Final EIS for the Verona Road Project to be completed in early fall 2004, but the document is not yet complete. Construction is scheduled for 2009 or later.

The State Route 23 Project is still ongoing. WisDOT identified five project alternatives in coordination with local focus groups and recorded the results of the environmental analysis on the SWs. In response to their experience on the Verona Road Project, WisDOT made changes to the SWs' matrices to better illustrate the

differences and similarities between alternatives. The State Route 23 Project Draft EIS used the same EIS SW review approach as was used for the Verona Road Project (*i.e.*, agency review of format first, then content).

The original schedule for the State Route 23 Project was completion of the Draft EIS in late 2002, and completion of the Final EIS in mid-2003, a total of 15 months. WisDOT prepared an internal draft of the Draft EIS for internal review in November 2003. Meetings were held in March 2004 to present the information in the Draft EIS to the public and the document was approved in December 2004. Public hearings are scheduled for January 5, 2005, with the comment period closing January 21, 2005. The Final EIS for the State Route 23 Project is scheduled to be completed in 2005, with construction slated for 2009 to 2011.

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

**ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION OF FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS**

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Project I.D. _____       | Funding Source <input type="checkbox"/> State Only <input type="checkbox"/> Federal |
| Project Termini<br>_____ | Federal Number _____  |
|                          | Estimated Project Cost (Include R/W Acquisition)<br>\$ _____                        |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>It is determined, after review of the comments from the public, and coordination with other agencies, that this action would not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. This document is a</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).</p>   | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Assessment (EA) No Significant Impacts Indicated by Initial Assessment</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Assessment (EA) EIS Required</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Report (2-ER)</p>   |
| <p>X _____ (Date) _____</p> <p>X _____ (Date) _____</p> <p>X _____ (Date) _____<br/>(<input type="checkbox"/> District, <input type="checkbox"/> Aero, <input type="checkbox"/> Rails &amp; Harbors)</p> <p>X _____ (Date) _____<br/>(Director, Bureau of Environment)</p> <p>X _____ (Date) _____<br/>(<input type="checkbox"/> FHWA <input type="checkbox"/> FAA <input type="checkbox"/> FTA <input type="checkbox"/> FRA)</p> | <p>X _____ (Date) _____</p> <p>X _____ (Date) _____</p> <p>X _____ (Date) _____<br/>(<input type="checkbox"/> District, <input type="checkbox"/> Aero, <input type="checkbox"/> Rails &amp; Harbors)</p> <p>X _____ (Date) _____<br/>(Director, Bureau of Environment)</p> <p>X _____ (Date) _____<br/>(<input type="checkbox"/> FHWA <input type="checkbox"/> FAA <input type="checkbox"/> FTA <input type="checkbox"/> FRA)</p> |

1) Description of Proposed Action (Attach project location map and other appropriate graphics).

2. Purpose and need of proposed action. Include description of existing facilities, abutting facilities, and how the action links into the overall transportation system. When appropriate, show that commitment for future work is not being made without evaluation, and that viable alternatives in a larger framework are not being unduly foreclosed.

3. Summary of the alternatives considered and if they are not proposed for adoption, why not. (Identify which, if any, of the alternatives is the preferred alternative.)

4. In general terms, briefly discuss the construction and operational energy requirements and conservation potential of the various alternatives under consideration. Indicate whether the savings in operational energy are greater than the energy required to construct the facility.

5. Describe existing land use (attach land use maps if available)

a. Land use in immediate area.

b. Land use in area surrounding project area.

6. Briefly identify adopted plans for the area and discuss whether the proposed action is compatible with the plan. (For example, the following may be considered: Regional Planning Commission Plans, Transportation Improvement Program, State Transportation Improvement Plan, Local zoning and land use plans, DOT Storm Water Management Plans, Others.)

7. Early coordination with Agencies.

a. Intra-Agency Coordination

i) Bureau of Aeronautics

☐ No - Coordination is not required. Project is not located within 2 miles (3.22 kilometers) of a public or military use airport nor would the project change the horizontal or vertical alignment of a transportation facility located within 6.44 kilometers (4 miles) of a public use or military airport.

☐ Yes - Coordination has been completed and project effects have been addressed. Explain:

ii) District Office Real Estate Section

☐ No - Coordination is not required because no inhabited houses or active businesses will be acquired.

☐ Yes - Coordination has been completed. Project effects and relocation assistance have been addressed. Conceptual Stage Relocation Plan attached as Exhibit \_\_\_\_.

b. Interagency Coordination

| STATE AGENCY                                   | COORDINATION Attached? Y-Yes N-No | COMMENTS Explain or give results. If no correspondence is attached to this document, indicate when coordination with the agency was initiated and, if available, when coordination was completed |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|
| Agriculture DATCP                              |                                   |  |
| Natural DNR Resources                          |                                   |  |
| State Historical Society SHS                   |                                   |  |
| Others:  |                                   |  |
| <b>FEDERAL AGENCY</b>                          |                                   |  |
| Advisory Council on Historic Preservation ACHP |                                   |  |
| Corps of Engineers COE                         |                                   |  |
| Environmental Protection Agency EPA            |                                   |  |
| National Park Service NPS                      |                                   |  |
| Natural Resource Conservation Service NRCS     |                                   |  |
| US Coast Guard USCG                            |                                   |  |
| US Fish & Wildlife Service FWS:                |                                   |  |
| Other(Identify)                                |                                   |  |

## ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION MATRIX

If necessary, this matrix should be completed for each reasonable alternative under consideration

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Alternative:<br>Preferred alternative? | Length of center line and termini this sheet is evaluating (if different from Sheet 1) |
|--|--|

| ENVIRONMENTAL<br>FACTORS | EFFECTS |         |      |   |  |
|--------------------------|---------|---------|------|---|--|
|                          | Adverse | Benefit | None | NOT Applicable (Black out cells in this column require a check in at least one of the other columns.) |  |

| SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS             |                          |                          |                          |                          | COMMENTS |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| A. General Economics               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |          |
| B. Community & Residential         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |          |
| C. Economic Development & Business | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |          |
| D. Agriculture                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |          |
| E. Environmental Justice           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |          |

| NATURAL ENVIRONMENT FACTORS  |                          |                          |                          |                          |  |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| F. Wetlands                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |  |
| G. Streams & Floodplains     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |  |
| H. Lakes or Other Open Water | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |  |
| I. Upland Habitat            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |  |
| J. Erosion Control           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |  |
| K. Storm Water management    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |  |

| PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT FACTORS        |                          |                          |                          |                          |  |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| L. Air Quality                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |  |
| M. Construction Stage Sound Quality | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |  |
| N. Traffic Noise                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |  |

| CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT FACTORS     |                          |                          |                          |                          |  |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| O. Section, 4(f) and , 6(f).)    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |  |
| P. Historic Resources            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |  |
| Q. Archaeological Resources      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |  |
| R. Hazardous Substances or UST's | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |  |
| S. Aesthetics                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |  |
| T. Coastal Zone                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |  |
| U. Other                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |  |

| EIS Specific Factors (Complete this portion for all projects EAs and ERs normally have No Effect on these factors.) |                          |                          |                          |                          |  |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| 1. Long v. Short Term Effects   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |  |
| 2. Irretrievable Commitments of Resources   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |  |



# **ENVIRONMENTAL MATRIX** **Transportation Improvements**

| Environmental Issue                      | Unit Measure     | Alternatives/Sections |  |  |  |  |
|--|------------------|-----------------------|--|--|--|--|
|  |                  | No Build              |  |  |  |  |
| Project Length                           | Mi (Km)          |                       |  |  |  |  |
| <b>Cost \$</b>                           |                  |                       |  |  |  |  |
| Construction                             | Million \$       |                       |  |  |  |  |
| Real Estate                              | Million \$       |                       |  |  |  |  |
| Total                                    | Million \$       |                       |  |  |  |  |
| <b>Land Conversions</b>                  |                  |                       |  |  |  |  |
| Total Area Converted to R/W              | Acres (Hectares) |                       |  |  |  |  |
| Wetland Area Converted to R/W            | Acres (Hectares) |                       |  |  |  |  |
| Upland Area Converted to R/W             | Acres (Hectares) |                       |  |  |  |  |
| Other Area Converted to R/W              | Acres (Hectares) |                       |  |  |  |  |
| <b>Real Estate</b>                       |                  |                       |  |  |  |  |
| Number of Farms Affected                 | Number           |                       |  |  |  |  |
| Total Area From Farm Operations Required | Acres (Hectares) |                       |  |  |  |  |
| AIS Required?                            | Yes/No           |                       |  |  |  |  |
| Farmland Rating                          | Score            |                       |  |  |  |  |
| Total Buildings Required                 | Number           |                       |  |  |  |  |
| Housing Units Required                   | Number           |                       |  |  |  |  |
| Commercial Units Required                | Number           |                       |  |  |  |  |
| Other Buildings or Structures Required   | Number (Type)    |                       |  |  |  |  |
| <b>Environmental Issues</b>              |                  |                       |  |  |  |  |
| In Flood Plain?                          | Yes/No           |                       |  |  |  |  |
| Stream Crossings                         | Number           |                       |  |  |  |  |
| Endangered Species                       | Yes/No           |                       |  |  |  |  |
| Historic Properties                      | Number           |                       |  |  |  |  |
| Archeological Sites                      | Number           |                       |  |  |  |  |
| 106 MOA Required?                        | Yes/No           |                       |  |  |  |  |
| 4(f) Evaluation Required?                | Yes/No           |                       |  |  |  |  |
| Environ Justice At Issue?                | Yes/No           |                       |  |  |  |  |
| Air Quality Permit?                      | Yes/No           |                       |  |  |  |  |
| Design Year Noise Sensitive Receptors    |                  |                       |  |  |  |  |
| Impacted                                 | Number           |                       |  |  |  |  |
| Exceed dBa Levels                        | Number           |                       |  |  |  |  |
| Contaminated Sites                       | Number           |                       |  |  |  |  |



8) Describe how the project development process complied with Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice. (EO 12898 requires agencies to achieve environmental justice by identifying and addressing disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects on minority populations and low-income populations, including the interrelated social and economic effects. Include those covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Age Discriminate)

a) Identify sources of data used to determine presence of minority populations and low income populations.

☐ Windshield Survey ☐ Survey Questionnaire ☐ Door to door

☐ WisDOT Real Estate ☐ U.S Census Data

☐ Real Estate Company  
Identify Real Estate Company

☐ Human resource Agency  
Identify agency

☐ Official Plan  
Identify Plan, Approval Authority, and Date of Approval

b) Indicate whether a minority population or a low income population, including the elderly and the disabled, is in the project's area of influence.

i) The requirements of EO 12898 are met if both "No" boxes are checked below

☐ No minority population in project's area of influence.

☐ No low income population in project's area of influence

ii) If either or both of the "Yes" boxes are checked, item c below must be completed

☐ Yes, a minority population is within the project's area of influence

☐ Yes, a low income population is within project's area of influence.

c) How was information on the proposed action communicated to the minority and/or low-income population(s)? Check all that apply.

☐ Advertising ☐ Brochures ☐ Newsletter ☐ Notices ☐ Utility Bill Stuffers ☐ E-mail

☐ Public Service Announcements ☐ Direct Mailings ☐ Key Person ☐ Other (Identify)

d) Identify how input from the minority population and/or low-income population obtained? Check al that apply.

☐ Mailed Survey ☐ Door-to-door interview ☐ Focus Group Research ☐ Public Meeting ☐ Public Hearing

☐ Key Person Interview ☐ Targeted Small Group Informational Meeting ☐ Targeted Workshop/Conference

☐ Other (Identify)

e) Indicate any special provisions made to encourage participation from the minority population and/or low-income population(s)

☐ Interpreter ☐ Listening Aids ☐ Accessibility for Elderly and Disabled ☐ Transportation Provided

☐ Child Care Provided ☐ Sign Language ☐ Other (Identify)

9) Briefly summarize the status and results of public involvement. Briefly describe how the public involvement process complied with EO 12898 on Environmental Justice.

a) Identify groups(e.g., elderly, handicapped), minority populations and low-income populations that participated in the public involvement process. This would include any organizations and special interest groups.

b) Describe, briefly, the issues, if any, identified by any groups, minority populations and/or low-income populations during the public involvement process.

c) Briefly describe how the issues identified above were addressed. Include a discussion of those that were avoided as well as those that were minimized and those that are to be mitigated. Include a brief discussion of proposed mitigation, if any.

10) Briefly describe the results of coordination with local units of government.

a) Identify local units of government contacted and provide the date coordination was initiated.

| Government | Date of Coordination m/d/yyyy |
|------------|-------------------------------|
|            |                               |
|            |                               |
|            |                               |

b) Describe, briefly, the issues, if any, identified by local units of government during the public involvement process.

c) Briefly describe how the issues identified above were addressed. Include a discussion of those that were avoided as well as those that were minimized and those that are to be mitigated. Include a brief discussion of proposed mitigation, if any.

### TRAFFIC SUMMARY

|                                |                         |                  |  |  |  |  |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|--|--|--|--|
|                                | ALTERNATE               |                  |  |  |  |  |
|                                | SEGMENT<br>TERMINI      |                  |  |  |  |  |
| TRAFFIC<br>VOLUMES<br>Existing | ADT Yr. ____            |                  |  |  |  |  |
| Const. Year                    | ADT Yr. ____            |                  |  |  |  |  |
| Const.<br>Plus 10 Yr.          | ADT Yr. ____            |                  |  |  |  |  |
| Design Year                    | ADT Yr. ____            |                  |  |  |  |  |
|                                | DHV Yr. ____            |                  |  |  |  |  |
| TRAFFIC<br>FACTORS             | K<br>(30, 100, or %)    |                  |  |  |  |  |
|                                | D (%)                   |                  |  |  |  |  |
|                                | Design Year             | T (% of ADT)     |  |  |  |  |
|                                |                         | T (% of DHV)     |  |  |  |  |
|                                |                         | Level of Service |  |  |  |  |
| SPEEDS<br>Existing             | Posted                  |                  |  |  |  |  |
|                                | Posted                  |                  |  |  |  |  |
| Design Year                    | Project Design<br>Speed |                  |  |  |  |  |
| OTHER<br>(specify)             | P (% of ADT)            |                  |  |  |  |  |
|                                | K (% OF ADT)            |                  |  |  |  |  |
|                                |                         |                  |  |  |  |  |
|                                |                         |                  |  |  |  |  |
|                                |                         |                  |  |  |  |  |
|                                |                         |                  |  |  |  |  |
|                                |                         |                  |  |  |  |  |
|                                |                         |                  |  |  |  |  |

ADT = Average Daily Traffic  
 K<sub>30,100</sub> or % = K<sub>30</sub> = Rural, K<sub>100</sub> = Urban, % = ADT in DHV  
 T = Trucks  
 K<sub>8</sub> = % ADT occurring in the average of the 8 highest consecutive hours of traffic on an average day. (Only required when a carbon monoxide analysis must be performed per Wisconsin Administrative Code - Chpt. NR 411.)

DHV = Design Hourly Volume  
 D = % DHV in predominate direction of travel  
 P = % ADT in Peak hour

## ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Alternative:<br>Preferred alternative? | Length of center line and termini this sheet is evaluating (if different from Sheet 1) |
|--|--|

Indicate whether the issue listed below is a concern for the proposed action. If the issue is a concern, explain how that concern is to be addressed or where the issue is addressed in this environmental document.

1) Stimulation of secondary environmental effects.

☐ No - Substantial secondary environmental effects will not be stimulated.

☐ Yes - Stimulation of substantial secondary environmental effects will occur. Explain or indicate where addressed.

2) Creation of a new environmental effect.

☐ No - A new environmental effect will not be created.

☐ Yes - The project will create a new environmental effect. Explain or indicate where addressed.

3) Impacts on geographically scarce resources.

☐ No - Geographically scarce resources will not be impacted.

☐ Yes - Impacts on geographically scarce resources will occur. Explain or indicate where addressed.

4) Precedent-setting nature of the proposed action.

☐ No - The proposed project does not have a precedent-setting nature.

☐ Yes - The proposed project has a precedent-setting nature. Explain or indicate where addressed.

5) The degree of controversy associated with the proposed action.

☐ No - The proposed action is not controversial or the level of controversy is low.

☐ Yes - The project has a high degree of controversy. Explain or indicate where addressed.

6) Conflicts with official agency plans or local, state, or national policies, including conflicts resulting from potential effects of transportation on land use and land use on transportation demand.

☐ No - No conflicts with any plans, policies, or land uses will result.

☐ Yes - Conflicts with plans, policies or land uses will result. Explain or indicate where addressed.

7) Cumulative environmental impacts of repeated actions of the type proposed.

☐ No - The proposed action will not contribute to cumulative environmental impacts of repeated actions.

☐ Yes - Cumulative environmental impacts will result from repeated actions of the type proposed. Explain or indicate where addressed.

8) Foreclosure of future options.

☐ No - The proposed action will not foreclose future options. That is, the proposal will not require or preclude alternative transportation improvements.

☐ Yes - The proposed action will foreclose future options. That is, other transportation improvements will be required or alternatives for future improvements are precluded. Explain or indicate where addressed.

9) Direct or indirect impacts on minority groups.

☐ No - Neither direct nor indirect impacts on minority groups will occur.

☐ Yes - Either direct or indirect impacts on minority groups will occur. Explain or indicate where addressed.

10) Disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority population or low-income populations

☐ No - Disproportionately high and adverse effects on a minority population or low-income populations will not occur

☐ Yes - A minority population or low-income population will experience disproportionately high and adverse effects. Explain or indicate where addressed.

## ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS

| Alternative:<br>Preferred alternative? | Length of center line and termini this sheet is evaluating (if different from Sheet 1) |
|--|--|
|--|--|

Identify and describe any commitments made to protect the environment. Indicate when the commitment should be implemented and who in WisDOT would have jurisdiction to assure fulfillment for each commitment. Include commitments made to address traffic (including commitments for any detour) for each Factor below as needed.

- A. General Economics
- B. Community & Residential
- C. Commercial & Industrial
- D. Agriculture
- E. Environmental Justice
- F. Wetlands
- G. Streams & Floodplains
- H. Lakes or Other Open Water
- I. Upland Habitat
- J. Erosion Control
- K. Storm Water management
- L. Air Quality
- M. Construction Stage Sound Quality
- N. Traffic Noise
- O. Section, 4(f) and , 6(f).)
- P. Historic Resources
- Q. Archaeological Resources
- R. Hazardous Substances or UST's
- S. Aesthetics
- T. Coastal Zone
- U. Other

### Basic EIS Specific Issues

(Complete this portion for all projects. EAs and ERs normally have No Effect on these factors.)

- 1) The relationship between local short-term uses of the human environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity

Discuss, in general terms, the proposed action's relationship of local short-term impacts and use of resources, and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity. This general discussion might recognize that the build alternatives would have similar impacts. The discussion should point out that transportation improvements are based on State and/or local comprehensive planning which consider(s) the need for present and future traffic requirements within the context of present and future land use development. In such a situation, one might then conclude that the local short-term impacts and use of resources by the proposed action is consistent with the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity for the local area, State, etc.

☐ No Effect - Explain

☐ Effect - Explain

2. Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources Involved in the Proposed Action..

Discuss, in general terms, the proposed action's irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources. This general discussion might recognize that the build alternatives would require a similar commitment of natural, physical, human, and fiscal resources. An example of such discussion would be as follows:

"Implementation of the proposed action involves a commitment of a range of natural, physical, human, and fiscal resources. Land used in the construction of the proposed facility is considered an irreversible commitment during the time period that the land is used for a highway facility. However, if a greater need arises for use of the land or if the highway facility is no longer needed, the land can be converted to another use. At present, there is no reason to believe such a conversion will ever be necessary or desirable."

☐ No Effect - Explain

☐ Effect - Explain

Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
**GENERAL ECONOMICS IMPACT EVALUATION**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Alternative:<br>Preferred alternative? | Length of center line and termini this sheet is evaluating (if different from Sheet 1) |
|--|--|

1) Describe, briefly, the existing economic characteristics of the area around the project. This could include type(s) of farming, retail or wholesale businesses, manufacturing, tourism, or other elements contributing to the area's economy and potentially affected by the project.

2) Discuss the economic advantages and disadvantages of the proposed action. Indicate how the project would affect the characteristics described in item 1 above.

3) In general, will the proposed action increase or decrease the potential for economic development in the area influenced by the project.

Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
**COMMUNITY OR RESIDENTIAL IMPACT EVALUATION**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Alternative:<br>Preferred alternative? | Length of center line and termini this sheet is evaluating (if different from Sheet 1) |
|--|--|

1) Give a brief description of the community or neighborhood affected by the proposed action.

Community/neighborhood name

Community/neighborhood population

Community is un-incorporated ☐

Community/neighborhood Characteristics(e.g. residential, small business, downtown, suburb, multi-family housing, etc.)

2) Identify and discuss the existing modes of transportation and their traffic characteristics within the community or neighborhood

3) Identify and discuss the probable changes resulting from the proposed action to the modes of transportation and their traffic within the community or neighborhood.

4) Briefly discuss the proposed action's effect(s) on existing and planned land use in the community or neighborhood.

5) Address any changes to emergency services or other public services during and after construction of the proposed project.

6) Describe any physical or access changes and their effects to lot frontages, driveways, or sidewalks. This could include effects on side slopes or driveways (steeper or flatter) reduced terraces, tree removal, vision corners, sidewalk removal, etc.

7) Indicate whether a community/neighborhood facility will be affected by the proposed action and indicate what effect(s) this will have, overall, on the community/neighborhood.

8) Place an "X" in the appropriate box below if one of the populations indicated would be affected by the proposal. Give a brief description of the community/neighborhood and population affected by the proposed action. Include demographic characteristics of those affected by the proposal.

For the populations shown below, The Orders issued by the U.S. Department of Transportation and its implementing agencies to satisfy the requirements of Executive Order 12898 require an evaluation to determine whether a minority and/or low income population would experience a disproportionately high and adverse effect. If any of the populations shown below are affected, Factor Sheet E, along with the remaining items on this worksheet, will need to be completed to satisfy Environmental Justice requirements

a) ☐ NO Disabled population is not affected

☐ YES Disabled population is affected - See Factor Sheet E

b) ☐ NO Elderly population is not affected

☐ YES Elderly are affected - See Factor Sheet E

c) ☐ NO Minority populations are not affected

☐ YES Minority populations are affected - See Factor Sheet E

d) ☐ No Low-income populations are not affected



☐ YES Low income populations are affected - See Factor Sheet E

9) Identify and discuss, in general terms, factors that residents have indicated to be important or controversial.

10) Indicate the number and type of any residential buildings which would be removed because of the proposed action. If either item a) or b) is checked, items 12 through 17 do not need to be addressed or included in the environmental document.

a) ☐ None -

b) ☐ No occupied residential building will be acquired as a result of this project. (

If item c) is checked, you must complete items 11 through 18.

c) ☐ Occupied residential building(s) will be acquired. Provide number and description of buildings, e.g., single family homes, apartment buildings, condominiums, duplexes, etc.

11) Estimate the number of households that would be displaced from the Occupied residential buildings identified in item 11 c) above.

a): Total Number of households to be relocated  
(Note that this number may be greater than the number shown in 11 c) above because an occupied apartment building may have many households.)

i) Number by Ownership

Number of households living in owner-occupied building

Number of households living in rented quarters

Number of households for which ownership status is unknown

ii) Number of household to be relocated which have:

1 bedroom

2 bedrooms

3 bedrooms

4 or more bedrooms

iii) Number relocated households by type and price range of dwelling

Number of single family dwellings in the price range of

Number of single family dwellings in the price range of

Number of multi-family dwellings in the price range of

Number of multi-family dwellings in the price range of

Number of apartments in the price range of

Number of apartments in the price range of

12) Describe the relocation potential in the community.

a) Number of available dwellings that have:

1 bedroom

2 bedrooms

3 bedrooms

4 or more bedrooms

b) Number of available and comparable dwellings by location

Number of available and comparable dwellings within

Number of available and comparable dwellings within

Number of available and comparable dwellings within

c) Number of available and comparable dwellings by type and price. (Include dwellings in price ranges comparable to those being dislocated, if any.)

Number of available and comparable single family dwellings in the price range of

Number of available and comparable single family dwellings in the price range of

Number of available and comparable single family dwellings in the price range of

Number of available and comparable multi-family dwellings in the price range of

Number of available and comparable multi-family dwellings in the price range of

Number of available and comparable multi-family dwellings in the price range of

Number of available and comparable apartments in the price range of

Number of available and comparable apartments in the price range of

Number of available and comparable apartments in the price range of

13) Identify all the sources of information used to obtain the data in item 12.

☐ WisDOT Real Estate

☐ Multiple Listing Service (MLS)

☐ Newspaper listing(s)

☐ Other - Identify:

14) Indicate the number households to be relocated that have the following special characteristics:

Number of minority households

Number of elderly households

Number of households with disabled residents.

Number of low income households

Number of households made up of a large family (5 or more individuals)

Number of households for which it is not known whether they have special characteristics

Number of households with no special characteristics

15) Describe how relocation assistance will be provided in compliance with the WisDOT Relocation Manual or FHWA regulation 49 CFR Part 24

16) Identify any difficulties or unusual conditions for relocating households displaced by the proposed action

17) Indicate whether Special Relocation Assistance Service will be needed? Describe any special services or housing programs needed to remedy identified difficulties or unusual conditions noted in item #14 above

☐ No

☐ Yes - Describe services that will be required

18) Describe any additional measures which would be used to minimize adverse effects or provide benefits to those relocated, those remaining, or to community facilities affected.

Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND,  
BUSINESS IMPACT EVALUATION**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Alternative:<br>Preferred alternative? - | Length of center line and termini this sheet is evaluating (if different from Sheet 1) |
|--|--|

- 1) Describe the economic development or existing business areas affected by the proposed action.
  
- 2) Identify and discuss the existing modes of transportation and their traffic within the economic development or existing business area. (This would include commercial and recreational navigation and commercial water transportation.)
  
- 3) Place an "X" in the appropriate box below if one of the populations indicated would be affected by the proposal. Give a brief description of the effects and the population affected by the proposed action. Include demographic characteristics of those affected by the proposal.
 

|  |                             |   |
|--|-----------------------------|---|
| a) Is there a Disabled population affected?  | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> YES Discuss Effects and population |
| b) Is there an Elderly population affected?  | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> YES Discuss Effects and population |
| c) Is there a Minority populations affected? | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> YES Discuss Effects and population |
  
- 4) Identify and discuss effects on the economic development potential and existing businesses that are dependent upon a transportation facility for continued economic viability that is affected by this proposed transportation improvement.
 

☐ The proposed project will have no effect on a transportation-dependent business or industry.

☐ The proposed action will change the conditions for a business that is dependent upon a transportation facility. Identify effects, including effects which may occur during construction.
  
- 5) Estimate the number of businesses and jobs that would be created or displaced because of the project.
 

a) Total number created ☐ None

Number created by type including number of jobs

|                                  |                            |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Retail businesses created        | Retail jobs created        |
| Service businesses created       | Service jobs created       |
| Wholesale businesses created     | Wholesale jobs created     |
| Manufacturing businesses created | Manufacturing jobs created |

b) Total number displaced ☐ None

Number displaced by type and number of jobs

|                                    |                               |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Retail businesses displaced        | Retail jobs displaced         |
| Service businesses displaced       | Service jobs displaced        |
| Wholesale businesses displaced     | Wholesale jobs displaced      |
| Manufacturing businesses displaced | Mmanufacturing jobs displaced |
  
- 6) Identify any special characteristics of the created or displaced businesses or their employees.
 

a) Number of created businesses by special characteristics: ☐ None

Number of created businesses that will employ or serve elderly ☐

Number of created businesses that will employ or serve disabled

Number of created businesses that will employ or serve a minority

b) Number of displaced businesses by special characteristics: ☐ None

Number of displaced businesses that employ or serve elderly

Number of displaced businesses that employ or serve disabled

Number of displaced businesses that employ or serve a minority

7) Is Special Relocation Assistance Needed?: ☐ No

☐ Yes - Describe special relocation needs

8) Describe the business relocation potential in the community.

a) Total number of available business buildings in the community

b) Number of available and comparable business buildings by location

Number of available and comparable business buildings within

Number of available and comparable business buildings within

Number of available and comparable business buildings within

c) Number of available and comparable business buildings by type and price (Include business buildings in price ranges comparable to those being dislocated, if any.)

Number of available and comparable single business buildings in the price range of

Number of available and comparable single business buildings in the price range of

Number of available and comparable single business buildings in the price range of

Number of available and comparable multi- business buildings in the price range of

Number of available and comparable multi-business buildings in the price range of

Number of available and comparable multi- business buildings in the price range of

9) Identify all the sources of information used to obtain the data in item 8.

☐ WisDOT Real Estate

☐ Multiple Listing Service (MLS)

☐ Newspaper listing(s)

☐ Other - Identify:

10) Describe how relocation assistance will be provided in compliance with the WisDOT Relocation Manual or FHWA regulation 49 CFR Part 24.

11) Identify any difficulties for relocating a business displaced by the proposed action and describe any special services needed to remedy identified unusual conditions.

12) Describe any additional measures which would be used to minimize adverse effects or provide benefits to those relocated, those remaining, or to community facilities affected.

13) Generally describe both the beneficial and adverse effects accruing to:

a) The area's economic development potential or existing business area caused by the proposed action. Include any factors identified by a business people that they feel are important or controversial.

b) The employment potential and existing employees in businesses affected by the proposal.

## AGRICULTURAL IMPACT EVALUATION

|   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| Alternative:<br>Preferred alternative?: | Length of Center line and termini this sheet is evaluating if different from Sheet 1 |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|

| Type of Land<br><br>Acquired From Farm Operations                         | Type of Acquisition               |                                 | Total Area<br>Acquired |
|---|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|
|   | Area Acquired<br>In<br>Fee Simple | Area Acquired<br>By<br>Easement |                        |
| Crop land and pasture   | Acres                             | Acres                           | Acres                  |
| Woodland  | Acres                             | Acres                           | Acres                  |
| Land of undetermined or other use<br>(e.g., wetlands, yards, roads, etc.) | Acres                             | Acres                           | Acres                  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | Acres                             | Acres                           | Acres                  |

1) Indicate the number of farms operations from which land will be acquired.

Total Number of Farm Operations from which land will be acquired

- a) Number of Farm Operations from which 1 acre or less will be acquired.
- b) Number of Farm Operations from which more than 1 acre but Less than 5 acres will be acquired.
- c) Number of Farm Operations from which more than 5 acres will be acquired.

2) Identify and describe the effects to farm operations because of land lost due to the project.

☐ Does not Apply

3) Describe changes in access to farm operations caused by proposed action.

☐ Does not Apply

4) Indicate whether a farm operation will be severed because of the project and describe the severance (include area of original farm and the size of any remnant parcels).

☐ Does not Apply

5) Identify and describe effects generated by the acquisition or relocation of farm operation buildings, structures or improvements, e.g., barns, silos, stock watering ponds, irrigation wells, etc. As appropriate, address the location, type, condition and importance to the farm operation.

☐ Does not Apply

6. Describe effects caused by the elimination or relocation of a cattle/equipment pass or crossing. Attach plans, sketches, or other graphics as needed to clearly illustrate existing and proposed location of any cattle/equipment pass or crossing:

- ☐ Does not Apply
- ☐ Replacement of an existing cattle/equipment pass or crossing is not planned. Explain
- ☐ Cattle/equipment pass or crossing will be replaced
  - ☐ Replacement will occur at same location
  - ☐ Cattle/equipment pass or crossing will be relocated. Describe

7) Describe the effects generated by the obliteration of the old roadway.

- ☐ Does not Apply

8) Identify and describe any proposed changes in the land use or secondary development which will affect farm operations which relate to the development of this project.

- ☐ Does not Apply

9) Describe any other project-related effects identified by a farm operator or owner which may be adverse, beneficial or controversial.

- ☐ No effects indicated by farm operator or owner.

10) Describe measures to minimize adverse effects or enhance benefits.

## Environmental Justice Evaluation

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Alternative:<br>Preferred? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | Length of Center line and termini this sheet is evaluating (if different from Sheet 1) |
|---|--|

1) Give a brief description of the minority population and/or low income population affected by the proposed action. Include the size of the population(s) and their pertinent demographic characteristics. [A minority population means any readily identifiable group of minority persons including the elderly or disabled (see item 2 below for definitions of Title VI protected minorities) who live in geographic proximity, and if circumstances warrant, geographically dispersed/transient persons (such as migrant workers or Native Americans) who will be similarly affected by a proposed program, policy, or activity. Low-Income Population means any readily identifiable group of low-income persons (having a household income at or below the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines) who live in geographic proximity, and, if circumstances warrant, geographically dispersed/transient persons (such as migrant workers or Native Americans) who would be similarly affected by a proposed program, policy, or activity.]

☐ No minority populations or low-income populations are present in the project's area of influence (Process is complete if the No box is checked)

☐ A minority population or low-income population is located in the project's area of influence. (Complete the remaining items on this Factor Sheet.)

2) Identify and give a brief description of the minority population or low-income population affected by the proposed action. Include the size of the population and their pertinent demographic characteristics. (Check all that apply.)

☐ Black (having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa)  
☐ Low income ☐ Elderly ☐ Disabled

☐ Hispanic (of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race)  
☐ Low income ☐ Elderly ☐ Disabled

☐ Asian American (having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands)  
☐ Low income ☐ Elderly ☐ Disabled

☐ American Indian and Alaska Native (having origins in any of the original people of North America and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition)  
☐ Low income ☐ Elderly ☐ Disabled

3) Identify and describe issues of concern or controversy to the minority population or low-income population.

☐ No issues of concern or controversy identified

☐ Issues of concern or controversy identified below- Describe issues and how they were resolved.

☐ Bodily impairment ☐ Infirmary ☐ Illness or death ☐ Air ☐ Noise

☐ Water Pollution and soil contamination ☐ Destruction or disruption of man-made or natural resources

☐ Destruction or diminution of aesthetic values ☐ Vibration ☐ Adverse employment effects

☐ Destruction or disruption of community cohesion or a community's economic vitality

☐ Destruction or disruption of the availability of public and private facilities and services

☐ Displacement of persons, businesses, farms, or nonprofit organizations

☐ Increased traffic congestion, isolation, exclusion or separation of minority or low-income individuals within a given community or from the broader community

☐ The denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of, benefits of federal transportation agency programs, policies, or activities.

4) Indicate whether effects to a minority population or a low-income population are beneficial or adverse

☐ Only beneficial effects will occur. Describe effects on affected population and discuss whether they are direct, indirect or cumulative, include a discussion of any measures to enhance beneficial effects.



☐ Identified adverse effects are proportionate to those experienced by the general population. Describe effects on affected population and discuss whether they are direct, indirect or cumulative, include a discussion of any measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects.

☐ Identified effects are disproportionately high and adverse. *A disproportionately high and adverse effect means an adverse effect that: 1) is predominately borne by a minority population and/or a low-income population; or 2) will be suffered by the minority population and/or low-income population and is appreciably more severe or greater in magnitude than the adverse effect that will be suffered by the non-minority population and/or non-low-income population.*

Describe disproportionately high and adverse effects on affected population and discuss whether they are direct, indirect or cumulative, include a discussion of any measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse effects or enhance beneficial effects.

5) Indicate whether the individuals in the affected population(s) are protected under Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

☐ No Title VI protections do not apply, but other requirements under the Age Discrimination Act or Americans With Disabilities Act do apply. Describe effects and how they will be avoided, minimized or mitigated.

☐ Yes Title VI protections apply. Describe any special services, considerations, or mitigation that will be used to avoid, minimize, or mitigate effects to Title VI individuals.

6) Will the will be carried out even with disproportionately high and adverse effects on a minority population or low-income population.

☐ No will not be carried out in keeping with EO 12898

☐ There is no substantial need for the

☐ Another alternative with less severe effects on the minority population or low income population can meet the needs of this and is practical.

☐ Yes, will be carried out with the mitigation of disproportionately high and adverse effects.

☐ Yes, a substantial need for the exists based on the overall public interest and alternatives that would have less adverse effects on minority populations or low-income populations have either:

☐ adverse social, economic, environmental, or human health impacts that are more severe ; or

☐ would involve increased costs of an extraordinary magnitude

7) Identify and discuss mitigation and enhancement efforts to address disproportionately high and adverse effects to Title VI protected minority people if different from those shown in item 5 above.

Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
**WETLANDS IMPACT EVALUATION**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Alternative:<br>Preferred alternative? | Length of Center line and termini this sheet is evaluating (if different from Sheet 1) |
|--|--|

- 1) Describe proposed work in the wetland(s), e.g., excavation, fill, marsh disposal, other.
  
- 2) Describe the location of wetland(s) affected by the proposal. Include wetland name(s), if available. (Use maps, sketches, or other graphic aids.)
  
- 3) This wetland is:
  - ☐ Isolated from stream, lake or other water body (e.g., perched wetland).
  - ☐ Adjacent (within 5-year floodplain) to a stream thread.
  - ☐ Contiguous (in contact) with a stream, lake, or other water body.

Identify corresponding stream, lake, or other water body by name or town-range location:

**NOTE:** If wetland is contiguous or adjacent to a stream, complete Factor Sheet F.  
If wetland is contiguous to a lake or other water body, complete Factor Sheet G.
  
- 4) List any observed or expected waterfowl and wildlife inhabiting or dependent upon the wetland. (List should include both permanent and seasonal residents).
  
- 5) Are there any known endangered or threatened species affected by the project?
  - ☐ No
  - ☐ Yes Identify the species and indicate whether it is on Federal or State lists.
    - ☐ Section 7 coordination has been completed with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Describe mitigation required to protect the federally listed endangered species.
    - ☐ Coordination with DNR has been completed. Describe mitigation required to protect the State listed species.
  
- 6) FHWA Wetland Policy
  - ☐ Not Applicable - Explain
  - ☐ Individual Wetland Finding Required - Summarize why there are no practicable alternatives to the use of the wetland.
  - ☐ Statewide Wetland Finding **NOTE: All must be checked for the Statewide Wetland Finding to apply.**
    - ☐ Project is either a bridge replacement or other reconstruction within 0.5 km (0.3 mile) of the existing location.
    - ☐ The project requires the use of 3 hectares (7.4 acres) or less of wetlands.
    - ☐ The project has been coordinated with the DNR and there have been no significant concerns expressed over the proposed use of the wetlands.
  
- 7) Erosion control or storm water management measures which will be used to protect the wetland are shown on Factor Sheet O:
  - ☐ Yes
  - ☐ No - Briefly Describe measures to be used
  
- 8) Section 404 Permit

☐ Not Applicable - No fill to be placed in wetlands

☐ Applicable - Fill will be placed in wetlands.

Indicate area of wetlands filled \_ Acres  
( \_ Hectares)

☐ Individual Section 404 Permit required

☐ Nationwide Section 404 Permit required

Indicate Nationwide Section 404 Permit Name - \_\_\_\_\_

Indicate Nationwide Section 404 Permit number - \_\_\_\_\_

Indicate whether notification to the Corps of Engineers is required - \_\_\_\_\_

9) Identify wetland type(s) that will be filled or converted to another use. Use TABLE 1C Banking Guideline found in "WIDOT WETLAND MITIGATION BANK SYSTEM". If the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) or Wisconsin Wetlands Inventory (WWI) are used to identify the types of wetlands, translate them to fit into the WIDOT WETLAND MITIGATION BANK SYSTEM.

a) Approximate areas of wetlands filled or converted by type.

Wetland Type \_ Area of Wetland Type \_ Acres  
( \_ Hectares)

Wetland Type \_ Area of Wetland Type \_ Acres  
( \_ Hectares)

Wetland Type \_ Area of Wetland Type \_ Acres  
( \_ Hectares)

Wetland Type \_ Area of Wetland Type \_ Acres  
( \_ Hectares)

10) Wetland Mitigation (NOTE: Avoid and minimization mitigation are required.)

a) Wetland Avoidance

i) Describe methods used to avoid the use of wetlands, such as using a lower level of improvement or placing the roadway on new location, etc.

ii) Indicate the total area of wetlands avoided.

b) Minimize the amount of wetlands affected

i) Describe methods used to minimize the use of wetlands, such as a steep up of side slopes or use of retaining walls, equalizer pipes, upland disposal of hydric soils, etc.

ii) Indicate the total area of wetlands saved through minimization \_\_\_\_\_ Acres  
( \_\_\_\_\_ Hectares)

c) Compensation for unavoidable loss

i) Is compensation of unavoidable wetland loss required?

☐ Yes

☐ No

ii) Describe efforts to replace unavoidable wetland loss

☐ Not Applicable

Note: If type and amount of compensation is known, complete item d) on following page.

d) Type and amount of compensation

☐ On-Site Replacement- Wetland replacement located in the general proximity of the project site within the same local watershed. These replacements are often contiguous to the project.

Wetland type of on-site replacement

Total area of on-site replacement    \_ Acres

( \_ Hectares)

☐ Near-Site or Off-site Replacement - Replacement opportunity for wetland compensation within a 8.05 kilometers (5 mile) corridor centered over the highway alignment or a wetland replacement located away from the project site, generally outside the project's local watershed.

Wetland type of off-site replacement

Total area of off-site replacement    \_ Acres

( \_ Hectares)

☐ No near or off-site replacement - Describe reasons no near or off-site opportunities were found.

☐ Wetland Mitigation Bank Site - A wetland compensation site containing wetland credit areas and types from bank developed wetland restoration/creation projects or surplus areas from the wetland compensation projects of specific DOT facility development projects.

Indicate name or location of wetland mitigation bank site to be used for the replacement of unavoidable wetland loss.

Wetland type of bank-site replacement

Total area of bank-site replacement    \_ Acres

( \_ Hectares)

Describe decision process used to determine the use of the bank-site and provide any coordination documentation with regulatory or resource agencies.

Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
**STREAMS AND FLOODPLAINS IMPACT EVALUATION**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Alternative:<br>Preferred? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | Length of Center line and termini this sheet is evaluating (if different from Sheet 1) |
|---|--|

|   |  |
|---|--|
| 1) Name of Stream   | 2) Location of Stream  |
| 3) Stream Type      Indicate Stream Class if Known<br><input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Warm water <input type="checkbox"/> Trout-Class<br><input type="checkbox"/> Wild and Scenic River | 4) Size of upstream Watershed Area _<br><input type="checkbox"/> Permanent Flow (year-round)<br><input type="checkbox"/> Temporary Flow (dry part of year) |

5) Stream Characteristics

a) Substrate ☐ Sand ☐ Silt ☐ Clay ☐ Cobbles ☐ Other-describe:

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| b) Average Water Depth | c) Vegetation in Stream<br><input type="checkbox"/> Absent <input type="checkbox"/> Present - If known describe: |
|------------------------|--|

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| d) Identify Fish Species Present | e) If water quality data is available, include this information (e.g. DNR or local discharger might have such records). |
|----------------------------------|---|

6) Are there any known endangered or threatened species affected by the project?

☐ No

☐ Yes Identify the species and indicate whether it is on Federal or State lists.

☐ Section 7 coordination has been completed with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Describe mitigation required to protect the federally listed endangered species.

☐ Coordination with DNR has been completed. Describe mitigation required to protect the State listed species.

7) If bridge replacement, are migratory bird nests present?

☐ No

☐ Yes – Identify Bird Species present      Estimated number of nests is: \_

8) Is a U.S. Fish & Wildlife Depredation Permit required to remove swallow nests?

☐ Not Applicable   ☐ Yes   ☐ No - Describe mitigative measures

9) Describe land adjacent to stream. If wetland, give type.

10) Identify upstream or downstream dischargers or receivers (if any) within 0.8 kilometers (1/2 mile) of the project site.

11) Section 404 Permit      ☐ Not Applicable - No fill to be placed in wetlands

☐ Applicable - Fill will be placed in wetlands.  
       Indicate area of wetlands filled    Acres      ( Hectares)

☐ Individual Section 404 Permit required

☐ General Permit (GP) or Letter Of Permission (LOP) required to satisfy Section 404  
       Indicate which GP or LOP required  
       ☐ Non-Reporting GP      ☐ Provisional GP  
       ☐ Provisional LOP      ☐ Programmatic GP

12) Section 10 Waters  
 For navigable waters of the United States (Section 10) indicate whether the U.S. Coast Guard has been notified?  
☐ No      ☐ Yes - Describe results of Notification

Identify which Nationwide Section 404 Permit is required

Indicate whether Preconstruction Notification (PCN) to the U.S. Corps of Engineers (USACE) is:  
☐ Required ☐ Submitted on (Date)

Status of PCN  
USACE has made the following determination on (Date)

USACE is in the process of review, anticipated date of determination is: (Date)

13) Describe proposed work in, over, or adjacent to stream. Indicate whether the work is within the 100-year floodplain and whether it is a crossing or a longitudinal encroachment. (Note: U.S. Coast Guard must be notified when Section 10 waters are affected by a proposal)

14) Discuss the effects of any backwater which would be created by the proposed action. Indicate whether the proposed activities would be consistent with NR 116, the National Flood Insurance Program, and Governor's Executive Order #73.

15) Describe and provide the results of coordination with any floodplain zoning authority.

16) Would the proposal or any changes in the design flood, or backwater cause any of the following impacts?:

- ☐ No impacts would occur
- ☐ Significant interruption or termination of emergency vehicle service or a community's only excavation route
- ☐ Significant flooding with a potential for property loss and a hazard to life
- ☐ Significant impacts on natural floodplain values such as flood storage, fish or wildlife habitat, open space, aesthetics, etc.

17) Discuss existing or planned floodplain use and briefly summarize the project's effects on that use.

18) Discuss probable direct impacts to water quality within the floodplain, both during and after construction. Include the probable effects on plants, animals, and fish inhabiting or dependent upon the stream.

19) Describe proposed measures to minimize adverse effects or to enhance beneficial effects.

20) Erosion control or storm water management measures which will be used to protect the stream are shown on Factor Sheet O:

- ☐ Yes ☐ No Briefly Describe measures to be used such as sheet piling, cofferdam, turbidity barrier, barges, construction blackout window, etc

|   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| Alternative:<br>Preferred alternative?  |  | Length of Center line and termini this sheet is evaluating (if different from Sheet 1)   |  |
| 1) Name of Lake or Waterbody  |  | 2) Location of Lake or Waterbody   |  |
| 3) Lake or Waterbody Type<br><input type="checkbox"/> Lake <input type="checkbox"/> Pond <input type="checkbox"/> Impoundment<br><input type="checkbox"/> Other - describe:   |  | 4) Area of Waterbody      Acres<br>(   Hectares)<br><input type="checkbox"/> Permanent (year-round)<br><input type="checkbox"/> Temporary (dry part of year) |  |
| 5) Lake or Waterbody Characteristics<br>a) Bottom <input type="checkbox"/> Sand <input type="checkbox"/> Silt <input type="checkbox"/> Clay <input type="checkbox"/> Cobbles <input type="checkbox"/> Other-describe: |  |  |  |
| b) Maximum Depth<br>Feet<br>(   Meters)   |  | c) Vegetation in Lake or Waterbody<br><input type="checkbox"/> Absent <input type="checkbox"/> Present - If known describe:                                  |  |
| d) Identify Fish Species Present  |  | f) If water quality data is available, include this information (e.g. DNR or local discharger might have such records).                                      |  |

- B-178

12) Is a Section 404 Permit required?

☐ Not Applicable - No fill to be placed in waterbody.

☐ Applicable - Fill will be placed in waterbody.

Indicate amount or length of fill - \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Individual Section 404 Permit required

☐ Nationwide Section 404 Permit required

Indicate Nationwide Section 404 Permit Name - \_\_\_\_\_

Indicate Nationwide Section 404 Permit number - # \_\_\_\_\_

Indicate whether notification to the Corps of Engineers is required - \_\_\_\_\_

12) Discuss probable direct impacts to water quality in the waterbody, both during and after construction. (Indicate the probable effects on plants and animals inhabiting or dependent upon the lake or waterbody.)

13) Describe proposed measures to avoid, minimize or compensate adverse effects or enhance beneficial effects.

14) Indicate which measures will be used to minimize erosion or storm water effects on the waterbody

☐ See Factor Sheet J - Erosion Control Impact Evaluation  
OR

Briefly describe erosion control measures to be used,

☐ See Factor Sheet K - Storm Water Impact Evaluation  
OR

Briefly describe storm water management measures to be used



Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
**UPLAND HABITAT IMPACT EVALUATION**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Alternative:<br>Preferred alternative? | Length of Center line and termini this sheet is evaluating (if different from Sheet 1) |
|--|--|

- 1) Give a brief description of the upland habitat area. Include each prominent plant community at the project site (list vegetation with an estimate of the size of each plant community if more than one is present).
- 2) Identify and describe any observed or expected wildlife associations with each plant community.
- 3) Identify each dominant plant community and estimate existing and proposed area of each dominant plant community to be altered.
- 4) Are there any known endangered or threatened species affected by the project?
  - ☐ No
  - ☐ Yes
    - Identify the species
    - Species is listed on the .
    - ☐ Section 7 coordination has been completed with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.  
Describe mitigation required to protect the federally listed endangered species.
    - ☐ Coordination with DNR has been completed.  
Describe mitigation required to protect the State listed species.
- 5) Describe the nature of proposed work in the upland habitat area (e.g., grading, clearing, grubbing, etc.).
- 6) Identify and describe any known wildlife or waterfowl use areas or movement corridors that would be severed or eliminated by the proposed action. Include a discussion of the proposed action's effects upon the areas or corridors.
- 7) Discuss other direct impacts on wildlife and estimate significance.
- 8) Identify and discuss any probable secondary impacts which may be expected due to the project.
- 9) Describe measures to minimize adverse effects or enhance beneficial effects.

## Wisconsin Department of Transportation Erosion Control

| Alternative<br>Preferred alternative? | Length of Centerline and termini this sheet is evaluating (if different from Sheet 1) |
|---------------------------------------|---|
|---------------------------------------|---|

1. Give a brief description of existing and proposed slopes in the project area, both perpendicular and longitudinal to the project. Include both existing and proposed slope length and percent slope.

2. Indicate all natural resources in the project vicinity that are sensitive to erosion, sedimentation, or water quality degradation.

☐ Yes - Sensitive resources exist in the project area.

☐ River/stream

☐ Wetland

☐ Lake or other waterbody

☐ Endangered species habitat

☐ Other - Describe

☐ No - There are no sensitive resources affected by the proposal.

3. Identify each sensitive resource affected and provide specific recommendations on the level of protection needed.

4. Indicate all circumstances requiring additional or special consideration.

a) ☐ Yes - Additional or special circumstances exist. Indicate all that are present.

☐ Areas of groundwater discharge

☐ Areas of groundwater recharge

☐ Overland flow/runoff

☐ Long or steep cut or fill slopes.

☐ Other - Describe

b) ☐ Yes - Describe any unique or atypical erosion control measures to be used to manage additional or special circumstances.

c) ☐ No - Additional or special circumstances are not present

5. Have erosion control measures received consensus from:

DNR

County Land Conservation Committee

Native American Tribe

(All Erosion Control measures (i.e., the Erosion Control Plan) shall be coordinated through the DNR liaison process and TRANS 401 except when Tribal lands of Native Americans are involved. DNR does not issue concurrence without Erosion Control plans. In addition, TRANS 401 requires the contractor prepare an Erosion Control Implementation Plan (ECIP), which identifies timing and staging of the project's erosion control measures.)

(On Tribal lands, coordination for 402 (erosion) concerns are either to be coordinated with the tribe affected or with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). EPA or the Tribes also have the 401 water quality responsibility on Trust lands.)

6. Describe overall Erosion Control strategy to minimize adverse effects and/or enhance beneficial effects.

7. Identify the temporary and permanent erosion control measures to be utilized on the project.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Minimize the amount of land exposed at one time            | <input type="checkbox"/> Seeding and mulching of exposed soils |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Erosion bales  | <input type="checkbox"/> Detention basin                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Temporary seeding  | <input type="checkbox"/> Sediment trap                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Silt fence   | <input type="checkbox"/> Pave haul roads                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ditch checks   | <input type="checkbox"/> Dust abatement                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Erosion control re-vegetative mat                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Turf reinforcement mat                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ditch or slope sodding                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Rip Rap                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Soil Stabilizer  | <input type="checkbox"/> In-Stream Sediment Trap               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inlet Protection   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Separating construction from live water - Describe method: |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other - Describe:  |  |

## Wisconsin Department of Transportation Stormwater Management

| Alternative<br>Preferred Alternative? | Length of Centerline and termini this sheet is evaluating (if different<br>from Sheet 1) |
|---------------------------------------|--|
|---------------------------------------|--|

**Surrounding land use and a discussion of adopted plans are described on Basic Sheet 4**

1. Indicate whether any natural resources exist in the project vicinity that are sensitive to water quality degradation.
  - ☐ Yes - Sensitive resources exist in the project area.
    - ☐ River/stream      ☐ Wetland      ☐ Lake or other waterbody
    - ☐ Endangered species habitat      ☐ Other - Describe
  - ☐ No - There are no sensitive resources affected by the proposal.
2. Identify each sensitive resource affected and provide specific recommendations on the level of protection needed.
3. Indicate whether circumstances exist in the project vicinity that require additional or special consideration.
  - a) ☐ Yes - Additional or special circumstances exist. Indicate all that are present.
    - ☐ Areas of groundwater discharge      ☐ Areas of groundwater recharge
    - ☐ Overland flow/runoff      ☐ Long or steep cut or fill slopes.
    - ☐ Cold water stream      ☐ Impaired waterway
    - ☐ Exceptional/outstanding resource waters      ☐ Other - Describe
  - b) Describe any unique, innovative, or atypical Stormwater Management measures to be used to manage additional or special circumstances.
  - c) ☐ No - Additional or special circumstances are not present
4. Indicate whether any Drainage District may be affected by the project.
  - ☐ Yes - Identify the affected drainage district
 

|   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| Initial coordination with drainage board has been completed | Discuss results |
| Initial coordination with DATCP has been completed          | Discuss results |
  - ☐ No - There will be no effects to a recognized drainage district.

5. Indicate whether the project is within DOT's storm water management area. ( NOTE: See Procedure 20-30-1, Figure 1, Attachment A4 the Cooperative Agreement between the Wisconsin Departments of Transportation and Natural Resources. Contact BoE's Stormwater Engineer or the District Environmental Coordinator for more details on the following areas.)

☐ Yes - The project affects one of the following regulated by a WPDES storm water discharge permit issued by the DNR.

☐ A DOT storm sewer system located within Phase One Municipalities (cities over 100,000 population).

☐ A DOT storm sewer system located within the five (5) Great Lakes Area of Concern.

☐ A DOT storm sewer system located within Municipalities having populations of 50,000 or more where nonpoint source priority watershed projects are being implemented.

☐ A DOT storm sewer system designated pursuant to NR 216.02 (4) Wis. Admin. Code.

☐ No - The project is outside of WisDOT's stormwater management area

6. Describe the overall storm water management strategy to minimize adverse effects and enhance beneficial effects.

7. Indicate how the stormwater management plan will be compatible with the storm water strategy .

8. Identify the storm water management measures to be utilized on the project.

☐ Grass-lined conveyance (parallel to flow)

☐ In-line storm sewer treatment - Describe

☐ Vegetated filter strips (perpendicular to flow)

☐ Catch basins

☐ Distancing outfalls from waterway edge

☐ Detention / retention basins

☐ Constructed storm water wetlands

☐ Infiltration basin / trench

☐ Other - Describe

9. Are there any property acquisitions for storm water management purposes?

☐ No - There are no property acquisitions acquired for Stormwater Management purposes.

☐ Yes - Complete the following:

☐ Safety measures are not needed for potential conflicts with existing and expected surrounding land use.

☐ Safety measures are needed for potential conflicts with existing and expected surrounding land use.

Describe proposed safety measures

Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
**AIR QUALITY IMPACT EVALUATION**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Alternative:<br>Preferred? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | Length of Center line and termini this sheet is evaluating (if different<br>from Sheet 1) |
|---|---|

**Carbon Monoxide**

1) Is this project exempt from air quality analysis under Wisconsin Administrative Code - NR 411?

- ☐ No - NR 411 exemptions do not apply
- ☐ Yes - NR 411 exemption(s) apply - Identify exemption(s) and explain why project is exempt.

2) An air quality analysis was required.

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes - Identify the air quality modeling technique or program used to perform the analysis. (Attach Carbon Monoxide Worksheet as Factor Sheet I-2 to illustrate results.)

3) If an air quality analysis was performed, will a Construction Permit be required to address air quality before the project may proceed?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Letter of concurrence from DNR Bureau of Air Management requested.  
See attached request letter - Exhibit \_\_\_\_.
- ☐ Letter of concurrence received from DNR Bureau of Air Management.  
See attached Exhibit \_\_\_\_.
- ☐ Yes - Indicate:  
(DATE) Date permit requested  
OR  
(DATE) Date of Permit

**Ozone**

4) Is the project located in a county which is designated non-attainment or maintenance for ozone?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes - If yes one of the following boxes must be checked.
- ☐ This project is included in the (NAME TRANSPORTATION PLAN) and in the (NAME TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)) endorsed by the (NAME OF MPO), the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization. The TIP was found to conform by the FHWA and FTA (Date). The project is included in the TIP as project number (TIP PROJECT NUMBER).
- ☐ This project is located outside of a Metropolitan Planning Organization's boundaries and has received a positive conformity determination per the rural conformity section of the WisDOT/WDNR Memorandum Of Agreement regarding determination of conformity.
- ☐ This project is exempt per 23 CFR 93.134.
- ☐ Other, describe.

Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
**MAXIMUM PROJECTED CARBON MONOXIDE (CO) CONCENTRATIONS**

[illegible]

<sup>(1)</sup>ppm = parts per million -- parts of CO per million parts of gas.

<sup>(2)</sup>Includes 1-hour ambient background CO concentration of ppm.

<sup>(3)</sup>Includes 8-hour ambient background CO concentration of ppm.

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

### CONSTRUCTION STAGE SOUND QUALITY IMPACT EVALUATION

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Alternative:<br>Preferred alternative? | Length of Center line and termini this sheet is evaluating (if different from Sheet 1) |
|--|--|

- 1) Identify and describe residences, schools, libraries, or other noise sensitive areas near the proposed action and which will be in use during construction of the proposed action. Include the number of persons potentially affected.
- 2) Describe the types of construction equipment to be used on the project. Discuss the expected severity of noise levels including the frequency and duration of any anticipated high noise levels.
- 3) Describe the construction stage noise abatement measures to minimize identified adverse noise effects.



Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
**GENERAL SOUND QUALITY IMPACT EVALUATION**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Alternative:<br>Preferred alternative? | Length of Center line and termini this sheet is evaluating (if different from Sheet 1) |
|--|--|

Need for Noise Analysis

1) Based upon a consideration of the traffic, roadway, terrain, and receiver characteristics affecting sound levels, could there be an increased traffic sound level as a result of this action?

- ☐ No - Complete only Factor Sheet J Construction Noise.
- ☐ Yes - Complete Factor Sheet J and the rest this Factor Sheet.

Traffic Data.

2) Indicate whether traffic volumes for sound prediction are different from the Design Hourly Volume (DHV) on Basic Sheet 5.

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes - Indicate volumes and explain why they were used.

Automobiles      \_\_\_\_\_ Veh/hr

Trucks              \_\_\_\_\_ Veh/hr

or percentage (T)      \_\_\_\_\_ %

3) Identify and describe the noise analysis technique or program used to identify existing and future sound levels. (See attached receptor location map as Exhibit \_\_.) A receptor location map shall be included with this document.]

4) Identify sensitive receptors, e.g., schools, libraries, hospitals, residences, etc. potentially affected by traffic noise.

☐ A receptor location map is attached as Exhibit \_\_\_\_\_.

5) If this proposal is implemented will future sound levels produce a noise impact?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes the impact will occur because:
- ☐ The Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC) is approached (1 dBA less than the NAC) or exceeded.
- ☐ Existing sound levels by 15 dBA or more.

6) Will traffic noise abatement measures be implemented?

- ☐ Not Applicable - Traffic noise impacts will not occur.
- ☐ No - Traffic noise abatement is not reasonable or feasible (explain why). In areas currently undeveloped, local units of government are to be notified of predicted noise levels for land use planning purposes. (A COPY OF THIS WRITTEN NOTIFICATION SHALL BE INCLUDED WITH THIS DOCUMENT.)
- ☐ Yes - Describe any traffic noise abatement measures which will be implemented.

**I = Impact    N = No Impact**

Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
**UNIQUE AREA IMPACT EVALUATION**  
**Section 4(f)**

| Alternative:<br>Preferred alternative? | Length of Center line and termini this sheet is evaluating (if different<br>from Sheet 1) |
|--|---|
|--|---|

1) Property Name

2) Location

3) Ownership or Administration

4) Use

5) Type

- ☐ Public Park    ☐ Recreational Lands    ☐ Wildlife Refuge    ☐ Waterfowl Refuge  
☐ Historic Site    ☐ Other - identify:

6) Indicate whether the land or improvements on the property were funded by:

- ☐ No funds from any acts were used for this property.  
☐ Yes - s.6(f) LAWCON (LWCF)  
☐ Yes - Dingell-Johnson (D/J funds)  
☐ Yes - Pittman-Robertson (P/R funds)  
*(Lands purchased with D/J or P/R funds are treated similarly to those using s.6(f) LAWCON funds.)*

7) Do FHWA requirements for section 4(f) apply to the project's use of the unique property?

- ☐ No - project is not federally funded  
☐ No - Property is not on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.  
☐ No - Other - explain:  
☐ Yes - Indicate which of the Programmatic 4(f) Evaluations applies  
☐ Historic Bridge    ☐ Park minor involvement  
☐ Historic site minor involvement    ☐ Independent bikeway or walkway  
☐ Great River Road  
☐ Yes - separate 4(f) evaluation attached or approved on

8) Describe the significance of the unique property. For historic and archeological sites, quote or summarize the statement of significance from the Determination of Eligibility. For national landmarks, natural or scientific areas, etc., state registry listing. For other unique areas, include or attach statements of significance of officials having jurisdiction.

9) Describe the proposed project's effects on this unique property.

a) Describe any effects on or uses of land from the property. "Use of land from" includes actual use (right of way acquisition, easements, etc.) or constructive use ("substantially impairs any of the site's vital functions"). For historic and archeological sites, give the results or status of Section 106 coordination. For other unique areas, include or attach statements from officials having jurisdiction over the property which discusses the project effects on the property. *A map, sketch, plan, or other graphic which clearly illustrates use of the property and the project's use and effects on the property must be included.*

b) Discuss the following alternatives and describe whether they are feasible and prudent.

i) Do nothing alternative

ii) Improvement without using the 4(f) lands.

iii) Alternatives on new location.

10) Indicate which measures would minimize adverse effects or enhance beneficial effects:

☐ Replacement of lands used with lands of reasonably equivalent usefulness and location and of at least comparable value.

☐ Replacement of facilities impacted by the project including sidewalks, paths, lights, trees, and other facilities.

☐ Restoration and landscaping of disturbed areas.

☐ Incorporation of design features and habitat features where necessary to reduce or minimize impacts to the section 4(f) property.

☐ Payment of the fair market value of the land and improvement taken or improvements to the remaining 4(f) site equal to the fair market value of the land and improvements taken.

☐ Such additional or alternative mitigation measures as may be determined necessary based on consultation with officials having jurisdiction over the 4(f) property - explain:

☐ Property is a historic property or an archeological site. The conditions or mitigation stipulations are listed or summarized below.

☐ Other - Describe:

11) Briefly summarize the results of coordination with other agencies which were consulted about the project and its effects on the unique property. (For historic and archeological sites, include the signed Memorandum Of Agreement and letter from the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. For other unique areas, attach correspondence from officials having jurisdiction over the 4(f) land which illustrates concurrence with impacts and mitigation measures.)

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IMPACT EVALUATION

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Alternative:<br>Preferred alternative? | Length of Center line and termini this sheet is evaluating (if different from Sheet 1) |
|--|--|

[illegible]

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Forest County Potawatomi Community of Wisconsin            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HoChunk Nation   | <input type="checkbox"/> Lac de Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Indians of Wisconsin |
| <input type="checkbox"/> LacCourte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin | <input type="checkbox"/> Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mohican Nation, Stockbridge Munsee Community of Wisconsin              | <input type="checkbox"/> Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin          | <input type="checkbox"/> Sokaogon Chippewa (Mole Lake) Community of Wisconsin       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> St. Croix Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Identify  |

☐ No - Draft EIS-- Survey will be conducted on selected alternative and any DOE prepared will be documented in the Final EIS

☐ No - EA- Survey will be conducted on the selected alternative and any DOE prepared will be documented in FONSI

☐ Yes - Complete the items 5 through 12 below:

5. Do FHWA requirements for Section 4(f) apply to the project's use of the historic property?

☐ No

☐ Project is not federally funded

☐ Property is not on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

☐ Other - explain:

☐ Yes - Complete Factor Sheet O - Unique Area Impact Evaluation

6. Identify site(s) that will be affected by the project and indicate effect:

Site Effect:

Site Effect:

Site Effect:

Site Effect:

Site Effect:

Site Effect:

7. Date(M/d/yy) Advisory Council on Historic Preservation(ACHP) Notified of project by FHWA

8. Date of Consultation:

a) Date(M/d/yy) SHPO Data Recovery Plan accepted?  
b) Date(M/d/yy) Native Americans, Data Recovery Plan accepted?

Specify Tribe(s) Consulted

- ☐ Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa ☐ Forest County Potawatomi Community of Wisconsin
- ☐ HoChunk Nation ☐ Lac de Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Indians of Wisconsin
- ☐ LacCourte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin ☐ Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin
- ☐ Mohican Nation, Stockbridge Munsee Community of Wisconsin ☐ Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin
- ☐ Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin ☐ Sokaogon Chippewa (Mole Lake) Community of Wisconsin
9. ☐ St. Croix Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin ☐ Other: Identify

10. Has a Memorandum of Agreement(MOA) been developed?

Indicate Date(M/d/yy) Signed

Signatories: ☐ FHWA ☐ SHPO ☐ WisDOT

☐ Native Americans, Specify Tribe(s)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Forest County Potawatomi Community of Wisconsin            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HoChunk Nation   | <input type="checkbox"/> Lac de Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Indians of Wisconsin |
| <input type="checkbox"/> LacCourte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin | <input type="checkbox"/> Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mohican Nation, Stockbridge Munsee Community of Wisconsin              | <input type="checkbox"/> Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin          | <input type="checkbox"/> Sokaogon Chippewa (Mole Lake) Community of Wisconsin       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> St. Croix Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Identify  |

10. Date MOA transmitted to ACHP:

11. Has a Documentation for Consultation (D for C) prepared?

Date (M/d/yy) transmitted to SHPO:

Date (M/d/yy) transmitted to ACHP:

Public Interpretation:

12. List pertinent commitments to be included in the project's contract specifications:

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

# **HISTORIC STRUCTURES/BUILDINGS IMPACT EVALUATION**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Alternative:<br>Preferred alternative? | Length of Center line and termini this sheet is evaluating (if different from Sheet 1) |
| 1) Property Name                       | 2) Location  |
| 3) Ownership or Administration         | 4) Use -   |

- 5) Assessment of Effects under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act ). (An adverse effect is found when a project may alter, directly or indirectly, any of the characteristics of a historic structure or building that qualify it for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.):

☐ No Historic Properties Affected      ☐ No Adverse Effect      ☐ Adverse Effect (specify)

- 6) Do FHWA requirements for Section 4(f) apply to the project's use of the historic property?

☐ No

☐ Project is not federally funded

☐ Property is not on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

☐ Other - explain:

☐ Yes - Complete Factor Sheet O - Unique Area Impact Evaluation

- 7) Describe the significance of the structures and/or buildings (quote or summarize the statement of significance from the Determination of Eligibility).

Property is a National Historic Landmark?

- 8) The proposed project's effects on the historic property, (e.g., structure or building) have been evaluated in the following report, a copy of which is:

☐ in the project file, or

☐ attached to this document.

☐ Documentation for Determination that No Historic Properties Will Be Affected.

☐ Documentation for Determination of No Adverse Effect to historic properties.

☐ Documentation for Consultation about adverse effect(s). Stipulations which mitigate the adverse effect(s) are listed in Item 10, below.

- 9) Describe any alternative with an adverse effect, but without a Section 4(f) use, and indicate whether it is feasible and prudent. *A map which shows the structures/buildings in relation to the project and a sketch, plan, or other graphic which clearly illustrates the effects on the structures/buildings must be included.*

- 10) List or summarize the stipulations from the Memorandum of Agreement below.



Wisconsin Department of Transportation

**HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES OR UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANKS (UST's)**

REV 11-21-96

| Alternative:<br>Preferred alternative? | Length of Center line and termini this sheet is evaluating (if different<br>from Sheet 1) |
|--|---|
|--|---|

1) Briefly describe the results of the initial (Project Review) Reconnaissance on the parcels affected by this project.

2) Indicate the type(s) of contamination (if any) suspected to be affecting sites in the project area.

3) Indicate the number and identify the parcels which are determined to require an Environmental Site Investigation or for which the Initial Project Review - Reconnaissance was not conducted.

4) Describe proposed course of action to avoid hazardous materials contamination for this project. For example, changes in location, changes in design, remediation of contaminated areas, etc.

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

## AESTHETICS

| Alternative:<br>Preferred alternative? | Length of Center line and termini this sheet is evaluating (if different from Sheet 1) |
|--|--|
|--|--|

1. Identify the alternative discussed on this sheet if it is different from the proposed action addressed in item 1 of Basic Sheet 1 or is different from the "Preferred Alternative" identified in item 3 of Basic Sheet 2.
2. Identify and briefly describe the visual character of the landscape. Include elements in the viewshed such as landforms, waterbodies, vegetation and human developments.
3. Indicate the visual quality of the viewshed and identify landscape elements which would be visually sensitive.
4. Identify the viewers who will have a view of the improved transportation facility and those with a view from the improved transportation facility. Indicate the relative numbers (low, medium, high) of each group.
5. Indicate the relative time of day (morning, afternoon, evening, night) and the approximate amount of viewing time each viewer group would have each day.
6. Describe whether and how the project would affect the visual character of the landscape.
7. Indicate the effects the project would have on the viewer groups.
8. Discuss mitigation measures to avoid or minimize adverse visual effects or enhance positive aesthetic effects of the project.

Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
**COASTAL ZONE IMPACT EVALUATION**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Alternative:<br>Preferred alternative? | Length of Center line and termini this sheet is evaluating (if different from Sheet 1) |
|--|--|

1) The project is located in the following County or Counties. (\* If project is in any of the counties shown below the dashed line and denoted with an asterisk (\*) Factor Sheet K - Storm Water Impact Evaluation may need to be completed to satisfy CZARA requirements if the project's stormwater discharges affect the Great Lakes Watershed.)

- ☐ Ashland    ☐ Bayfield    ☐ Brown    ☐ Door    ☐ Douglas    ☐ Iron  
☐ Kenosha    ☐ Kewaunee    ☐ Manitowoc    ☐ Marinette    ☐ Milwaukee    ☐ Oconto  
☐ Ozaukee    ☐ Racine    ☐ Sheboygan
- 
- ☐\* Florence    ☐\* Fond du Lac    ☐\* Forest    ☐\* Menominee    ☐\* Outagamie    ☐\* Shawano  
☐\* Vilas    ☐\* Washington    ☐\* Waukesha    ☐\* Winnebago

☐ None of the Above - If projects effects do not extend into one of the counties above, this Worksheet is complete.

2) The project affects a Special Coastal Area as indicated in the Coastal Zone Management Planf

☐ Yes, the Special Coastal Area is:

Check all that apply and complete the rest of this Worksheet as appropriate. (If the proposal is federally funded and uses land from a publicly owned park, recreation area, wildlife or waterfowl refuge or significant historic site, Section 4(f) may apply and Factor Sheet O-Unique Area Impact Evaluation will need to be completed. )

- ☐ Park    ☐ Boat landing    ☐ Beach    ☐ Historic Property  
☐ Archaeological Site    ☐ Harbor    ☐ Fishery Area    ☐ Hunting Area

☐ No - If project's effects do not extend into or affect any of the CZM Areas of Special Concern, this Worksheet is complete.

3) Describe the projects effects on the CZM Special Coastal Area.

4) Briefly discuss the results of coordination with any other agency or local unit of government regarding their concerns and mitigation proposals for the project's effects on the CZM Special Coastal Area.

## **List of Preparers**

**List the following:**

**1.State (and local agency) personnel, including consultants, who were primarily responsible for preparing the EIS or performing environmental studies, and a brief summary of their qualifications, including educational background and experience.**

**2.The FHWA personnel primarily responsible for preparation or review of the EIS and their qualifications.**

**3.The areas of EIS responsibility for each preparer.**

## APPENDIX C: Pilot Project Profiles

| <b>Riverside County Integrated Project (RCIP) Profile</b>  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Descriptor</b>  |   |
| Problem that the project was intended to address.  | <p>The RCIP integrated four major planning efforts in Riverside County with the goal of providing more efficient processes and better environmental and transportation results. Traditionally, the four planning efforts integrated into the RCIP (local community development, transportation, and habitat) would be conducted individually, in a linear fashion, perhaps separated by many years, and often spawning lawsuits between developers and environmentalists.</p> <p>The species habitat plan integrated into the RCIP addressed multiple species. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the California Department of Fish and Game wanted to perform multi-species planning in the region because there were many species/habitat issues, there had been too frequent battles between land use and conservation, and there was no gain in a permit-by-permit or species-by-species process.</p> |
| Environmental permits and approvals, if any, which are being addressed by the project.   | <p>The Community and Environmental Transportation Acceptability Process (CETAP) is intended to accomplish National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance. The Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSCHP) allowed issuance of one Federal and State endangered species Umbrella Permit valid for 75 years. There is no more need for full Section 7 coordination or Individual Permits from the USFWS and the California Department of Fish and Game, but some continuing coordination will occur. The Special Area Management Plan (SAMP) will allow issuance of Regional General Section 404 Permits for projects in the watersheds covered by the SAMP that meet specific criteria.</p>   |
| Unique approaches or processes that are being used to achieve environmental streamlining in the transportation planning and project development process. | <p>The RCIP is integrating and coordinating the activities of stakeholders involved in four previously separate and distinct planning efforts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The preparation of a new Riverside County General Plan</li> <li>2. The development of a Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP),</li> <li>3. The identification of four new transportation corridors through the Community and Environmental Transportation Acceptability Process (CETAP) and</li> <li>4. The development of a watershed plan for the San Jacinto and Santa Margarita watersheds (referred to as the Special Area Management Plan (SAMP)).</li> </ol>  |
| Goals or objectives of the sponsor for this project.   | <p>The aim of the RCIP is to be proactive in coordinating growth and transportation planning. The long-term results should include a consensus-based process that saves time and money.</p>   |

| <b>Riverside County Integrated Project (RCIP) Profile</b>  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Descriptor</b>  |   |
| How the sponsors intend to measure and evaluate success or failure.  | <p>Locate and preserve rights-of-way for four major new multimodal transportation facilities</p> <p>Reduce impacts of transportation on the environment.</p> <p>Limit growth areas to prevent sprawl.</p> <p>Obtain broader (streamlined) endangered species permitting</p> <p>Secure Regional General Permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) for projects in the watersheds covered by the SAMP.</p> <p>Maintain public and stakeholder involvement and support.</p>   |
| Agencies or stakeholders that were involved in developing the pilot project.                                 | Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC), California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), County of Riverside, Western Riverside Council of Governments, Riverside Transit Agency, California Office of Land Conservation, California Department of Fish and Game, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), USFWS, USACE, and Sierra Club.  |
| Steps being taken to ensure appropriate communication, coordination, and cooperation among the stakeholders. | <p>Over 1,400 RCIP-related meetings were held between 1999 and 2003. There were monthly Working Group meetings with the Federal agencies. Also, the Interagency Transportation Infrastructure Streamlining Task Force, created by Executive Order 13274, appointed a U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) “champion” for the CETAP. This champion provided leadership in arranging to have FHWA and the Federal resource agencies hold meetings to assist in resolving an impasse on the CETAP. Subsequently, EPA and FHWA have agreed to jointly fund a mediator/ facilitator.</p> <p>On October 14, 2003, an “Expectations Summit” was held for the CETAP partners who are involved in the Cajalco-Ramona Corridor Project. The participants signed a Partnership Agreement that reaffirmed commitments to the project.</p> |

| <b>Riverside County Integrated Project (RCIP) Profile</b>  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Descriptor</b>  |  |
| Public participation process that was used in the project. | <p>The General Plan Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was made available for public review on August 20, 2002. The Riverside County Planning Commission and Riverside County Board of Supervisors also conducted public hearings on the new General Plan from September 2002 through September 2003.</p> <p>The Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Reports (EIS/EIRs) on the two interior CETAP corridors were issued for public review on July 19, 2002. Five public hearings were held between December 2002 and January 2003.</p> <p>Public scoping meetings for the Moreno Valley to San Bernardino County corridor environmental study were held in each county on June 4, 2003 and June 5, 2003. A Bi-County committee has also been formed for the Riverside County to Orange County corridor. The first meeting with the corridor cities occurred on July 6, 2004.</p> <p>The MSHCP Draft Plan, Draft Implementation Agreement, and Draft EIS/EIR were made available to the public on November 15, 2002. Public hearings were held in early May 2003 and in the first week of June 2003.</p>  |
| Schedule of key activities.                                | <p>The Board of Supervisors adopted and certified the General Plan Final Program EIR on October 7, 2003. The General Plan was published and distributed to the public in January 2004.</p> <p>FHWA signed the Record of Decision (ROD) for the Winchester to Temecula Corridor on September 17, 2003.</p> <p>On June 11, 2003, the RCTC voted to terminate the Tier 1 EIS for the Hemet to Corona/Lake Elsinore corridor and to proceed with a project-specific Tier 2 EIS process. The Tier 2 EIS process is scheduled to take three years to complete.</p> <p>The NEPA process for the two external CETAP corridors (Moreno Valley to San Bernardino Bi-County Corridor and Riverside County to Orange County Corridor) began in May 2003. Public review of the Draft EIR for the Moreno Valley to San Bernardino Bi-County Corridor and additional public meetings are on hold until 2005. The Major Investment Study for the Riverside County to Orange County Corridor began in June 2004 and is anticipated to take 18 months.</p> <p>On June 17, 2003, the Riverside County Board of Supervisors adopted the MSHCP and signed the Final Implementation Agreement. The USFWS issued a Biological Opinion in June 2004 and the Umbrella Permit was signed the same month.</p> <p>As of June 2004, the County and USACE were still in discussions regarding the integration of the SAMP with the MSHCP and RCIP.</p> |

| <b>Riverside County Integrated Project (RCIP) Profile</b>   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Descriptor</b>   |   |
| Elements of the planning and project development process that are unique to the conditions or requirements in the particular state. | There are three separate environmental documents prepared for the General Plan, CETAP, and MSHCP. The reason for the separate environmental documents is that the General Plan is subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) only. CETAP and MSHCP involve Federal actions so they are subject to both CEQA and NEPA. As many as 43 State agencies are potentially involved in the transportation-land use decisions. |



| <b>The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)/Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)/U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Partnership Effort</b> |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Descriptor</b>   |  |
| Problem that the project was intended to address.   | Caltrans, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) felt that a healthier relationship based on mutual understanding of agencies missions, legal mandates and authorities, and an understanding of why conflicts develop would lead to potential solutions to these conflicts.  |
| Environmental permits and approvals, if any, which are being addressed by the project.  | The issuance of a revised NEPA/404 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was expected to result in a more efficient process by better defining the projects that would be subject to the merger process and by addressing changes in the Section 404 permit requirements since the drafting of the original MOU. A revised MOU was put on hold as a result of guidelines, issued in 2003, from the Council on Environmental Quality about Purpose and Need Statements.   |
| Unique approaches or processes that are being used to achieve environmental streamlining in the transportation planning and project development process.          | <p>Training and Outreach Coordination, Interagency Rotational Assignments, Funding Coordination, Joint Guidance Development, and Merced County Partnership for Integrated Planning (PIP). The Merced County PIP is expected to improve the delivery of transportation projects through early State and Federal agency participation in the planning process.</p> <p>UPLAN, an interactive GIS-based model, was developed to assess cumulative impacts for the Merced County 2030 Regional Transportation Plan, as required by the California Environmental Quality Act. UPLAN overlays geographic data layers to find the most attractive areas for growth with the least amount of impact. In this manner, various land use scenarios are tested.</p> |

| <b>The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)/Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)/U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Partnership Effort</b> |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Descriptor</b>   |  |
| Goals or objectives of the sponsor for this project.  | <p>The goal of Training and Outreach Coordination is to share internal and external training opportunities among agencies and conduct joint transportation workshops.</p> <p>The intent of the Interagency Rotational Assignments is to have individuals from one of the partnership agencies spend six months on a “tailored” assignment at another of the partnership agencies.</p> <p>The three agencies are also committed to coordinate and share funding, where possible, and to work together to create guidance that integrates transportation and environmental planning.</p> <p>Merced PIP had five specific goals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Formulate a regional transportation planning approach that may be used as a statewide and national model,</li> <li>2) Improve delivery of transportation projects through early State and Federal agency participation in the planning process</li> <li>3) Use and evaluate GIS tools to model urban development, habitat, and agriculture land use with transportation projects in the planning process,</li> <li>4) Evaluate options for addressing project cumulative growth issues in the Merced County Association of Governments’ (MCAGs’) 20-year Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), and</li> <li>5) Develop a progressive and inclusive public education and involvement process using innovative communication formats and media.</li> </ol> |
| How the sponsors intend to measure and evaluate success or failure.   | Improved interagency communication, cooperation, and collaboration in their interactions. More effective and efficient NEPA/404 Process. Formulation of a regional transportation planning approach that may be used as a statewide and national model to performing cumulative impacts analyses for groups of projects  |
| Agencies or stakeholders that were involved in developing the pilot project.  | Caltrans, FHWA, EPA, and Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG).  |
| Steps being taken to ensure appropriate communication, coordination, and cooperation among the stakeholders.  | <p>The Partnership Steering Committee comprises senior management and staff of each agency. The committee’s purpose is to discuss emerging problems, issues, opportunities, and agency priorities and to report and track the status of the Caltrans/FHWA/EPA Partnership Effort initiatives.</p> <p>The PIP functioned with a broad-based advisory committee guiding the development of Merced County’s 2030 Regional Transportation Plan.</p>  |

| <b>The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)/Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)/U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Partnership Effort</b> |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Descriptor</b>   |  |
| Public participation process that was used in the project.  | To ensure that all segments of the community have representation and input into the regional transportation plan, MCAG established eight focus groups: Business and Education, Southeast Asian Community, Hispanic Community, Environmental and Outdoor Recreation, Elderly and Disabled, Agriculture, Commuters/Professional Drivers, and Youth. A series of quarterly community workshops started in February 2003 and ran through June 2004.  |
| Schedule of key activities.   | <p>Since implementation of the partnership agreement, Caltrans developed an Environmental Planners Academy; EPA sponsored five Air Quality Conformity Workshops and a Cumulative Impact Workshops; and Caltrans conducted training sessions on the new Programmatic Agreement to be used by FHWA, Caltrans, and local agencies to comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.</p> <p>Caltrans assigned and funded interagency rotational assignments at FHWA beginning in December 2000.</p> <p>Guidance on specific approaches and training for Indirect and Cumulative Impacts in the context of Land Use and Transportation Planning were issued in Fall 2004.</p> <p>Recommendations for transportation projects, policies, and programs for the Merced RTP were completed in March 2004. The Draft EIR on the RTP was completed in early 2004. The RTP was issued in July 2004. The first individual projects from the RTP are likely to go to construction in 2005 or 2006.</p> |
| Elements of the planning and project development process that are unique to the conditions or requirements in the particular state.                               | In California, the RTPs prepared by the Metropolitan Planning Organizations as part of the Federal planning process also must meet California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements. CEQA requires a cumulative impact analysis.   |

| <b>California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) State and Federal Agency Position Funding Effort</b>   |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Descriptor</b>  |  |
| Problem that the project was intended to address.  | Caltrans' substantially increased workload affected resource agencies, creating a backlog that in turn affected Caltrans project delivery. Caltrans initiated this Position Funding Effort to take advantage of Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century's (TEA-21's) Section 1309(e) provisions, which allow State Departments of Transportation to enter into cost reimbursement agreements to provide Federal-aid funds to Federal agencies for those agencies to hire additional staff.  |
| Environmental permits and approvals, if any, which are being addressed by the project.   | National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)/404 Integration, Section 404 Permits, Section 106 Reviews, Federal and State Endangered Species Consultations.  |
| Unique approaches or processes that are being used to achieve environmental streamlining in the transportation planning and project development process. | Caltrans now fills agency positions using three methods: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Using Federal/State agency employees,</li> <li>2) Using Caltrans employees hired for the other agency's location, and</li> <li>3) Using Caltrans employees on rotation to other agencies.</li> </ol>  |
| Goals or objectives of the sponsor for this project.   | The Position Funding Effort provides additional staff resources to selected resource agencies to allow early and constructive participation in project planning and design decisions, timely field reviews and negotiations, and processing of project and emergency permits. The additional staff resources help the resource agencies provide premium service levels, thereby shortening project time frames by allowing environmental studies and coordination with resource agencies to be completed in a timely manner.   |
| How the sponsors intend to measure and evaluate success or failure.  | <p>Caltrans established a consistent quarterly tracking and reporting system to help prioritize Caltrans projects for review, track turnaround times, and track performance by agency personnel filling the funded positions. Caltrans is in the process of transforming the initial system that uses spreadsheets into a database with remote access capabilities.</p> <p>Performance measures address responsiveness and timeliness of reviews. They also establish targets for requests for additional information, so that those requests go to Caltrans early rather than at the end of the comment period.</p> |
| Agencies or stakeholders that were involved in developing the pilot project.   | Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), National Marine Fisheries Service, California State Historic Preservation Officer, California Department of Fish and Game, California Coastal Commission.  |

| <b>California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) State and Federal Agency Position Funding Effort</b>                          |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Descriptor</b>   |   |
| Steps being taken to ensure appropriate communication, coordination, and cooperation among the stakeholders.                        | Caltrans has worked to establish a consistent quarterly tracking and reporting by the agencies with funded positions. Caltrans is also holding quarterly meetings with the USACE, California Coastal Commission, and USFWS to review commitments, discuss issues, and address outstanding concerns. |
| Public participation process that was used in the project.  | Not applicable to this Pilot Project.   |
| Schedule of key activities.   | Not applicable to this Pilot Project.   |
| Elements of the planning and project development process that are unique to the conditions or requirements in the particular state. | Caltrans' projects are subject to the California Environmental Quality Act.   |

| <b>Developing an Environmental Streamlining Process for Use in Florida (The Efficient Transportation Decision-Making (ETDM) Process)</b>                 |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Descriptor</b>  |  |
| Problem that the project was intended to address.  | <p>During the comprehensive planning process, minimal consideration was given to potential direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of transportation or land use decisions on the local community's social and natural resources. In addition, the problem characteristics with the planning and project development process were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sequential, dependent actions,</li> <li>2. Long timeline with gaps,</li> <li>3. Late agency involvement, and</li> <li>4. Risk of late project changes.</li> </ol>  |
| Environmental permits and approvals, if any, which are being addressed by the project.   | The ETDM Process addresses all the numerous Federal and State, laws, rules and regulations that apply to Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) projects.   |
| Unique approaches or processes that are being used to achieve environmental streamlining in the transportation planning and project development process. | FDOT created an ongoing electronic database for each project to which the whole team contributes via a Web-based user interface. The database becomes the project history and agency review mechanism.   |
| Goals or objectives of the sponsor for this project.   | The ETDM Process was designed to result in better transportation decisions, higher quality land use decisions, and more comprehensive treatment of local community issues. The process also had potential for a higher level of avoidance of environmental impacts through early indirect and cumulative impact assessment in planning, and better distribution of information.  |
| How the sponsors intend to measure and evaluate success or failure.  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Early and continuous involvement from Federal and State agencies and community citizens in decision-making.</li> <li>2. Early identification of avoidance, minimization, or mitigation requirements.</li> <li>3. Linkages between land use, transportation, and environmental protection or preservation efforts.</li> <li>4. Early project approvals for less complex projects.</li> <li>5. Reduction in the number of projects subject to detailed reviews.</li> <li>6. Permit issuance linked to environmental document approvals on projects.</li> </ol> |

| <b>Developing an Environmental Streamlining Process for Use in Florida (The Efficient Transportation Decision-Making (ETDM) Process)</b> |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Descriptor</b>  |   |
| Agencies or stakeholders that were involved in developing the pilot project.   | Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, Federal Rail Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Park Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Florida Department of Community Affairs, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Department of State, Florida Department of Transportation, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Florida MPO Advisory Council, Local Resource Agencies, Regional Planning Councils, Water Management Districts, Native American Tribal Governments, Local Planning Agencies |
| Steps being taken to ensure appropriate communication, coordination, and cooperation among the stakeholders.                             | <p>The ETDM process involves a multi-agency Environmental Technical Advisory Team (ETAT) for each of the seven FDOT districts. The ETAT is comprised of 12 to 20 members from agencies with statutory responsibility for transportation, land use and ecosystem planning, permitting, or consultation on projects and seeks collaborative decision-making. Each agency appoints a representative with responsibility to coordinate transportation project reviews within their agency.</p> <p>FDOT negotiated agreements between the FHWA, FDOT, and each reviewing agency address funding for any positions, performance measures for all parties, and any specific bases for early issuance of permits.</p>   |
| Public participation process that was used in the project.   | As part of ETDM, FDOT is creating a Community Outreach Network for Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and non-MPO areas and has appointed a Community Liaison Coordinator to handle coordination between FDOT and local communities affected by transportation projects. Community outreach and public involvement activities will begin during the planning phase and continue through project development and subsequent project phases. The public will have read-only access to the technical reports, data, and comments and will also be able to submit comments to the project sponsor through the ETDM system.  |

| <b>Developing an Environmental Streamlining Process for Use in Florida (The Efficient Transportation Decision-Making (ETDM) Process)</b> |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Descriptor</b>  |  |
| Schedule of key activities.  | <p>In February 2000, an Executive Summit was held in Tallahassee for Florida and Federal agencies to obtain support and commitment to create a new process for ETDM.</p> <p>Training of the ETDM process for ETDM participants occurred between February 2003 and October 2004.</p> <p>The ETDM Manual was completed in June 2004.</p> <p>Twelve agency agreements were signed in 2002. As of July 2004, FDOT has completed or is near completion on two year agency agreements with 13 Federal, State, and local entities.</p> <p>FDOT began the implementation of the ETDM Process in the seven FDOT Districts on July 1, 2003. Between July 1, 2003 and December 31, 2003, either the MPO (in the MPO areas) or the FDOT District (in the counties) uploaded project information into the initial Planning Screen. ETATs to begin reviewing projects in the Planning Screen Phase beginning on January 1, 2004.</p> <p>Project Summary Reports were generated in the Spring of 2004 and were uploaded to the Programming Screen in preparation for the Fiscal Year 2005 FDOT Work Program (begins July 2005) in April 2004.</p> |
| Elements of the planning and project development process that are unique to the conditions or requirements in the particular state.      | <p>Florida has more State regulations than Federal regulations and there are inconsistencies between the two. Activities of 24 different agencies have to be coordinated.</p>  |



| <b>Environmental Streamlining for the Georgia Rail Passenger Program (GRPP)</b>  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Descriptor</b>  |  |
| Problem that the project was intended to address.  | To complete a single environmental review process to implement a rail passenger program involving six Federal and State transportation agencies.   |
| Environmental permits and approvals, if any, which are being addressed by the project.   | National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance  |
| Unique approaches or processes that are being used to achieve environmental streamlining in the transportation planning and project development process. | The original intent of the GRPP Pilot Project was to define a single programmatic process for environmental review and permit approvals that would have satisfied multiple agency requirements and promote timely decision-making. However, the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) and the other agencies reconsidered this approach and decided to proceed with the remainder of the GRPP using the informal processes that were used effectively for the first elements of the project. These include multi-agency coordination, concurrent document reviews, public involvement, and early agency involvement. |
| Goals or objectives of the sponsor for this project.   | The goals of the GRPP Environmental Streamlining project were to jointly coordinate the program, to quickly reach program decisions, and to expeditiously prepare and review the required NEPA documents.  |
| How the sponsors intend to measure and evaluate success or failure.  | There was no mechanism in place for the sponsors to measure and evaluate success or failure. The Research Team used the performance measures in Appendix D and feedback from participant reporters to perform this evaluation.   |
| Agencies or stakeholders that were involved in developing the pilot project.   | Federal Railroad Administration, Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), GDOT, Georgia Rail Passenger Authority (GRPA), Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA), and Georgia SHPO.  |
| Steps being taken to ensure appropriate communication, coordination, and cooperation among the stakeholders.   | GRPP developed a multi-agency agreement at the State level among the GDOT, GRTA, and GRPA. Under the agreement, the three agencies established a Program Management Team comprised of members from each of the three agencies. That team holds responsibility for joint decision-making and program coordination. Implementation of the program is the responsibility of the Rail Program Managers Committee, composed of staff from each of the three agencies.   |
| Public participation process that was used in the project.   | GRPP is using Local Advisory Committees. Public involvement includes a Web-based system for public comment. There also have been public meetings and hearings for the various elements of the program.   |

| <b>Environmental Streamlining for the Georgia Rail Passenger Program (GRPP)</b>   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Descriptor</b>   |  |
| Schedule of key activities.   | <p>Public meetings on the GRPP projects were held in April/May 2000 and October/November 2000. Publication of a report on rail alternatives occurred in Summer 2000.</p> <p>A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was issued on the Atlanta Multi-Modal Passenger Terminal (MMPT) in 1995 and reevaluated and determined still to be valid in December 2000. On December 7, 2001, a new conceptual design of the MMPT was reviewed and generally agreed to by stakeholders and reviewing agencies. As of summer 2004, the right-of-way for the station was being finalized.</p> <p>In November 2001, FTA issued a FONSI for the Macon to Atlanta corridor. A kick-off meeting for the Macon Corridor Local Advisory Committee members along the corridor was held in mid-October 2002. A grant application for the Macon to Atlanta Corridor implementation was submitted through GDOT. Provided that State funding continues, late 2005 is now the earliest date that service from Griffin to Atlanta would occur. Service from Macon would not occur until 2006.</p> <p>FTA issued a FONSI for the Athens-Atlanta corridor in February 2004. Service could start in the Athens to Atlanta corridor as early as 2008, depending on the level of State funding.</p> |
| Elements of the planning and project development process that are unique to the conditions or requirements in the particular state. | <p>The GRPP is somewhat unique in having three State transportation agencies involved in a program of projects (GDOT, GRPA, and GRTA).</p> <p>This Pilot Project used flexible funding, rather than FTA funds, and was outside FTA's New Start classification. The New Start process would have required competition for funding (and a very rigorous project review). The NEPA process, therefore, had lesser requirements than a New Start project. To qualify for New Start status, the review would have had to include supplemental documentation with financial information.</p>   |

| <b>Integrating NEPA and Statewide Planning in Oregon</b>   |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Descriptor</b>  |  |
| Problem that the project was intended to address.  | The statewide planning process in the State of Oregon requires integration of the Local Comprehensive Plans required for each community and the Transportation System Plans required for each community of 10,000 or more people. Corridor plans (or Refinement Planning) developed through the Transportation System Plans previously did not consider environmental factors, and decisions made in that process had to be revisited and often had to be revised during the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. As a result, the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) began a process to integrate the NEPA process with the Statewide Planning process.  |
| Environmental permits and approvals, if any, which are being addressed by the project.   | NEPA, Section 404, Section 106, and Section 4(f)   |
| Unique approaches or processes that are being used to achieve environmental streamlining in the transportation planning and project development process. | <p>The Collaborative Environmental and Transportation Agreement on Streamlining (CETAS) process fully integrates land use planning, transportation planning, environmental review, and project development by engaging the resource agencies early and merging the reviews needed for compliance with NEPA and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.</p> <p>The CETAS Major Transportation Projects Agreement is an implementing tool for the Tiered NEPA Decision-Making process. The Tiered NEPA Decision-Making process uses a Location Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) at the planning stage to support decision-making on purpose and need, type of facility, corridor location, and transportation modal choice. Location EISs are completed on projects that have not been identified for funding for the next 10 to 20 years. Location EISs use a 10 percent level of engineering design (compared to a 30 percent level of engineering design in the traditional NEPA process), 100-meter corridors, and coarse-level impact data. A Design EIS, prepared when the project is later funded for construction, addresses design alternatives that are within the selected corridor alternative (derived from the Location EIS) and develops environmental data and analysis sufficient to gain the construction permits.</p> |

| <b>Integrating NEPA and Statewide Planning in Oregon</b>   |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Descriptor</b>  |  |
| Goals or objectives of the sponsor for this project.   | <p>The goals of this Pilot Project are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reduce public frustration with redundant Refinement Planning and NEPA processes by combining the alternative analysis and selection process required by both into one process, rather than consecutive processes,</li> <li>2. Reduce resource agency frustration by incorporating their concerns early in the process of planning and alternative consideration,</li> <li>3. Improve decision-making during Refinement Planning by having the appropriate information available at the point of decision,</li> <li>4. Improve ability to preserve corridors for future transportation development, and</li> <li>5. Shorten overall time required to advance from planning product to completed transportation facility.</li> </ol> |
| How the sponsors intend to measure and evaluate success or failure.  | <p>Success or failure will be based on whether:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The planning decision is sustainable and will not have to be revisited later when the facility is funded,</li> <li>2. Land use decisions can safely be made based on the first assumptions,</li> <li>3. When the funding is secured and the Design EIS is prepared, that the decision in the Location EIS can be assumed, and that the design can focus on design alternatives and issues within the selected location alternative, and</li> <li>4. Right-of-way can be purchased or otherwise preserved to protect the corridor decision based on the Location EIS.</li> </ol>  |
| Agencies or stakeholders that were involved in developing the pilot project.                                 | <p>Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), ODOT, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Oregon Division of State Lands, Oregon State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), Willamette Valley Council of Governments, and Yamhill County Commissioners.</p>  |
| Steps being taken to ensure appropriate communication, coordination, and cooperation among the stakeholders. | <p>With the CETAS process, ODOT reviews projects with the resource agencies and SHPO. At each concurrence point (Purpose and Need, Range of Alternatives, Selection Criteria, and Preferred Alternative), the agencies receive a presentation and each agency is then asked to document to ODOT their concurrence. FHWA has agreed not to advance a project if a CETAS agency has not signed off on a concurrence point. There is also a Project Oversight Steering Team for the Newberg-Dundee Transportation Improvement Project composed of eleven local, State and Federal officials who make key decisions on the project.</p>  |

| <b>Integrating NEPA and Statewide Planning in Oregon</b>  |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Descriptor</b>   |   |
| Public participation process that was used in the project.  | A Public Involvement Program is developed for each project that undergoes the CETAS process. For the Newberg-Dundee Transportation Improvement Project, four public hearings for the project were held in the last weeks of October 2002.   |
| Schedule of key activities.   | <p>The Location Draft EIS for the Newberg-Dundee Transportation Improvement Project was formally issued to the public and agencies for review and comment in October 2002.</p> <p>In May 2003, the recommended alternative was presented to CETAS agencies at the Preferred Alternative Concurrence Point. In July 2003, ODOT received non concurrence letters from six agencies.</p> <p>In September 2003, the agencies requested elevation to higher levels in their respective organizations. On November 6, 2003, ODOT met with four of the non-concurring agencies to develop an approach that would allow for concurrence with the preferred alternative. ODOT drafted a Record of Agreement/Consensus to this effect, which was signed by all CETAS participants in January 2004.</p> <p>The Yamhill County Commissioners voted to approve an exception to the Statewide Planning Goals and to amend the County's land use plans and ordinances for the Newberg-Dundee Project on September 30, 2004.</p> <p>The Location Final EIS for the Newberg-Dundee Transportation Improvement Project is scheduled for early 2005. Completion of the preliminary design and the Design EIS is expected to be completed in Spring 2007.</p> |
| Elements of the planning and project development process that are unique to the conditions or requirements in the particular state. | State planning law mandates that ODOT projects be consistent with local comprehensive plans and statewide planning goals. Local governments must concur with a project and adopt comprehensive plan amendments and goal exceptions to authorize a facility within a proposed corridor. The Transportation System Plan Guidelines require these comprehensive plan amendments and goal exceptions to be passed between the time of the Location Draft EIS and publishing of the Location Final EIS.  |

| <b>The Loop 12/IH 35E Corridor Major Investment Study and Environmental Assessment Project in Texas</b>  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Descriptor</b>  |   |
| Problem that the project was intended to address.  | Length of environmental review process.   |
| Environmental permits and approvals, if any, which are being addressed by the project.   | National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance   |
| Unique approaches or processes that are being used to achieve environmental streamlining in the transportation planning and project development process. | Early coordination with involved agencies, use of a broad stakeholder process, use of “evergreen” (on-call) contracts for consultants, the use of a combined Major Investment Study (MIS)-NEPA process and contracts, and reviews of NEPA documents concurrently at interim stages of project development.  |
| Goals or objectives of the sponsor for this project.   | Local community consensus and support for the project. Reduction in time to complete the environmental review process.  |
| How the sponsors intend to measure and evaluate success or failure.  | Not Applicable. The Loop 12/IH 35E Pilot Project was essentially completed on December 11, 2002.  |
| Agencies or stakeholders that were involved in developing the pilot project.   | Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), City of Dallas, City of Irving, Dallas County Public Works, DART, and Texas Transportation Institute.  |
| Steps being taken to ensure appropriate communication, coordination, and cooperation among the stakeholders.   | TxDOT established a Loop 12/IH 35E Project Coordination Work Group, which included Federal and State transportation and resource agencies, city officials, the county, and the public and involved these entities in the project development process. TxDOT also tried more flexible methods, such as meeting with the stakeholders at a location, time, and date of the stakeholders’ choosing. In addition, TxDOT developed a Loop 12/IH 35E Web Site to keep the involved agencies informed. |
| Public participation process that was used in the project.   | All citizens living within 200 feet (61 meters) of the corridor were invited to quarterly public meetings to find solutions and contribute to the project’s direction. Also, TxDOT used open houses, telephone “hot-line”, on-call presentations, press releases, briefings to elected officials, newspaper ads and legal notices.  |

| <b>The Loop 12/IH 35E Corridor Major Investment Study and Environmental Assessment Project in Texas</b>                             |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Descriptor</b>   |   |
| Schedule of key activities.   | <p>On December 11, 2002, the FHWA issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Loop 12/IH 35E Corridor Environmental Assessment.</p> <p>TxDOT held a project streamlining coordination meeting on November 6, 2002 to find the ways to streamline the funding, preparation of right-of-way map/acquisition, PS&amp;E, and construction phasing areas. As of August 2003, TxDOT was well underway with the right-of-way mapping, and the City of Irving was seeking to complete some right-of-way purchases also.</p> <p>The Loop 12/IH 35E Task Force Group is also pursuing the possibility of constructing interim projects. Originally scheduled for advertising in Fiscal Year 2009, the Loop 12/IH 35E Project should now move up to letting in Fiscal Year 2005 or 2006.</p> |
| Elements of the planning and project development process that are unique to the conditions or requirements in the particular state. | Texas prepares many EAs, rather than EISs, to serve as the NEPA documents for their projects, particularly in the Dallas District.  |

| <b>Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Screening Worksheets in Wisconsin</b>  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Descriptor</b>  |   |
| Problem that the project was intended to address.  | A typical EIS process for a new major project in Wisconsin takes approximately five years to complete and the EISs are voluminous documents.  |
| Environmental permits and approvals, if any, which are being addressed by the project.   | National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance.  |
| Unique approaches or processes that are being used to achieve environmental streamlining in the transportation planning and project development process. | The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) has used Screening Worksheets (SWs) for EAs for more than 20 years. The SWs describe the proposed action and document all the direct, indirect, and cumulative effect evaluations and mitigation measures in an easy-to-complete question and answer format. The Pilot Project is to take these worksheets to the next level and use them to create an EIS. |
| Goals or objectives of the sponsor for this project.   | Standardizing the format of EISs; including in the EIS only the information needed to identify, evaluate, and mitigate adverse environmental effects; and reducing the EIS length to approximately 150 to 300 pages   |
| How the sponsors intend to measure and evaluate success or failure.  | Number of pages of EIS using the SWs. Research Team is using the performance measures in Appendix D.  |
| Agencies or stakeholders that were involved in developing the pilot project.   | Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), WisDOT, and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.  |
| Steps being taken to ensure appropriate communication, coordination, and cooperation among the stakeholders.   | For both projects that are to use the EIS SWs, early public and agency involvement has occurred to refine the Purpose and Need, focus on alternatives to be considered, and identify the environmental issues and concerns that will be addressed in the EISs.  |
| Public participation process that was used in the project.   | See above. WisDOT has used local focus groups to identify project alternatives.   |



| <b>Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Screening Worksheets in Wisconsin</b>   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Descriptor</b>   |  |
| Schedule of key activities.   | <p>In mid-May 2003, WisDOT issued a review draft to the agencies of the Draft EIS for the Verona Road (Route 151)/West Beltline (U.S.12/14) Project using the SWs. WisDOT submitted the Draft EIS for the Verona Road Project to FHWA in early 2004, and FHWA approved the document on March 5, 2004. Public hearings were held on the Draft EIS in May 2004 and the comment period ended June 8, 2004. EPA reviewed the document in June 2004 and had no objections to the preferred alternative. WisDOT expected the Final EIS for the Verona Road Project to be completed in early Fall 2004, but the document is not yet complete. Construction is scheduled for 2009 or later.</p> <p>WisDOT prepared an internal draft of the Draft EIS for the State Route 23 Project for internal review in November 2003. Meetings were held in March 2004 to present the information in the Draft EIS to the public and the document was approved in December 2004. Public hearings are scheduled for January 5, 2005, with the comment period closing January 21, 2005. The Final EIS for the State Route 23 Project is scheduled to be completed in 2005, with construction slated for 2009 to 2011.</p> |
| Elements of the planning and project development process that are unique to the conditions or requirements in the particular state. | WisDOT has used SWs for EAs for more than 20 years.  |

| <b>Parallel Processing of Section 106 and Section 4(f) Requirements in New Jersey</b>  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Descriptor</b>  |   |
| Problem that the project was intended to address.  | If a Federal-aid project has an adverse effect on a historic district or a historic site (except bridges), it does not qualify for a Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluation. These projects must go through separate and sequential processes to comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (Section 106) and to comply with Section 4(f). The same issues in three different documents (the Section 106 documentation, the Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation, and Final Section 4(f) Evaluation) must be addressed and reviewed by essentially the same entities. |
| Environmental permits and approvals, if any, which are being addressed by the project.   | Section 106 and Section 4(f).   |
| Unique approaches or processes that are being used to achieve environmental streamlining in the transportation planning and project development process. | The Pilot Project involved merging the Section 106 process with the Section 4(f) process for projects that have adverse effects on historic districts and historic sites (except bridges) and that are classified as categorical exclusions.  |
| Goals or objectives of the sponsor for this project.   | To eliminate duplication and redundant coordination by fully addressing the requirements of Section 106 and Section 4(f) in parallel.   |
| How the sponsors intend to measure and evaluate success or failure.  | Savings in time resulting from parallel processing of Section 106 and Section 4(f).   |
| Agencies or stakeholders that were involved in developing the pilot project.   | Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT), New Jersey Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and New Jersey Division of Law.   |
| Steps being taken to ensure appropriate communication, coordination, and cooperation among the stakeholders.   | The Pilot Project Process included steps to consult with the SHPO, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), the public, and local governments early in the process and also involved circulation of the Draft Section 4(f)/Section 106 Summary Documentation and Draft Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to the public/stakeholders and regulators.  |
| Public participation process that was used in the project.   | In addition to the steps described above, the public outreach program was a function of the projects selected to undergo parallel processing of Section 106 and Section 4(f).   |
| Schedule of key activities.  | Project is inactive.  |
| Elements of the planning and project development process that are unique to the conditions or requirements in the particular state.                      | Not applicable. The situation that the Pilot Project was to address is applicable to all states.  |

## APPENDIX D: Pilot Project Performance Measures

### D-1

#### Pilot Project Performance Measures

##### RCIP Pilot Project

#### NCHRP 25-24

#### Performance Measures

##### **Performance Measure 1:** Improved Transportation Decision-making

**Measure:** Measures the RCIP process. The goal is to improve the quality and efficiency of decision-making. Measures initial perceptions of potential of RCIP to achieve improvements as compared to perceptions during application of RCIP process over time.

##### **RCIP Potential Performance (answer with first report only)**

Please state your opinion as it was prior to starting the RCIP process.

1. The RCIP process will improve the quality and efficiency of decision-making on transportation projects (select one).

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

2. The expected degree of improvement in the quality and efficiency of decision-making as a result of the RCIP process is (select one):

- ☐ High
- ☐ Moderate
- ☐ Low
- ☐ No change

3. Comments:

##### **RCIP Performance (answer each quarter):**

Please provide your opinion of the current RCIP process.

1. The RCIP process is improving the quality and efficiency of decision-making on transportation projects (select one).

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

2. The degree of improvement in the quality and efficiency of decision-making as a result of the RCIP process is (select one):

- ☐ High

- ☐ Moderate
- ☐ Low
- ☐ No change

3. Comments:

**Performance Measure 2:** Improved Transportation Decision-making

**Measure:** Measures the RCIP process. The goal is to reduce processing time and costs by achieving early identification and closure on issues. Examines perceptions over time.

**RCIP Performance (answer each quarter):**

Indicate your rating of the RCIP process on each question appearing below.

1. The organizations participating in the RCIP proceedings send representatives to meetings and hearings who have the authority necessary to make decisions for their organization on the issues presented (select one):

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

2. RCIP participants make decisions in a timely and effective manner (select one):

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

3. Once a decision is made in RCIP proceedings, the participants treat it as binding except in cases involving significant new information or substantially changed circumstances.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

4. Comments:

**Performance Measure 3:** Improved Environmental Protection

**Measure:** Measures the RCIP process. The goal is to improve environmental results through the application of an integrated planning process. Compares perceptions of effectiveness of pre-RCIP process and RCIP process, and tracks perceptions of RCIP process over time.

**RCIP Process Performance Baseline (answer with first report only):**

1. Rate the effectiveness of the “traditional” (pre-RCIP) Caltrans transportation planning and project development process in protecting the **human** environment (select one):

- ☐ Usually very effective
- ☐ Usually effective

- ☐ Usually somewhat effective
- ☐ Usually not effective

2. Rate the effectiveness of the “traditional” (pre-RCIP) transportation planning and project development process in protecting the **natural** environment is (select one):

- ☐ Usually very effective
- ☐ Usually effective
- ☐ Usually somewhat effective
- ☐ Usually not effective

3. Comments:

**RCIP Performance (answer each quarter):**

1. Rate the effectiveness of the transportation planning and project development process used for the RCIP in protecting the **human** environment (select one):

- ☐ Usually very effective
- ☐ Usually effective
- ☐ Usually somewhat effective
- ☐ Usually not effective

2. Rate the effectiveness of the transportation planning and project development process used for the RCIP in protecting the **natural** environment (select one):

- ☐ Usually very effective
- ☐ Usually effective
- ☐ Usually somewhat effective
- ☐ Usually not effective

3. Comments:

**Performance Measure 4:** Improved Transportation Decision-making.

**Measure:** Measures the RCIP process. The goal is to improve the environmental review process by increasing its productivity and/or its environmental results. Examines perceptions of the results over time.

**RCIP Performance (answer each quarter):**

1. The overall **staff and consultant labor** (time) requirements of the RCIP process, as compared to the traditional Caltrans planning and project development process, are (select one):

- ☐ Significantly greater
- ☐ Significantly less
- ☐ About the same

2. The overall **processing time** requirements of the RCIP process, as compared to the traditional Caltrans planning and project development process, are (select one):

- ☐ Significantly greater
- ☐ Significantly less
- ☐ About the same

3. The benefits of the RCIP process justify its labor and processing time requirements.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

**4. Comments:**

**D-2**  
**Pilot Project Performance Measures**

**Caltrans-FHWA-EPA Partnership Pilot Project**

**NCHRP 25-24**

**Performance Measures**

**Performance Measure 1:** Improved Transportation Decision-making

**Measure:** Measures the implementation of the Mare Island Accord (July 2000). The goal is to foster effective, collaborative efforts among the three agencies in the transportation and environmental planning processes. Compares pre-accord and post-accord results and examines perceptions of the results over time.

**Baseline Performance (answer with first report only):**

Please rate the performance of the participating agencies prior to the July 2000 Mare Island Accord on each item listed below.

1. The participating agencies consistently displayed a high level of cooperation and collaboration in their interactions (select one):

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

2. Interagency communication on transportation projects and issues was timely and effective (select one):

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

3. Caltrans offered frequent and appropriately-timed opportunities for regulatory and resource agency involvement in transportation project planning and development activities (select one):

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

4. Interagency coordination efforts typically produced timely and high-quality information and decisions (select one):

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

5. Caltrans had an “environmental IQ” that demonstrated a broad-based understanding within Caltrans of the missions, jurisdictional concerns, and operating needs of the regulatory and resource agencies (select one):

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

6. The regulatory and resource agencies had a “transportation IQ” that demonstrated a broad-based understanding of the mission, jurisdictional concerns, and operating needs of transportation agencies (select one):

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

7. On average, the environmental review process for transportation projects produced good environmental results (select one):

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

8. On average, the environmental review process for transportation projects produced good transportation results (select one):

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

9: Comments:

**Partnership Performance (answer each quarter):**

Please rate the current performance of the participating agencies on each item listed below.

1. The participating agencies consistently display a high level of cooperation and collaboration in their interactions (select one):

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion



2. Interagency communication on transportation projects and issues is timely and effective (select one):

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

3. Caltrans offers frequent and appropriately-timed opportunities for regulatory and resource agency involvement in transportation project planning and development activities (select one):

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

4. Interagency coordination efforts typically produce timely and high-quality information and decisions (select one):

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

5. Caltrans has an “environmental IQ” that demonstrates a broad-based understanding within Caltrans of the missions, jurisdictional concerns, and operating needs of the regulatory and resource agencies (select one):

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

6. The regulatory and resource agencies have a “transportation IQ” that demonstrates a broad-based understanding of the mission, jurisdictional concerns, and operating needs of transportation agencies (select one):

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

7. On average, the environmental review process for transportation projects produces good environmental results (select one):

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

8. On average, the environmental review process for transportation projects produces good transportation results (select one):

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

9. Comments:

**Performance Measure 2:** Improved Transportation Decision-making

**Measure:** Measures the effectiveness of the Merced Partnership for Integrated Planning (PIP). The goal is to integrate environmental considerations into regional transportation planning and increase early coordination with stakeholders. Compares results before PIP and examines perceptions of the results over time.

**Baseline Performance (answer with first report only):**

Please rate the effectiveness of the Merced County Regional Transportation Plan process in 1999-2001, prior to the PIP, on the following items:

1. The process encouraged state and federal agencies to participate in the evaluation of all significant issues.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

2. When state and federal agency input was requested, those agencies gave the input in a timely and effective manner.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

3. The planning process used tools and procedures that were able to identify effectively the potential human and natural environmental effects of the regional plan's projects.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

4. Comments:

**Partnership Performance (answer each quarter):**

Please rate the effectiveness of the current Merced County Regional Transportation Plan process, with the PIP, on the following items:

1. The process encourages state and federal agencies to participate in the evaluation of all significant issues.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

2. When state and federal agency input is requested, those agencies give the input in a timely and effective manner.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

3. The planning process uses tools and procedures that are able to identify effectively the potential human and natural environmental effects of the regional plan's projects.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

4. Comments:

**Performance Measure 3: Improved Environmental Protection**

**Measure:** Measures the effectiveness of the Merced Partnership for Integrated Planning (PIP). The goal is to achieve better environmental results through an integrated planning process. Compares results before PIP and examines perceptions of the results over time.

**Baseline Performance (answer with first report only):**

Please rate the effectiveness of the Merced County Regional Transportation Plan process prior to the PIP on the following items:

1. The effectiveness of the process in protecting the human environment (select one):

- ☐ Usually very effective
- ☐ Usually effective
- ☐ Usually somewhat effective
- ☐ Usually not effective

2. The effectiveness of the process in protecting the natural environment (select one):

- ☐ Usually very effective
- ☐ Usually effective
- ☐ Usually somewhat effective
- ☐ Usually not effective

3. The effectiveness of the process in producing decisions that remain in effect, rather than being revisited, during subsequent NEPA proceedings.

- ☐ Usually very effective
- ☐ Usually effective
- ☐ Usually somewhat effective
- ☐ Usually not effective

4. Comments:

**Partnership Performance (answer each quarter):**

Please rate the effectiveness of the Merced County Regional Transportation Plan process with the PIP in effect on the following items:

1. The effectiveness of the process in protecting the human environment (select one):

- ☐ Usually very effective
- ☐ Usually effective
- ☐ Usually somewhat effective
- ☐ Usually not effective

2. The effectiveness of the process in protecting the natural environment (select one):

- ☐ Usually very effective
- ☐ Usually effective
- ☐ Usually somewhat effective
- ☐ Usually not effective

3. The effectiveness of the process in producing decisions that remain in effect, rather than being revisited, during subsequent NEPA proceedings.

- ☐ Usually very effective
- ☐ Usually effective
- ☐ Usually somewhat effective
- ☐ Usually not effective

4. Comments:

**Performance Measure 4: Improved Transportation Decision-making**

**Measure:** Measures the effectiveness of the revised NEPA-404 Integration Process. The goal is to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the NEPA-404 review process. Compares results before the revised integration agreement with results under the revised agreement and examines perceptions of effectiveness of the revised agreement over time.

**Baseline Performance (answer with first report only):**

Please rate the effectiveness of the integrated NEPA-404 review process prior to the integration agreement revisions on the following items:

1. The 404/NEPA Integrated Process, as applied, offered adequate opportunities to participate in transportation planning and programming activities (select one):

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

2. The organizations participating in the Integrated Process sent representatives to meetings and hearings who had the authority necessary to make decisions for their organization on the issues presented (select one):

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

3. Participants provided input and made decisions in a timely and effective manner (select one):

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

4. Once a decision was made in Integrated Process proceedings, the participants treated it as binding except in cases involving significant new information or substantially changed circumstances (select one):

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

5. When an agency disagreed with a milestone or checkpoint decision (such as purpose and need, least environmentally damaging practicable alternative, etc.), it typically offered a complete and substantiated explanation for its disagreement (select one):

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

6. The original integrated NEPA-404 process created an effective framework for NEPA and 404 decisions.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

7. Comments:

**Partnership Performance (answer each quarter after the signing of the revised integration agreement):**

Please rate the effectiveness of the integrated NEPA-404 review process under the revised integration agreement on the following items:

1. The 404/NEPA Integrated Process, as applied, offers adequate opportunities to participate in transportation planning and programming activities (select one):

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

2. The organizations participating in the Integrated Process send representatives to meetings and hearings who have the authority necessary to make decisions for their organization on the issues presented (select one):

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

3. Participants provide input and make decisions in a timely and effective manner (select one):

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

4. Once a decision is made in Integrated Process proceedings, the participants treat it as binding except in cases involving significant new information or substantially changed circumstances (select one):

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

5. When an agency disagrees with a milestone or checkpoint decision (such as purpose and need, least environmentally damaging practicable alternative, etc.), it typically offers a complete and substantiated explanation for its disagreement (select one):

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

6. The revised integrated NEPA-404 process creates an effective framework for NEPA and 404 decisions.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

7. Comments:

**Performance Measure 5:** Improved Transportation Decision-making

**Measure:** Measures the results of the Merced Partnership for Integrated Planning (PIP) and Revised NEPA-404 Integration Process. The goal is to improve results of environmental review process by increasing the return on investment (e.g., reduce overall agency and consultant labor and processing time requirements, and/or enhance the quality of final results). Examines perceptions of the results over time.

**Partnership Performance (answer each quarter):**

Please rate the combined performance of the Merced Partnership for Integrated Planning (PIP) and Revised NEPA-404 Integration Process on the following items:

1. Agency/consultant staff time requirements under the new processes, as compared to the previous processes, are (select one):

- ☐ Significantly greater
- ☐ Significantly less
- ☐ About the same

2. Processing time requirements under the new processes, as compared to the previous processes, are (select one):

- ☐ Significantly greater
- ☐ Significantly less
- ☐ About the same

3. The benefits of the new processes justify their human resource and processing time requirements (select one):

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

4. Comments:

**D-3**  
**Pilot Project Performance Measures**

**Caltrans Position Funding Pilot Project**

**NCHRP 25-24**

**Performance Measures**

**Performance Measure 1:** Improved Transportation Decision-making

**Measure:** Measures the effectiveness of the interagency position funding initiative. The goal is to create and sustain additional capacity within agencies reviewing Caltrans projects in order to facilitate review of those projects. Compares number of positions funded and occupied over time.

**Performance Baseline (answer with first report only):**

The full-time equivalent (40 hours/week) state and federal agency positions funded by Caltrans and occupied as of October 1, 1999 were (fill in position, agency in which position is located, and whether it was funded and occupied):

| Position Type | Participating Agency | Funded (yes/no) | Occupied (yes/no) |
|---------------|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
|               |                      |                 |                   |
|               |                      |                 |                   |
|               |                      |                 |                   |
|               |                      |                 |                   |
|               |                      |                 |                   |
|               |                      |                 |                   |
|               |                      |                 |                   |

Comments:

**Caltrans Pilot Performance (answer each quarter):**

The full-time equivalent (40 hours/week) state and federal agency positions currently funded by Caltrans and occupied are (fill in position, agency in which position is located, and whether it was funded and occupied):

| Position Type | Participating Agency | Funded (yes/no) | Occupied (yes/no) |
|---------------|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
|               |                      |                 |                   |
|               |                      |                 |                   |
|               |                      |                 |                   |
|               |                      |                 |                   |
|               |                      |                 |                   |
|               |                      |                 |                   |
|               |                      |                 |                   |

Comments:



**Performance Measure 2:** Improved Transportation Decision-making

**Measure:** Measures the effectiveness of interagency position funding. The goal is to create and sustain additional capacity within agencies reviewing Caltrans projects in order to facilitate review of those projects. Examines perceptions of the effect of position funding on the agency review process over time.

**Caltrans Pilot Performance (answer each quarter):**

Caltrans respondents: Please answer the questions based on the performance of Caltrans and performance of the reviewing agencies as a group.

Position incumbents: Please answer the questions based on the performance of your host agency and the performance of Caltrans.

Other respondents: Please answer the questions based on the performance of your agency and the performance of Caltrans.

1. Applications are processed within the time agreed to by Caltrans and the agency.

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Usually
- ☐ Frequently
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Rarely or Never

2. Disagreements on projects and applications are resolved in an effective and timely manner.

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Usually
- ☐ Frequently
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Rarely or Never

3. Caltrans establishes and communicates clearly its project priorities so that the reviewing agency can plan effective work schedules.

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Usually
- ☐ Frequently
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Rarely or Never

4. Work products are consistently of high quality, meeting the reviewing agency's needs.

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Usually
- ☐ Frequently
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Rarely or Never

5. The reviewing agency consistently meets expectations for staff availability and participation in project reviews and decision-making.

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Usually
- ☐ Frequently
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Rarely or Never

6. Comments:

## **D-4 Pilot Project Performance Measures**

### **Florida ETDM Pilot Project**

#### **NCHRP 25-24**

#### **Performance Measures**

##### **Performance Measure 1: Time and Cost Savings**

**Measure:** Measures the Efficient Transportation Decision-making (ETDM) screening process for projects in FDOT's Long Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program. The goal is to reduce processing time and costs through the early identification of major issues and study needs, and the sorting of projects by review requirements. Compares the average duration and cost for Type 2 Categorical Exclusion projects before ETDM and with ETDM.

##### **ETDM Performance:**

1. The average duration (calendar days) of the study phase for a typical Type 2 Categorical Exclusion project started and completed in the period 1998-2002 not using the ETDM process was:
  
2. The average cost of the study phase for a typical Type 2 Categorical Exclusion project started and completed in the period 1998-2002 not using the ETDM process was:
  
3. The number of 2003 FDOT Five Year Work Program projects that would have been treated as Type 2 Categorical Exclusion projects (requiring technical studies) prior to the ETDM process, but now will go directly into design after ETDM review is:

##### **Performance Measure 2: Cost Savings**

**Measure:** Measures the ETDM process effects on costs. The goal is to reduce the cost of program delivery, as measured by project consultant costs to FDOT Districts and Florida Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs).

##### **ETDM Performance:**

1. The average FDOT consultant cost per project prior to the use of the ETDM process was:
  
2. The average FDOT consultant cost per project using the ETDM process is:
  
3. The average Florida MPO consultant cost per project prior to the use of the ETDM process was:
  
4. The average Florida MPO consultant cost per project using the ETDM process is:

##### **Performance Measure 1 (3): Improved Environmental Protection and Improved Transportation System**

**Measure:** Measures whether the ETDM process improves the environmental and transportation system results through its integrated planning process. Compares perceptions of ETDM results to the results of the FDOT process prior to the use of ETDM.

**Performance Baseline (answer with first report only):**

1. Rate the effectiveness of the “traditional” (pre-ETDM) FDOT transportation planning and project development process in protecting the **human** environment (select one):

- ☐ Usually very effective
- ☐ Usually effective
- ☐ Usually somewhat effective
- ☐ Usually not effective

2. Rate the effectiveness of the “traditional” (pre-ETDM) FDOT transportation planning and project development process in protecting the **natural** environment (select one):

- ☐ Usually very effective
- ☐ Usually effective
- ☐ Usually somewhat effective
- ☐ Usually not effective

3. Rate the effectiveness of the “traditional” (pre-ETDM) FDOT transportation planning and project development process in producing an efficient and effective transportation system.

- ☐ Usually very effective
- ☐ Usually effective
- ☐ Usually somewhat effective
- ☐ Usually not effective

**ETDM Performance (answer each quarter):**

1. Rate the effectiveness of the ETDM transportation planning and project development process in protecting the **human** environment (select one):

- ☐ Usually very effective
- ☐ Usually effective
- ☐ Usually somewhat effective
- ☐ Usually not effective

2. Rate the effectiveness of the ETDM transportation planning and project development process in protecting the **natural** environment (select one):

- ☐ Usually very effective
- ☐ Usually effective
- ☐ Usually somewhat effective
- ☐ Usually not effective

3. Rate the effectiveness of the ETDM transportation planning and project development process in producing an efficient and effective transportation system.

- ☐ Usually very effective
- ☐ Usually effective
- ☐ Usually somewhat effective
- ☐ Usually not effective

**Performance Measure 2 (4): Improved Transportation Decision-making**

**Measure:** Measures whether the ETDM process improves the results of the environmental review process. The goal is to improve the environmental review process by increasing its productivity and/or its environmental results. Examines perceptions of the results over time.

**ETDM Performance (answer each quarter):**

1. The overall **staff and consultant labor** (time) requirements of the ETDM process, as compared to the traditional FDOT planning and project development process, are (select one):

- ☐ Significantly greater
- ☐ Significantly less
- ☐ About the same

2. The overall **processing time** requirements of the ETDM process, as compared to the traditional FDOT planning and project development process, are (select one):

- ☐ Significantly greater
- ☐ Significantly less
- ☐ About the same

3. The benefits of the ETDM process justify its labor and processing time requirements.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

**D-5**  
**Pilot Project Performance Measures**

**GRPP Pilot Project**

**NCHRP 25-24**  
**Performance Measures**

**Performance Measure 1:** Impact of Early Involvement on Environmental Review Time Requirements

**Measure:** Measures NEPA Review Process. Goal is to reduce time required for review through use of early public involvement process. Compares Pilot results to national averages.

**Macon Corridor**

|  |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| Date of first public meeting                         | <input type="text"/> |
| Date of scoping meeting                              | <input type="text"/> |
| Date of submission of draft Environmental Assessment | <input type="text"/> |
| Date of federal lead agency approval of corridor     | <input type="text"/> |

**Athens Corridor**

|  |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| Date of first public meeting                         | <input type="text"/> |
| Date of scoping meeting                              | <input type="text"/> |
| Date of submission of draft Environmental Assessment | <input type="text"/> |
| Date of federal lead agency approval of corridor     | <input type="text"/> |

**Atlanta Multimodal Station**

|  |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| Date of first public meeting                         | <input type="text"/> |
| Date of scoping meeting                              | <input type="text"/> |
| Date of submission of draft Environmental Assessment | <input type="text"/> |
| Date of federal lead agency approval of corridor     | <input type="text"/> |

**Performance Measure 2:** Improved Transportation Decision-making

**Measure:** Measures GRPP Process. Goal is to improve results of environmental review process by increasing the return on investment (e.g., reduce overall agency and consultant labor and processing time requirements, or enhance quality of final results).

**GRPP Process Performance:**

Please provide your assessment of the GRPP Process on the items below.

1. The overall agency/consultant staff time requirements under the new GRPP process, as compared to the traditional GDOT process, are (select one):

- ☐ Significantly greater
- ☐ Significantly less
- ☐ About the same

2. The overall processing time requirements under the new GRPP process, as compared to the traditional GDOT process, are (select one):

- ☐ Significantly greater
- ☐ Significantly less
- ☐ About the same

3. The benefits of the new GRPP process justify its human resource and processing time requirements (select one).

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

### **Performance Measure 3:** Improvement in Transportation Decision-making Process

**Measure:** Measures joint management under three-agency GRPP MOA (GDOT, GRPA, GRTA). Goal is expedited decision-making and program delivery.

#### **Rail Program Managers' ratings of the GRPP MOA**

Please provide your assessment of the GRPP MOA on the items below.

1. The quality of communication among GDOT, GRPA and GRTA is (select one):

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Adequate
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Poor

2. The coordination between Rail Program Managers and the GRPCC is (select one):

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Adequate
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Poor

3. The decision-making process under the GRPP MOA is (select one):

- ☐ Usually very effective
- ☐ Usually effective
- ☐ Usually somewhat effective
- ☐ Usually not effective

4. The dispute avoidance/resolution process under the GRPP MOA is (select one):

- ☐ Usually very effective
- ☐ Usually effective
- ☐ Usually somewhat effective
- ☐ Usually not effective
- ☐ Not applied

5. The GRPP MOA makes implementation of decisions on the GRPP more efficient and effective (select one).

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

6. The overall effectiveness of the joint management process, taking into account cost, time, and how equitable the results are for the three participating agencies, is (select one):

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Adequate
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Poor

7. Comments:

**GRPCC Members' ratings of the GRPP MOA**

Please provide your assessment of the GRPP MOA on the items below.

1. The quality of communication among GDOT, GRPA and GRTA is (select one):

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Adequate
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Poor

2. The coordination between GRPCC members, the Rail Program Managers and the Program Management Team is (select one):

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Adequate
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Poor

3. The decision-making process under the GRPP MOA is (select one):

- ☐ Usually very effective
- ☐ Usually effective
- ☐ Usually somewhat effective
- ☐ Usually not effective

4. The dispute avoidance/resolution process under the GRPP MOA is (select one):

- ☐ Usually very effective
- ☐ Usually effective
- ☐ Usually somewhat effective
- ☐ Usually not effective
- ☐ Not applied

5. The GRPP MOA makes implementation of decisions on the GRPP more efficient and effective (select one).

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

6. The overall effectiveness of the joint management process, taking into account cost, time, and how equitable the results are for the three participating agencies, is (select one):

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Adequate
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Poor

7. Comments:

**Program Management Team Members' rating of the GRPP MOA**

Please provide your assessment of the GRPP MOA on the items below.

1. The quality of communication among GDOT, GRPA and GRTA is (select one):

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Adequate
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Poor

2. The coordination among the Program Management Team, the Rail Program Managers and the GRPCC is (select one):

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Adequate
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Poor

3. The decision-making process under the GRPP MOA is (select one):

- ☐ Usually very effective
- ☐ Usually effective
- ☐ Usually somewhat effective
- ☐ Usually not effective

4. The dispute avoidance/resolution process under the GRPP MOA is (select one):

- ☐ Usually very effective
- ☐ Usually effective
- ☐ Usually somewhat effective
- ☐ Usually not effective
- ☐ Not applied

5. The GRPP MOA makes implementation of decisions on the GRPP more efficient and effective (select one).

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

6. The overall effectiveness of the joint management process, taking into account cost, time, and how equitable the results are for the three participating agencies, is (select one):

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Adequate
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Poor

7. Comments:



**D-6**  
**Pilot Project Performance Measures**

**New Jersey 106-4(f) Pilot Project**

**NCHRP 25-24**  
**Performance Measures**

**Performance Measure 1: Time Savings in Processing Reviews**

**Measure:** Measures the time efficiency of combined 106 and 4(f) process for projects. The goal is to reduce the time required for processing Section 106-Section 4(f) reviews for Categorical Exclusion projects that do not affect historic bridges and do not qualify for Programmatic Section 4(f) treatment (“qualifying projects”). Compares perceptions of results under the combined process to the results of the previous, separate processes. Compares the average time required for processing qualifying projects through 106 and 4(f) reviews during 1995-2000 to the average time required to process qualifying projects through the combined review process. Measurement starts with the date of filing the Section 106 Determination of Eligibility documentation and ends with date of issuance of Final Section 4(f) Evaluation.

**Performance Baseline (answer with first report only):**

1. The average number of calendar days required for processing qualifying projects through both Section 106 and 4(f) reviews in the period 1995-2000 was:

2. Comments:

**Combined Process Performance (answer each quarter):**

1. The number of calendar days required for processing qualifying projects through the new combined Section 106 and 4(f) review process is (please list the projects by name and the number of days required):

2. Comments:

**Performance Measure 2: Staff and Consultant Time Savings**

**Measure:** Measures the resource requirements of the combined Section 106 and Section 4(f) review process. The goal is to reduce the labor required to produce and review Section 106 and Section 4(f) documentation. Captures perception of old processes compared to new combined process.

**Combined Process Performance (answer each quarter):**

Please provide your assessment of the combined process on the item listed below.

1. The overall **staff and consultant labor** (time) requirements of the new combined process, as compared to the “traditional” separate review processes, are (select one):

- ☐ Significantly greater
- ☐ Significantly less
- ☐ About the same

2. Comments:

**Performance Measure 3: Completeness of Documentation**

**Measure:** Measures the combined Section 106 and Section 4(f) review process in terms of documentation requirements. The goal is to reduce documentation requirements without compromising quality, completeness and suitability for statutory reviews. Captures perception of old processes compared to new combined process.

**Combined Process Performance (answer each quarter):**

Please provide your assessment for each of the items below.

1. With regard to quality and completeness, the documentation submitted for reviews under the combined review process is equal to, or better than, the documentation submitted under “traditional” separate review processes (select one):

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

2. The documentation submitted for combined Section 106 and Section 4(f) reviews provides the information necessary for the statutory reviews and meets the reviewing agencies’ needs (select one):

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

3. Comments:

**Performance Measure 4: Improved Transportation Decision-making**

**Measure:** Measures the combined 106 and 4(f) process for projects. The goal is to achieve appropriate protection of Section 106 and Section 4(f) interests on qualifying projects through a more efficient process. Compares perceptions of results under the combined process to the results of the previous, separate processes.

**Performance Baseline (answer with first report only):**

Please provide your assessment for each of the items below.

1. Rate the effectiveness of the “traditional” separate 106 review process in achieving the objectives of Section 106 (select one):

- ☐ Usually very effective
- ☐ Usually effective
- ☐ Usually somewhat effective
- ☐ Usually not effective

2. Rate the effectiveness of the “traditional” separate 4(f) review process in achieving the objectives of Section 4(f) (select one):

- ☐ Usually very effective
- ☐ Usually effective
- ☐ Usually somewhat effective
- ☐ Usually not effective

3. Comments:

**Combined Process Performance (answer each quarter):**

Please provide your assessment for each of the items below.

1. Rate the effectiveness of the combined 106 and 4(f) review process in achieving the objectives of Section 106 (select one):

- ☐ Usually very effective
- ☐ Usually effective
- ☐ Usually somewhat effective
- ☐ Usually not effective

2. Rate the effectiveness of the combined 106 and 4(f) review process in achieving the objectives of Section 4(f) (select one):

- ☐ Usually very effective
- ☐ Usually effective
- ☐ Usually somewhat effective
- ☐ Usually not effective

3. As compared to the traditional, separate Section 106 and Section 4(f) processes, the new combined process does not compromise the quality of evaluation.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

4. As compared to the traditional, separate Section 106 and Section 4(f) processes, the new combined process does not compromise the protection of historic resources.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

5. Comments:

**D-7**  
**Pilot Project Performance Measures**

**ODOT Integration of NEPA into Statewide Planning Pilot Project**

**NCHRP 25-24**

**Performance Measures**

**Performance Measure 1:** Improved Transportation Decision-making

**Measure:** Measures the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process. The goal is to improve the quality and efficiency of decision-making. Measures pre-integration perceptions of potential to achieve improvements, as compared to perceptions of improvement from the application of the integrated process over time.

**Potential Performance of Integrated Process (answer with first report only)**

Please indicate the views you held **prior** to the initial use of the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process on the items listed below.

1. The Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process will improve the quality and efficiency of decision-making on transportation projects (select one).

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

2. The expected degree of improvement in the quality and efficiency of decision-making as a result of the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process is (select one):

- ☐ High
- ☐ Moderate
- ☐ Low
- ☐ No change

3. Comments:

**Integrated Process Performance (answer each quarter):**

Please indicate the views you now hold about the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process on the items listed below.

1. The Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process is improving the quality and efficiency of decision-making on transportation projects (select one).

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

2. The degree of improvement in the quality and efficiency of decision-making as a result of the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process is (select one):

- ☐ High
- ☐ Moderate
- ☐ Low
- ☐ No change

3. Comments:

**Performance Measure 2: Improved Transportation Decision-making**

**Measure:** Measures the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process. The goal is to reduce processing time and cost by achieving early identification of, and closure on, project issues. Examines perceptions of the performance by Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process participants over time.

**Integrated Process Performance (answer each quarter):**

Please rate the performance of the participating agencies on each item listed below.

1. The organizations participating in the proceedings send representatives to meetings and hearings who have the authority necessary to make decisions for their organization on the issues presented (select one):

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

2. Participants make decisions in a timely and effective manner (select one):

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

3. Once a decision is made in proceedings, the participants treat it as binding except in cases involving significant new information or substantially changed circumstances (select one):

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

4. Comments:

**Performance Measure 3: Improved Environmental Protection**

**Measure:** Measures the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process. The goal is to achieve better environmental results through the integrated process. Examines perceptions of the environmental results prior to, and with, the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process.

**Baseline Performance (answer with first report only):**

Please rate the effectiveness of the ODOT transportation planning and project development process **prior** to the integration of NEPA into Statewide Planning on the following items:

1. The effectiveness of the ODOT transportation planning and project development process in protecting the human environment (select one):
  - ☐ Usually very effective
  - ☐ Usually effective
  - ☐ Usually somewhat effective
  - ☐ Usually not effective
2. The effectiveness of the ODOT transportation planning and project development process in protecting the natural environment (select one):
  - ☐ Usually very effective
  - ☐ Usually effective
  - ☐ Usually somewhat effective
  - ☐ Usually not effective
3. Comments:

**Integrated Process Performance (answer each quarter):**

Please rate the effectiveness of the ODOT transportation planning and project development process **with** the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process on the following items:

1. The effectiveness of the integrated process in protecting the human environment (select one):
  - ☐ Usually very effective
  - ☐ Usually effective
  - ☐ Usually somewhat effective
  - ☐ Usually not effective
2. The effectiveness of the integrated process in protecting the natural environment (select one):
  - ☐ Usually very effective
  - ☐ Usually effective
  - ☐ Usually somewhat effective
  - ☐ Usually not effective
3. Comments:

**Performance Measure 4: Improvements in Transportation Corridor Protection**

**Measure:** Measures the results of transportation system planning. The goal is to improve protection of future transportation corridors through the integration of NEPA into the Statewide Planning Process. Examines community responses to requests for protective action for corridors given preferred alternative designation.

**Integrated Process Performance (answer each quarter):**

Please provide the information requested below for the period 2000-2003:

1. Please list the projects for which a Draft EIS identified a preferred alternative corridor.
2. For each project, please list the communities from which ODOT requested action to protect a corridor designated in a Draft EIS as a “preferred alternative.”
3. Please list those communities that designated the preferred alternative corridor area as protected prior to the Final EIS and ROD for the project.

4. If a requested designation was not made, please indicate any known reasons for that lack of designation.
5. Comments:

**Performance Measure 5:** Improved Transportation Decision-making

**Measure:** Measures the results of the integration of NEPA into Statewide Planning. The goal is to improve results of environmental review process by increasing the return on investment (e.g., reduce overall agency and consultant labor and processing time requirements, and/or enhance the quality of final results). Examines perceptions of the results over time.

**Integrated Process Performance (answer each quarter):**

Please rate the performance of the Integrated NEPA-Statewide Planning Process on the following items:

1. Agency/consultant staff time requirements under the new process, as compared to the previous process, are (select one):

- ☐ Significantly greater
- ☐ Significantly less
- ☐ About the same

2. Processing time requirements under the new process, as compared to the previous process, are (select one):

- ☐ Significantly greater
- ☐ Significantly less
- ☐ About the same

3. The benefits of the new process justifies its human resource and processing time requirements (select one):

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

4. Comments:

**D-8**  
**Pilot Project Performance Measures**

**Texas Loop 12/IH-35E Pilot Project**

**NCHRP 25-24**

**Performance Measures**

**Performance Measure 1:** Improved Environmental Protection and Improved Transportation Decision-making

**Measure:** Measures the Loop 12/IH environmental assessment (EA) process. The goal is to improve the results of the transportation planning and project development process through the use of the Loop EA process's early interagency coordination and public involvement procedures. Compares perceptions of the results of the Loop EA process to the results of TxDOT's traditional, pre-Loop planning and project development process.

**Loop Performance Baseline (answer with first report only):**

1. Rate the effectiveness of the "traditional" (pre-Loop 12/IH Project) TxDOT transportation planning and project development process in protecting the **human** environment (select one):

- ☐ Usually very effective
- ☐ Usually effective
- ☐ Usually somewhat effective
- ☐ Usually not effective

2. Rate the effectiveness of the "traditional" (pre-Loop 12/IH Project) TxDOT transportation planning and project development process in protecting the **natural** environment is (select one):

- ☐ Usually very effective
- ☐ Usually effective
- ☐ Usually somewhat effective
- ☐ Usually not effective

**Loop Performance (answer each quarter):**

1. Rate the effectiveness of the transportation planning and project development process used for the Loop 12/IH Project in protecting the **human** environment (select one):

- ☐ Usually very effective
- ☐ Usually effective
- ☐ Usually somewhat effective
- ☐ Usually not effective

2. Rate the effectiveness of the transportation planning and project development process used for the Loop 12/IH Project in protecting the **natural** environment (select one):

- ☐ Usually very effective
- ☐ Usually effective
- ☐ Usually somewhat effective
- ☐ Usually not effective



**Performance Measure 2:** Improved Transportation Decision-making

**Measure:** Measures the effectiveness of the Loop 12/IH Project Coordination Work Group (PCWG). The goal is to reduce processing time and costs through the use of the PCWG to achieve earlier identification and resolution of issues affecting the Loop project. Examines perceptions of effectiveness of the PCWG over time.

**Loop Performance (answer each quarter):**

1. The Project Coordination Work Group (PCWG) process succeeds in identifying early in the project the major issues relating to the Loop project (select one).

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

2. The PCWG process succeeds on resolving efficiently and effectively those major project issues that the PCWG identifies.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

3. PCWG participants make decisions in a timely and effective manner.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

4. The PCWG process is a highly useful tool for avoiding “surprises” and “fatal flaws” that can cause delay, extra costs, or project termination.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

**Performance Measure 3:** Improved Transportation Decision-making

**Measure:** Measures the Loop 12/IH environmental assessment (EA) process. The goal is to improve the environmental review process by increasing its productivity and/or its environmental results. Examines perceptions of the results over time.

**Loop Performance (answer each quarter):**

1. The overall **staff and consultant labor** (time) requirements of the Loop environmental assessment (EA) process, as compared to the traditional TxDOT planning and project development process, are (select one):

- ☐ Significantly greater
- ☐ Significantly less
- ☐ About the same

2. The overall **processing time** requirements of the Loop environmental assessment (EA) process, as compared to the traditional TxDOT planning and project development process, are (select one):

- ☐ Significantly greater
- ☐ Significantly less
- ☐ About the same

3. The benefits of the Loop EA process justify its labor and processing time requirements.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

**D-9**  
**Pilot Project Performance Measures**

**EIS Screening Worksheets Pilot Project**

**NCHRP 25-24**

**Performance Measures**

**Performance Measure 1:** Completeness of Documentation and Reduction of Rework

**Measure:** Measures the effectiveness of the EIS Screening Worksheet. The goal is to make EIS adequacy reviews faster and easier. Examines perceptions of effectiveness over time.

**WisDOT Performance (answer each quarter):**

Indicate your rating of the EIS Screening Worksheet on each question appearing below.

1. The format and organization of Screening Worksheet EISs make them easier to read and understand than those of traditional WisDOT EISs (select one):

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

2. The standardized approach of the Screening Worksheet EISs still provides sufficient flexibility to permit EIS preparers to effectively address projects with unique characteristics, complexities and needs.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

3. Screening Worksheet EISs take less time and effort to review for adequacy than traditional WisDOT EISs (select one):

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

4. The structure of Screening Worksheet EISs produces a more thorough and focused document, and reduces the need to request WisDOT to provide additional information (select one).

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ No opinion

5. Comments:

## **Performance Measure 2: Time Savings**

**Measure:** Measures the effects of the EIS Screening Worksheets on processing time. The goal is to reduce the time required for processing DEIS and FEIS reviews. Compares time requirements of documents with and without the Worksheets.

### **Performance Baselines:**

1. Average number of days required for agencies to review 2000-2002 DEISs **that did not use Screening Worksheets**, as measured from the date of submission of the DEIS to an agency to the date of the agency response on the DEIS:

2. Average number of days required for agencies to review 2000-2002 FEISs **that did not use Screening Worksheets**, as measured from the date of submission of the FEIS to an agency to the date of the final agency action on the FEIS:

3. Comments:

### **WisDOT Worksheet Performance:**

1. Average number of days required for agencies to review 2000-2002 DEISs **that used Screening Worksheets**, as measured from the date of submission of the DEIS to an agency to the date of the agency response on the DEIS:

2. Average number of days required for agencies to review 2000-2002 FEISs **that used Screening Worksheets**, as measured from the date of submission of the FEIS to an agency to the date of the final agency action on the FEIS:

3. Comments:

## **Performance Measure 3: Reduction in Documentation and Rework**

**Measure:** Measures the EIS Screening Worksheet process. The goal is to reduce the amount of documentation and the instances of rework required for EISs. Compares the length of WisDOT DEIS and FEIS documents done without the Worksheet to the length of such documents done using the Worksheet.

### **Performance Baseline:**

1. Average number of pages in WisDOT DEISs published in 2000-2002 **that did not use Screening Worksheets**:

2. Average number of pages in WisDOT FEISs published in 2000-2002 **that did not use Screening Worksheets**:

3. Comments:

### **WisDOT Worksheet Performance:**

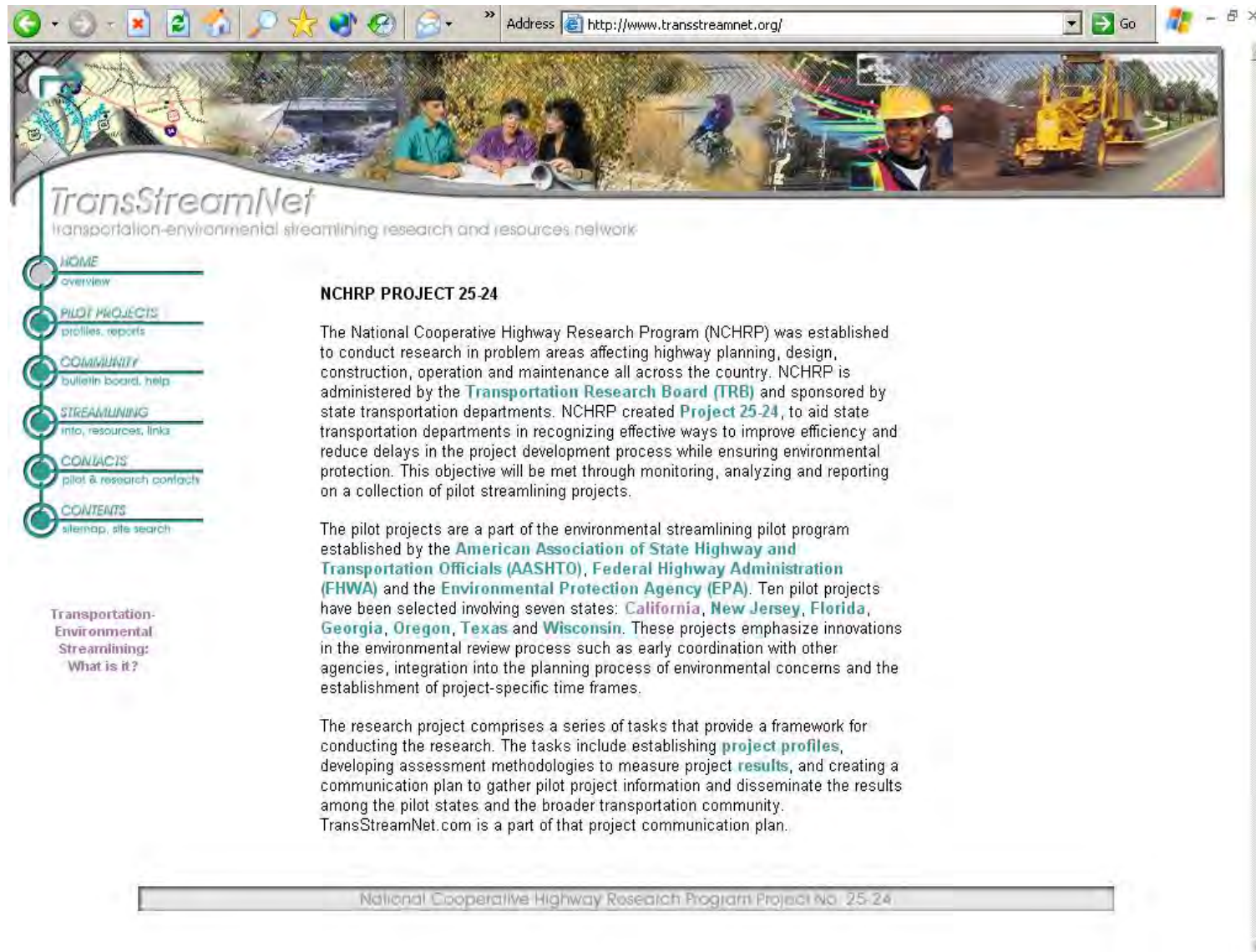
1. Average number of pages in WisDOT DEISs published in 2000-2002 **that used Screening Worksheets**:

2. Average number of pages in WisDOT FEISs published in 2000-2002 **that used Screening Worksheets**:

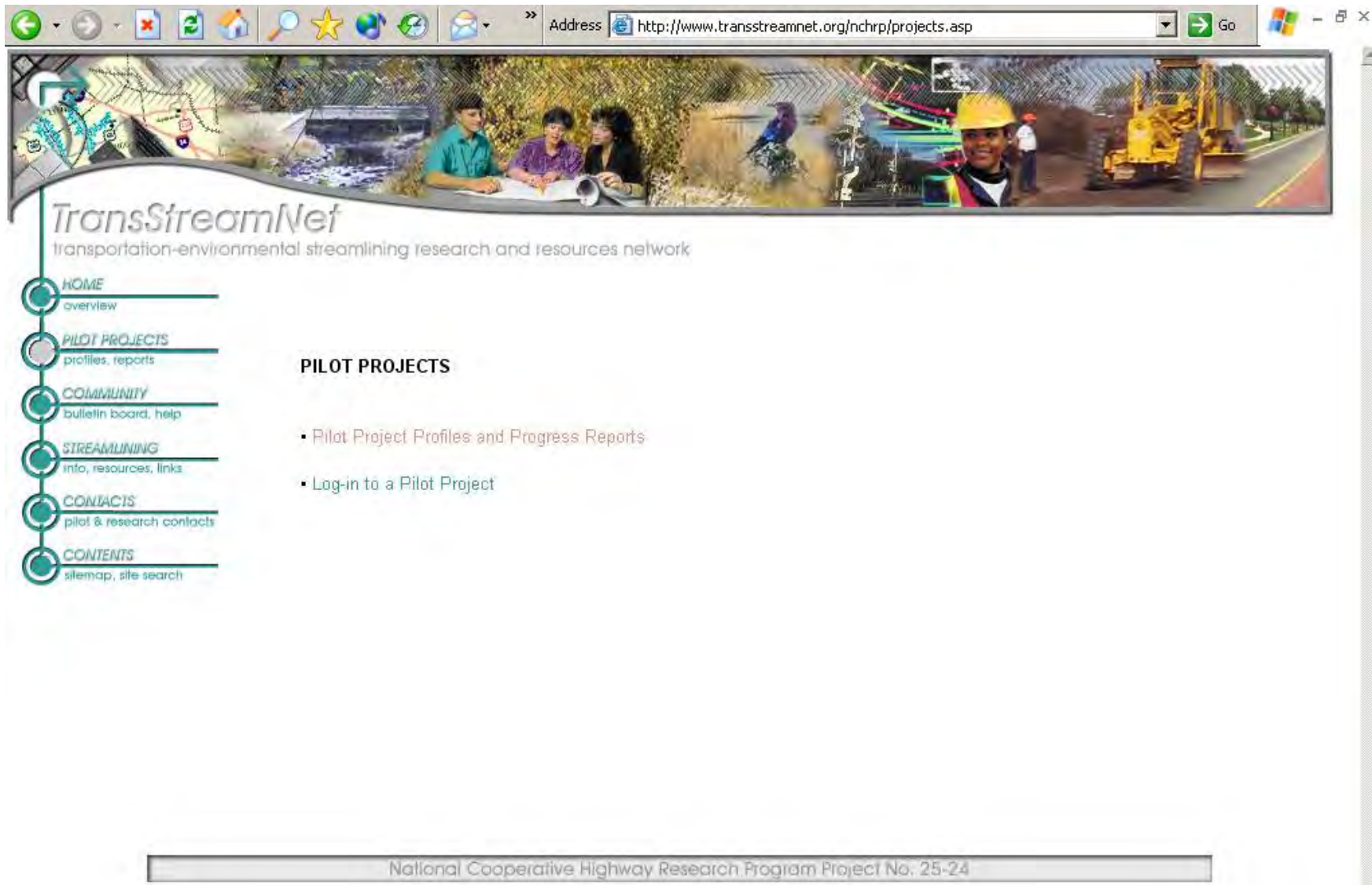
3. Comments:

## APPENDIX E: Research Project Web Site Screen Shots

### Research Project Web Site Screen Shots: Home Page



## Research Project Web Site Screen Shots: Pilot Projects Page



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying <http://www.transstreamnet.org/nchrp/projects.asp>. The website features a banner image at the top with various scenes related to transportation and environment. Below the banner, the site title "TransStreamNet" is displayed, followed by the tagline "transportation-environmental streamlining research and resources network". A vertical navigation menu on the left lists several sections: HOME (overview), PILOT PROJECTS (profiles, reports), COMMUNITY (bulletin board, help), STREAMLINING (info, resources, links), CONTACTS (pilot & research contacts), and CONTENTS (sitemap, site search). The main content area is titled "PILOT PROJECTS" and contains two bullet points: "Pilot Project Profiles and Progress Reports" and "Log-in to a Pilot Project". At the bottom of the page, a footer bar indicates the funding source: "National Cooperative Highway Research Program Project No. 25-24".

Address <http://www.transstreamnet.org/nchrp/projects.asp> Go

**TransStreamNet**  
transportation-environmental streamlining research and resources network

- HOME  
overview
- PILOT PROJECTS**  
profiles, reports
- COMMUNITY  
bulletin board, help
- STREAMLINING  
info, resources, links
- CONTACTS  
pilot & research contacts
- CONTENTS  
sitemap, site search

### PILOT PROJECTS

- Pilot Project Profiles and Progress Reports
- Log-in to a Pilot Project

National Cooperative Highway Research Program Project No. 25-24



## Research Project Web Site Screen Shots:

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying [http://itre.ncsu.edu/nchrp/state\\_projects/projects\\_california1.asp](http://itre.ncsu.edu/nchrp/state_projects/projects_california1.asp). The website header features a banner image with the text "TransStreamNet" and the subtitle "transportation-environmental streamlining research and resources network". A vertical navigation menu on the left includes links for HOME, PILOT PROJECTS, COMMUNITY, STREAMLINING, CONTACTS, and CONTENTS. The main content area is titled "Riverside County Integrated Plan (RCIP)" and contains the following text:

California's Riverside County is within the southeastern portion of the Greater Los Angeles metropolitan area. The county population is projected to double from 1.5 million to 3 million over the next 20 years. In May 1999, the County embarked on a parallel, integrated planning effort to address transportation, habitat conservation, open space, watershed, and land use issues.

The pilot project is bringing together stakeholders involved in four integrated and coordinated activities:

- The preparation of a new Riverside County General Plan
- The development of the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSCHP)
- The Community and Environmental Transportation Acceptability Process (CETAP) (The purpose of CETAP is to identify and preserve rights-of-ways for needed transportation corridors in the western part of the County.)
- The development of a watershed plan for the San Jacinto and Santa Margarita watersheds

All four planning efforts are being conducted simultaneously.

This interactive process provides a unique opportunity, not possible in traditionally performed linear planning efforts, for good coordination and communication and for resolving conflicts and issues. The result is to be a balancing of endangered species protection, open space, new development, and transportation and a comprehensive long-term solution serving broad-based interests. The goal is bring together all responsible oversight agencies to be in a position to review and approve the required environmental documents and plans simultaneously.

The RCIP is expected to significantly shorten the time frame for concept to delivery of transportation corridors because of the early resource agency involvement and concurrent review of completed draft documents. It should also support a basis for broader permitting under both the MSCHP and watershed planning.

## Research Project Web Site Screen Shots: Information and Resources Page

Address [http://itre.ncsu.edu/nchrp/envir\\_streamline.asp](http://itre.ncsu.edu/nchrp/envir_streamline.asp) Go

# TransStreamNet

transportation-environmental streamlining research and resources network

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overview
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- STREAMLINING  
info, resources, links
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pilot & research contacts
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## STREAMLINING

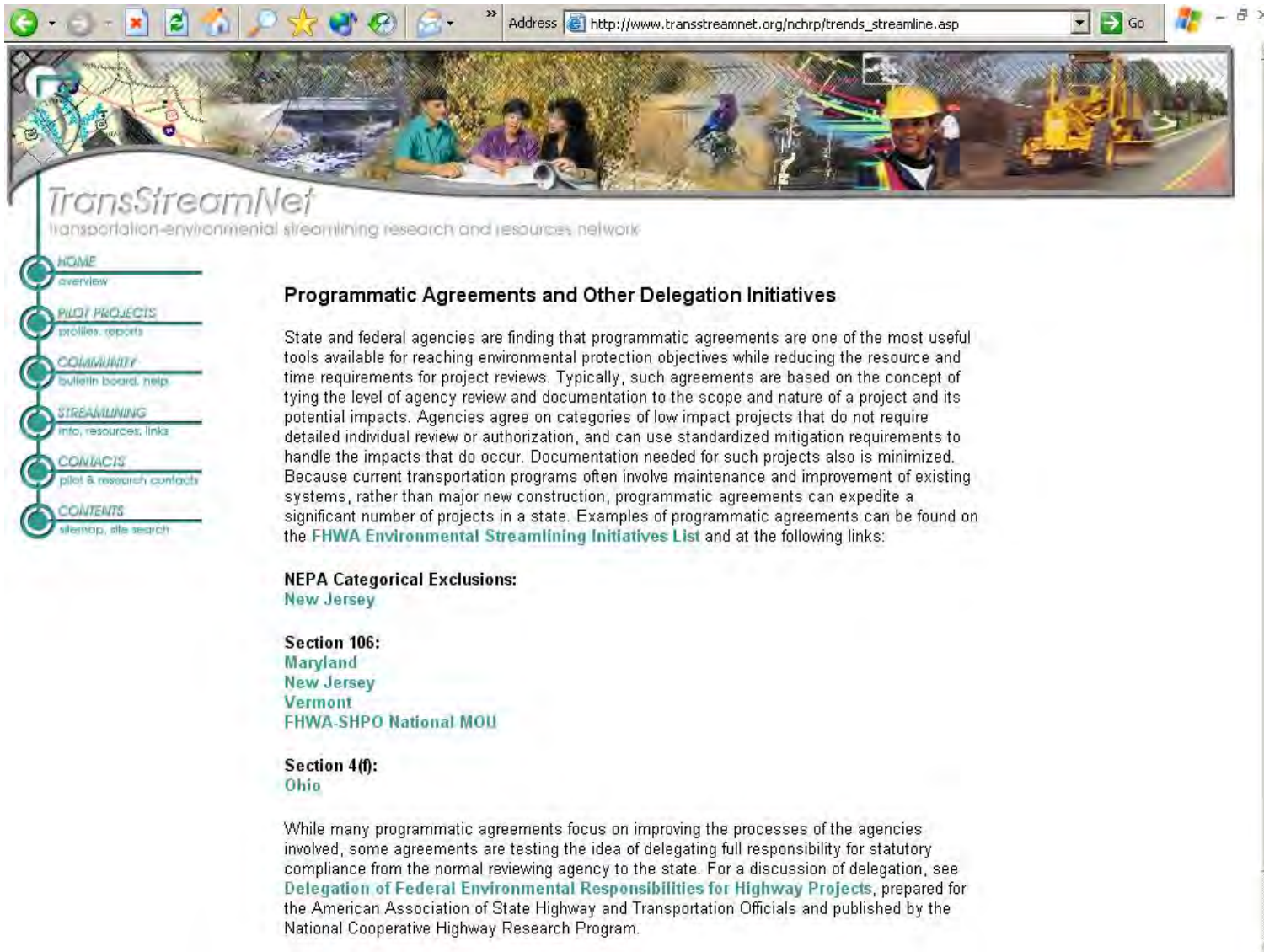
This section of TransStreamNet is the first stop if you're doing research on streamlining or looking for information on other streamlining initiatives. *Trends in Streamlining* connects you to discussions about the principal types of streamlining activities occurring around the country today. *Streamlining Resources* offers brief summaries about, and links to, organizations involved in various aspects of streamlining and related topics. *Streamlining Links* contains a complete list of all links referenced on this site, with additional links to transportation agencies, other relevant organizations, a variety of state projects and other resource material.

- **Trends in Streamlining *NEW!!***
- **Streamlining Resources**
- **Streamlining Links**

National Cooperative Highway Research Program Project No. 25-24



## Research Project Web Site Screen Shots: Example of Information and Resources Page



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying [http://www.transstreamnet.org/nchrp/trends\\_streamline.asp](http://www.transstreamnet.org/nchrp/trends_streamline.asp). The website header features a banner image with the text "TransStreamNet" and "transportation-environmental streamlining research and resources network". A vertical navigation menu on the left includes links for HOME (overview), PILOT PROJECTS (profiles, reports), COMMUNITY (bulletin board, help), STREAMLINING (info, resources, links), CONTACTS (pilot & research contacts), and CONTENTS (sitemap, site search). The main content area is titled "Programmatic Agreements and Other Delegation Initiatives" and contains a paragraph explaining the benefits of such agreements. Below this, it lists "NEPA Categorical Exclusions" for New Jersey, including Section 106 for Maryland, New Jersey, and Vermont, and the FHWA-SHPO National MOU. It also lists "Section 4(f)" for Ohio. A final paragraph discusses the testing of delegation of full responsibility for statutory compliance from the normal reviewing agency to the state, referencing the "Delegation of Federal Environmental Responsibilities for Highway Projects" document.

**Programmatic Agreements and Other Delegation Initiatives**

State and federal agencies are finding that programmatic agreements are one of the most useful tools available for reaching environmental protection objectives while reducing the resource and time requirements for project reviews. Typically, such agreements are based on the concept of tying the level of agency review and documentation to the scope and nature of a project and its potential impacts. Agencies agree on categories of low impact projects that do not require detailed individual review or authorization, and can use standardized mitigation requirements to handle the impacts that do occur. Documentation needed for such projects also is minimized. Because current transportation programs often involve maintenance and improvement of existing systems, rather than major new construction, programmatic agreements can expedite a significant number of projects in a state. Examples of programmatic agreements can be found on the [FHWA Environmental Streamlining Initiatives List](#) and at the following links:

**NEPA Categorical Exclusions:**  
[New Jersey](#)

**Section 106:**  
[Maryland](#)  
[New Jersey](#)  
[Vermont](#)  
[FHWA-SHPO National MOU](#)

**Section 4(f):**  
[Ohio](#)

While many programmatic agreements focus on improving the processes of the agencies involved, some agreements are testing the idea of delegating full responsibility for statutory compliance from the normal reviewing agency to the state. For a discussion of delegation, see [Delegation of Federal Environmental Responsibilities for Highway Projects](#), prepared for the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials and published by the National Cooperative Highway Research Program.

## Research Project Web Site Screen Shots: Contacts Page

Address: <http://www.transstreamnet.org/nchrp/contacts.asp> Go

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**Center for Transportation and the Environment**

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|---|--|

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## Research Project Web Site Screen Shots: Site Map Page

Address: <http://www.transstreamnet.org/nchrp/sitemap.asp> Go



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**HOME**

| Pilot Projects      | Community              | Streamlining                      | Contact   | Contents          |
|---------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|-------------------|
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National Cooperative Highway Research Program Project No. 25-24

## **APPENDIX F: Standardized Questions for Pilot Project Quarterly Progress Reports**

### **STANDARDIZED QUESTIONS FOR PILOT PROJECT QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORTS**

1. Describe the pilot's progress during this period. Please include any milestones achieved during this period, such as agreements, permits or other approvals, and public participation activities.
2. Have there been any significant changes in the pilot's approach or goals this period?
3. If the pilot has encountered any substantial problems, delays, or constraints in this period, please describe them and indicate how they are being resolved.
4. What are the next pilot milestones, and when are they scheduled to occur?
5. Which aspects of the pilot do you feel are working well, and which do you think could be improved?

## **APPENDIX G: Standardized Evaluative Questions for Pilot Project Stakeholder Interviews**

### **STANDARDIZED EVALUATIVE QUESTIONS FOR PILOT PROJECT STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS**

1. How successful was the Pilot Project in reducing the time frame of the planning and project development process?
2. How much time was saved or lost in terms of initial expectations?
3. What problems or delays were encountered in achieving the objectives of the Pilot Project?  
What factors were responsible for these delays? What factors were responsible for these delays?
4. Did the Pilot Project require increased or decreased levels of resources on the part of sponsors or other stakeholders?
5. How successful was the Pilot Project in the view of major stakeholders?
6. To what extent were environmental resources protected? Was this approach better or worse than previous approaches in protecting the environment? Did the Pilot Project result in any environmental enhancements?
7. What approaches taken or problems encountered in the Pilot Project relate to the unique conditions or requirements in the particular state?



8. Did the Pilot Project result in process or quality improvements other than time and cost savings?
9. To what extent were transportation decisions improved by the new approaches taken in the Pilot Project?
10. What lessons or conclusions can be gained from the results of the Pilot Project that are applicable at the local, state, regional, and national levels?
11. What aspects of this Pilot Project have been successful, which have not, and what are the underlying causes for each?
12. What improvements or other methods would be beneficial based upon experience with this Pilot Project?
13. What are the perceived constraints on adaptation of the Pilot Project to other settings or modes?
14. What administrative or legislative changes would make the Pilot Project process work better?