

etdm

Efficient Transportation Decision Making

Florida's ETDM Process Progress Report #5



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



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Executive Summary

This report provides an update for Florida's Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Process for a reporting period from July 2009 through December 2011. The report documents major accomplishments and issues during that period. It also includes an assessment of the projected return on investment and provides a path forward discussion of anticipated activities for the ETDM Process in Florida.

The ETDM Process began as a joint effort among FDOT, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and other state, federal, and local governments to reexamine the transportation planning and project development processes in response to Congress's environmental streamlining initiative. Ultimately, FDOT coordinated with 23 federal, state and regional agencies to develop this process and the supporting technology system from 2000 through 2004. The ETDM program continues to evolve and support national initiatives, such as FHWA's Every Day Counts (EDC) initiative. EDC identifies and deploys innovation aimed at shortening and expediting project delivery, enhancing the safety of our roadways, and protecting the environment. One such innovation is the Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) program. PEL provides a framework for considering and incorporating planning documents and decisions from the earliest stages of project planning into the environmental review process.

The ETDM Process achieves these objectives by using the Environmental Screening Tool (EST), a web-based technology to engage agency participants in the transportation planning process. The ETDM Process affords participating Environmental Technical Advisory Team (ETAT) agencies, other participants, and the public the opportunity to provide early input to the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) on a transportation project's potential effects or involvement with other initiatives through a series of "screening" events. These screening events ideally occur during the Long Range Transportation Plan development stage and just prior to a project entering the FDOT Five-Year Work Program or Transportation Improvement Plan. These screening events are completed in the EST, where ETAT agencies provide comments on 20 different issues such as air quality, wetlands and historic and archaeological sites.

FDOT has continued to work with its partners to refine and improve the process since its implementation. Noteworthy accomplishments during the July 2009 through December 2011 reporting period are briefly summarized below:

- **ETDM Process Award** – The success of Florida's ETDM Process was recognized with the *2010 Exemplary Human Environment Initiatives Award* (FHWA). **Section 1 – Introduction.**
- **Project Screenings** – Between October 2004 and December 2011, approximately 496 unique qualifying projects were screened. The total number of completed screening events – 521 – is slightly higher, however, since projects can be screened multiple times. **Section 2 – Status.**
- **Environmental Screening Tool Refinements** – Numerous enhancements and simplifications were delivered, including site search functionality, the integration of the Local Agency Program (LAP), plain language page rewrites, an on-line document review module, and access to Google Street View and statewide 1ft imagery. In addition, 153 new data sets were added and 589 existing data sets were updated. **Section 2 – Status.**
- **Sociocultural Effects (SCE) Evaluation Process Support** – FDOT focused on improving training and guidance for the SCE Evaluation Process, including the development of SCE practitioner's guides, web delivery of training materials, and a focus on developing SCE-based performance objectives and measurements. **Section 2 – Status.**
- **Cumulative Effects Evaluation (CEE) Process Development** – FDOT continues to develop the CEE Process. Knowledge gained from the Indirect and Cumulative Effects (ICE) Task Work Group in developing the preliminary CEE Handbook is being used to enhance the current training materials.

Enhancements are being made to the EST to support the recommended CEE Process. The first training session was held in October 2011. **Section 2 – Status.**

- **Process and Performance Management** – The ETDM Performance Management Program (PMP) monitors, evaluates and documents the activities of the ETDM Process and its effectiveness in meeting the established performance measures. FDOT monitors agency participation and provides feedback on a quarterly basis. In January 2010, FDOT conducted a Biennial ETDM Survey. **Section 2 – Status.**

The ETDM Process is a substantial investment. For this reason, various review mechanisms are in place to ascertain whether FDOT is receiving a positive return on investment and identify needed process improvements. As found by the 2010 ETDM Biennial Survey and 2011 project cost-benefit assessment, the ETDM Process is both highly regarded by its participants and is providing projected savings in project development. **Section 3 – Return on Investment and Appendixes II and III.**

The ETDM Process reduces the cost and time of project delivery. Consistent with the EDC initiative and the PEL program, ETDM provides a framework for considering and incorporating planning documents and decisions from the earliest transportation planning stages into the environmental review process. Analysis of 496 projects indicates a projected savings in cost and time to the State of Florida of approximately \$26.1 million and 805 man-months. Agency commentary identifies or confirms relevant project issues which focus future environmental studies and highlight critical path schedule drivers. Early awareness and interagency coordination has led to timely acceptance of purpose and need and project concepts, elimination of project alternatives, reduction in project scopes of service and classes of action, and the lessening frequency of late issue identification and project challenges.

Section 1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This report provides an update on the progress made by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Process. This document is the fifth in a series of progress reports and covers the period from July 2009 through December 2011 (referred to as the “reporting period”). **Section 2 Status** highlights the progress of program initiatives underway during the reporting period. **Section 3 Return on Investments** provides costs and benefits of the ETDM Process based on information from two primary sources:

- 2011 project cost-benefit assessment
- 2010 ETDM Biennial Survey

Section 4 Path Forward discusses future plans for continued improvements. Finally, **Section 5 Conclusions** summarizes the report findings. Previous ETDM Progress Reports are available on the ETDM Public Access Site at <http://etdmpub.fl.a-etat.org>.

1.2 Background

FDOT worked in conjunction with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and other state, federal and local agencies, as well as Tribal Nations to develop a refined and improved methodology for making transportation decisions. This Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Process was originally designed to accomplish the streamlining objectives identified in Section 1309 of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) and Section 6002(b) of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). The ETDM Process can link transportation and environmental resource planning initiatives through early, interactive agency involvement. Florida established the ETDM Process on December 14, 2001 through entry into a Memorandum of Understanding with state and federal agencies. These entities endorsed the ETDM concept and agreed to support, establish, and implement the ETDM Process at their respective agencies to the extent feasible, within existing legal authority, staffing capabilities, and budget. Agency and Tribal Nation representatives participate in the ETDM Process as members of an Environmental Technical Advisory Team (ETAT).

In December 2005, FHWA determined that Florida's ETDM program met the statutory requirements of Section 6002(b) of SAFETEA-LU and grandfathered Florida's process as an approved methodology to develop federal-aid projects. Most notably, ETDM elements related to Section 6002(b)'s coordination and scheduling requirements through interagency agreements, informative project delivery and review manuals, and two project screening events were the cornerstone to

ETDM Process Awards

The success of Florida's ETDM Process has been recognized by the following awards:

- **2010 Exemplary Human Environment Initiatives Award (FHWA)** – For development of the EST, which improves interagency coordination and community outreach.
- **2008 Exemplary Ecosystem Initiatives Award (FHWA)** – For stimulating early ecosystem planning.
- **2008 Exemplary Human Environment Initiatives Award (FHWA)** – For developing a collaborative transportation decision-making process that protects the environment.
- **2006 Transportation Planning Excellence Award (FHWA and FTA)** – For the Sociocultural Effects Evaluation Handbook, in the Educating and Training category.
- **American Council of Engineering Companies Engineering Excellence, National Finalist (March 2006)** – For demonstrating a high degree of innovation, achievement, and value.
- **Florida Institute of Consulting Engineers 2006 Excellence in Engineering Award** – For making an outstanding contribution to the engineering profession and meeting the highest standards of the Institute.
- **2005 Exemplary Ecosystem Initiatives Award (FHWA)** – For its GIS-based decision model integrating road improvement projects into habitat management and conservation plans.
- **2005 Florida's Productivity Award** – For modifying the EST to assist in post-hurricane disaster response.

satisfying these requirements. The process fosters early identification and consideration of potential environmental impacts and facilitates open and continuous engagement by interested stakeholders during the planning stage of project development where potential project alternatives, and the purpose and need are reviewed. It also provides a mechanism to identify the Lead, Cooperating, and Participating Agencies. The ETDM program continues to evolve and support national initiatives, such as FHWA's Every Day Counts (EDC) initiative. EDC identifies and deploys innovation aimed at shortening and expediting project delivery, enhancing the safety of our roadways, and protecting the environment. ETDM is also consistent with the Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) program. This idea provides a framework for considering and incorporating planning documents and decisions from the earliest stages of project planning into the environmental review process. The ETDM Process uses technology, the EST, to engage agency participants in the transportation planning process and develop information about potential environmental impacts or fatal flaws of a proposed facility which may be considered early in project development to shorten project delivery while fostering environmental protection.

1.3 Process Overview

As illustrated in **Appendix I**, the ETDM Process involves three phases of the transportation project delivery process: Planning, Programming, and Project Development and Environment (PD&E). During the Planning and Programming Phases, ETAT members review qualifying projects through two Screening events, the Planning and Programming Screens. These reviews apply only to qualifying capacity improvement projects, such as the widening of roadways, new roadways, new rail systems, and bridge projects (**PD&E Manual, Part 1, Chapter 2**).

During the Planning Screen, ETAT comments assist FDOT and the applicable MPO in their assessment of projects for their adopted Long Range Transportation Plans (LRTP). During the Programming Screen, qualifying priority projects under consideration for funding and inclusion in FDOT's Work Program or MPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) are screened. The resulting agency comments assist with scoping the project. Information gathered in the Planning and Programming Screens gives FDOT the opportunity to identify project-specific potential environmental issues, consider avoidance, minimization, and mitigation opportunities early, identify fatal flaws, and inform and support PD&E activities.

The EST provides the vehicle for information exchange to and from ETAT members regarding project details, potential effects, and agency recommendations or requirements. The EST is an interactive, internet application housed at the University of Florida GeoPlan Center. Project and resource data resides in the GeoPlan Center's Florida Geographic Data Library (FGDL). Standard GIS analyses are performed within the EST. Agency ETAT members view and comment on GIS results and project information. Comments about potential project effects are communicated and documented within the EST. Information is made available to the public through the EST, as well (<http://etdmpub.fl.a-etat.org>).

Section 2 Status

Development of the ETDM Process began in 2000. Process changes and refinement occur as a result of experience and shifts in regulatory requirements.

2.1 Projects Screened through December 2011

Since implementation of the ETDM Process began in October 2004, approximately 496 unique projects have been screened in the EST and reviewed by ETAT and public stakeholders. The total number of completed screening events – 521 – is higher because projects can be screened multiple times. For instance, a project may go through a Planning Screen and then several years later a Programming Screen.

Table 2-2: ETDM Interagency Agreements

Agency Name	Master Agreement (MA)	Agency Operating Agreement (AOA)	Funding Agreement (FA)
Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration (FHWA/FTA)	*Not Required	02/12/03 – indefinite	Not Required
Florida Department of State, State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and Advisory Council on Historic Preservation	12/01/08 – 11/30/12	12/01/08 – 11/30/12	12/01/08 – 11/30/12
Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP)	11/17/04 – 12/31/11	11/17/04 – 12/31/11	Not Required
Florida Department of Economic Development (DEO) [formerly Community Affairs (FDCA)]	12/01/09 – 10/31/11	12/01/09 – 10/31/11	12/01/09 – 10/31/11
	Will Merge with AOA	Will Develop AOA	Not Required at this time
Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (FDACS)	05/14/04 – 09/19/11	05/14/04 – 09/19/11	05/14/04 – 09/19/11
Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC)	Merged with AOA	11/1/11 – 10/31/16	1/1/12 – 12/31/16
National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)	Merged with AOA	07/25/11 – 07/24/16	07/25/11 – 7/24/16
National Park Service (NPS)	08/11/05 – indefinite	08/11/05 – indefinite	08/11/05 – 08/11/08
			Not Required
Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)	01/15/03 – indefinite	01/15/03 – indefinite	Not Required
Northwest Florida Water Management District (NFWFMD)	Merged with AOA	07/01/09 – 06/05/16	06/06/11 – 06/05/16
Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD)	10/01/06 – 09/30/12	10/01/06 – 09/30/12	10/01/06 – 09/30/12
South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD)	09/29/04 – 05/14/12	09/29/04 – 05/14/12	10/01/04 – 05/14/12
St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD)	**Agreement cancelled	Agreement cancelled	Agreement cancelled
Suwannee River Water Management District (SRWMD)	10/01/11 – 09/30/12	10/01/11 – 09/30/12	10/01/11 – 09/30/12
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE)	01/01/10 – 12/13/14	01/01/10 – 12/31/14	01/01/10 – 12/31/14
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)	12/01/08 – 11/30/13	12/01/08 – 11/30/13	12/01/08 – 11/30/13
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)	Merged with AOA	01/21/09 – 01/22/14	01/21/09 – 01/22/14
U.S. Forest Service (USFS)	08/08/06 – 08/07/12	08/08/06 – 08/07/12	08/08/06 – 08/07/12
U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)	Not Required	06/08/09 – Indefinite	Not Required

*Not Required = agency is actively engaged or using their own funds to participate in the program without the need for a formal agreement

**SJRWMD requested cancellation of the agreements in 2008 but continues to participate on specific projects

In addition to the agencies listed above, several Tribal Nations, Florida's regional planning councils, and a number of other organizations receive ETDM-related notifications and actively participate in the ETDM Process but have not entered into an AOA or MA with FDOT and FHWA.

2.3 Agency Staffing and Participation

Table 2-3 shows current agency participation levels, which are calculated by reviewing each agency's comments submitted in the EST during each qualifying project screening event. Table 2-3 also shows historical staffing levels and the source of funding for these positions, as well as the type of personnel classification providing the services (In-House or Other-Personnel-Services – OPS).

Table 2-3: ETDM Agency Staffing and Participation

	Total # of Positions Supporting Program			Previously Funded by	Currently Funded by	Position Providing Support	Participation Level as of Dec. 2011
	2004	2008	2011				
FDEO (formerly DCA)	1.0	1.0	1.0	DOT/FHWA	AGENCY	In-House	Near 100%
FDEP	1.5	2.0	2.0	DOT/FHWA	AGENCY	In-House	Near 100%
FDACS	1.0	1.0	1.0	AGENCY	AGENCY	In-House	Less than 50%
FFWCC	2.0	2.0	2.0	DOT/FHWA	DOT/FHWA	OPS	100%
FHWA	3.0	3.0	3.0	AGENCY	AGENCY	In-House	100%
FTA	1.0	1.0	2.0	AGENCY	AGENCY	In-House	Less than 50%
NMFS	2.0	2.0	2.0	DOT/FHWA	DOT/FHWA	OPS	100%
NVFWMD	1.5	1.5	1.5	DOT/FHWA	DOT/FHWA	In-House	100%
SFWMMD	6.0	4.0	0.5	DOT/FHWA	DOT/FHWA	In-House	Near 100%
SHPO	3.0	3.0	3.0	DOT/FHWA	DOT/FHWA	OPS	100%
SJRWMD	4.0	2.5	0.0	DOT/FHWA	AGENCY	In-House	Above 0%
SRWMD	2.0	0.5	0.5	DOT/FHWA	DOT/FHWA	OPS	100%
SWFWMD	3.5	3.5	1.5	DOT/FHWA	DOT/FHWA	In-House	100%
USCG	2.0	2.0	2.0	AGENCY	AGENCY	In-House	Near 100%
USACOE	3.5	3.5	3.5	DOT/FHWA	DOT/FHWA	In-House	Near 100%
USEPA	2.0	2.0	2.0	DOT/FHWA	DOT/FHWA	In-House	Near 100%
USFS	1.0	1.0	1.0	DOT/FHWA	DOT/FHWA	In-House	Less than 50%
USFWS	3.0	3.0	3.0	DOT/FHWA	DOT/FHWA	In-House	100%
NPS	1.0	1.0	1.0	AGENCY	AGENCY	In-House	Near 100%
TOTALS	44.0	39.5	32.5				

	Funded Positions Supporting Program		
	2004	2008	2011
# of DOT/FHWA Funded Positions	36	30	20

NOTE:

FDEP, DEO, FDACS, FHWA, FTA, USCG, and NPS are participating at or near 100% at their own agency expense, as is the Seminole Tribe of Florida (not listed).

2.4 Environmental Screening Tool

EST maintenance and support have been instrumental to the success of the ETDM Process. Enhancements to the EST occur regularly in response to user feedback, technological advancements, and refinements to the ETDM Process. In the summer of 2009, efforts were initiated to identify improvements to the tool which would increase its ease of use. Some of the more noteworthy enhancements completed under this work effort include:

- **Site Search Tool** – The ability to search the EST using keywords, project numbers or names (full or partial), EST function, or ETDM Contact List name without having to navigate through the main menu options.
- **Simplified Menus** – More concise menu naming conventions and menu options organized by use rather than alphabetical order.
- **Advance Notification (AN) Package** – Tools to generate the Advance Notification Package, in an alternative, descriptive format.

- **AN Transmittal List** – A guided “wizard” to create and add contacts to the AN Transmittal List and rectify existing contact information stored in separate spreadsheets.
- **Updated calendar feature** – An editable calendar that includes more training classes, project milestones and upcoming project events calculated from the database (such as the end of a current screening event), and the ability for authorized users to add future events (such as anticipated start dates of future screening events or upcoming ETAT meetings).
- **New Home Page** – A home page of quick links and useful information to help users navigate the EST.
- **Interactive Map** – An updated interface of the Interactive Map that provides a more familiar internet mapping experience, such as those found on Google Maps or MapQuest.
- **Google Street Map** – A mapping enhancement that provides access to Google Street View that provides a visual context from ground level to the proposed project area. This integration allows users to immediately see the surrounding area and assists in the identification of potential environmental concerns, as well as the development of agency commentary.

Additional enhancements delivered during this reporting period include:

- **Local Agency Program (LAP)** – As requested by the LAP office, the ability for authorized users to designate a project as a LAP project and indicate the pertinent LAP agency and whether it has various LAP certifications. The LAP Coordinator receives an email notification when a LAP project is designated.
- **Document Review Module** – Tools and reports to upload and distribute documents for comment and review, including environmental documents.
- **Feature-level GIS Analysis Results** – GIS analysis results for alternative features, allowing for a more targeted review of potential project effects, particularly useful for long linear, multimodal, or segmented projects.
- **New and Updated EST Data Sets** – Added 153 new datasets and updated 589 existing data sets.

2.5 Sociocultural Effects (SCE) Evaluation Process

In the ETDM Process, the FDOT District Community Liaison Coordinators (CLCs) and MPOs evaluate and address potential effects of a transportation action on a community and its quality of life. These effects are addressed through FDOT’s SCE Evaluation Process. During this reporting period, FDOT focused on improving training and guidance needed to support the CLCs in these SCE Evaluations. FDOT also began preparing for a quality assurance review of the SCE Evaluation Process.

In April 2004, FDOT developed a document titled *Sociocultural Effects Evaluations - Interim Guidelines for the ETDM Process*. This document was superseded by a much more comprehensive document titled *Sociocultural Effects Evaluation Handbook*, which was published in November 2005. This Handbook received the 2006 *Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration Transportation Planning Excellence Award* for the *Educating and Training* category. The SCE Evaluation Handbook does an excellent job in detailing the processes and methodologies used for SCE Evaluations. However, practical experience determined that more specific instructions about performing SCE Evaluations in the ETDM Process would be helpful. The Practical Application Guides for SCE Evaluation (SCE Guides) take the Handbook’s guidance one step further by providing step-by-step directions for evaluating sociocultural effects during the Planning, Programming and PD&E Phases of the ETDM Process. This allows practitioners to follow the critical path of work flow through these three phases.

Training for SCE is currently undergoing a redesign to be delivered as web-enabled content. The SCE training topics being converted from a traditional classroom training to webinar format range from the general SCE

process, principles, procedures and documentation requirements discussion to more complex how-to classes identifying SCE outreach techniques and completing SCE evaluations, as well as a class identifying recommendations to resolve SCE issues.

Currently, FDOT periodically monitors the SCE Evaluation performance during the ETDM screening events. In the ETDM Process, qualifying transportation projects receive initial consideration of Sociocultural Effects during the Planning and Programming Phases. A report for the EST was developed to compile these results interactively, as needed. The SCE Participation Report was completed and deployed to the EST in May 2010. Additional performance measures are currently being developed to verify that SCE Evaluation goals are consistently being met in an effective and efficient manner.

2.6 Cumulative Effects Evaluation Process Development

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Protection Act of 1969 (NEPA) require that indirect and cumulative effects be evaluated for certain proposed transportation and other federal projects.

An initial Indirect and Cumulative Effects Task Work Group was formed in March 2001 to define a process for evaluating indirect and cumulative effects, with a structure that could be incorporated into ETAT reviews utilizing the EST. The Indirect and Cumulative Effects Task Work Group consisted of representatives from FDOT, FHWA, federal and state resource agencies, and MPOs tasked with determining a method for evaluating indirect and cumulative effects within Florida's ETDM Process.

Following a series of meetings and communications with the Indirect and Cumulative Effects Task Work Group a preliminary Cumulative Effects Evaluation (CEE) Handbook and training materials are under development.

Knowledge gained from actual project experience has provided opportunities for further clarification in the CEE Handbook, and enhancements to the training materials. In addition, enhancements are being made to the EST to support the recommended process. The first training session for the CEE Process was held in October 2011.

2.7 ETDM Process and Performance Management

2.7.1 Process Management

The FDOT Central Environmental Management Office (CEMO) leads the ETDM Process management effort by supporting process improvements, policy development, training, and performance monitoring. Process refinements and improvements have been ongoing and continue through the following activities:

- The ETDM Process is part of FDOT's tiered business plans.
- Regularly scheduled ETDM Coordinator teleconferences are conducted to identify and address issues arising during ETDM implementation.
- ETAT workshop held in October 2011 to bring together agency participants to discuss program issues and identify improvements. An ETDM Coordinator's workshop is planned for 2012.
- The ETDM Planning and Programming Manual was approved as a FDOT Manual in March 2006. Updates are currently being drafted, with an expected adoption in 2012.
- FDOT developed an annual training program to support the ETDM Process. The ETDM Overview course and EST hands-on workshops are conducted on an as-needed basis. The EST training is supplemented by monthly web-based trainings, targeted presentations and functionality demonstrations.
- Other process management tools include ETDM Biennial Surveys administered to the FDOT Districts and ETAT agencies to assess their experiences and recommendations about the ETDM Process.

- Coordination activities and meetings to provide standards, training, coordination, and process improvements to ensure that the program meets its goals.

2.7.2 Performance Management

SAFETEA-LU, adopted August 25, 2005 (23 USC), requires performance measures to be developed for transportation environmental review processes.

To meet SAFETEA-LU requirements for performance monitoring, the ETDM Performance Management Program (PMP) has been developed to monitor, evaluate and document the activities of the ETDM participants, the ETDM Process itself, and their effectiveness in meeting the established performance goals. The performance goals and measures are used to evaluate the level of efficiency and effectiveness of the ETDM Process activities undertaken by FDOT and the ETAT agencies. In addition, the PMP helps identify deficiencies within the ETDM Process that can be modified to improve and further streamline environmental review of transportation projects, while enhancing both accountability and transparency.

The PMP consists of three major elements: measuring, monitoring and steering. The first element is “measuring,” which is accomplished through a series of periodic performance reviews conducted throughout the year. One review mechanism is the biennial survey of the Districts and ETAT agencies. The second element is “monitoring,” which is conducted through “Quarterly ETAT Participation,” “Summary Report Status,” and “Semi-Annual Feedback” reports. These reports provide feedback to participants and FDOT. The third element is “steering,” which consists of problem identification and rapid problem solving through communication among all parties to ultimately meet mutually defined goals of the ETDM Process.

The following list summarizes the reports and tools used to support the PMP:

- **Biennial ETAT Agency and District Survey and Reports (January 2010)** – Meetings are conducted on a biennial basis (in conjunction with the biennial survey reports) with each ETAT agency and FDOT District and FTE to discuss how the ETDM Program is working and any outstanding issues. A report is produced for each ETAT agency, FDOT District and FTE to capture the survey and meeting results.
- **Agency Feedback Reports** – The following reports are generated and emailed directly to ETDM personnel within FDOT and the ETAT agencies to provide updates on their performance in the ETDM Planning and Programming Screens conducted during the indicated period. This allows for corrective action if poor performance is indicated.
- **Quarterly ETAT Participation Report** – FDOT provides feedback to agencies regarding their participation in the ETDM Planning and Programming Screens. During this reporting period, there were eight reports.
- **Semi-Annual Agency Feedback Report** – Provides individual agencies with semi-annual performance information regarding their ETDM activities. These reports summarize performance results associated with agency-related performance measures. The report includes performance results for agency participation in ETDM Planning and Programming Screens and statistics about participation in other related activities, as well as the status of issues and action items identified in the annual reports and invoices. During the reporting period, there were four semi-annual reports.
- **Issue Tracking System** – This system is an online database used when an issue relating to ETDM cannot be resolved quickly. The issue is recorded and assigned to appropriate personnel for action. ETDM Program support personnel record and update the status of the action items in the database. The status of action items is included in the Semi-Annual Agency Feedback Report for the agency that reported the problem.
- **ETDM Progress Report** – FDOT has issued five ETDM Progress Reports, including this report (ETDM Progress Report No. 5). These reports are produced on a regular basis.

Section 3 Return on Investment

The ETDM Process is a substantial investment. For this reason, various review mechanisms are in place to ascertain whether FDOT is receiving a positive return on investment and identify needed process improvements. This section discusses program cost categories and process benefits, and provides a projected comparison of monetary and temporal project savings and costs. The results of the 2010 ETDM Biennial Survey and 2011 project cost-benefit assessment serve as the basis for this discussion.

The 2010 ETDM Biennial Survey used a five-point Likert Scale and free text responses to summarize participant level of agreement regarding potential ETDM benefits and achievement of ETDM goals, such as earlier agency involvement in the planning process and more efficient and concurrent project reviews. All FDOT Districts and the FTE responded to the survey. Of the 20 ETAT agencies with executed MAs, 17 responded. Each organization submitted one survey. The survey primarily serves as the qualitative foundation of program benefit evaluations expressed in **Section 3.2** and further articulated in **Appendix II**.

The 2011 project cost-benefit assessment included all projects screened between October 2004 and October 2011 in order to allow for the estimation of costs or savings on previously screened projects that have since moved on to later stages of project delivery. To complete the assessment, the FDOT Districts and FTE applied their own internal methodology to locally provided estimates of the average cost and time to produce an environmental document or individual technical study during PD&E. The Districts and FTE considered costs and savings on a per project basis and in many instances provided the specific circumstances for the projected savings and/or increased costs. It serves as the quantitative basis for most of the assertions made regarding project benefits later on in this section.

3.1 Program Costs

Program administration costs amounted to approximately \$31 million between July 2000 and June 2011. This cost estimate includes dollars allocated to agency participation, program support and administration, technology development and maintenance, and data administration support.

Over the last 11 years expenses are estimated at approximately \$17.8 million. These funds supported the development, operation and management of all elements of the ETDM Program, its associated technology and related environmental program initiatives. This cost estimate includes the initial efforts of working with agency partners to create the ETDM Process, develop and refine technology prototypes, develop and deliver the Environmental Screening Tool (EST), provide training and produce documentation, establish help desk support, and establish the Florida Geographic Data Library (FGDL) to process and store ETDM data and reports. This also includes the ongoing efforts to continually improve the ETDM Process and supporting technology infrastructure. An additional \$13.3 million was spent under the executed agency funding agreements through FY 2012. These agreements provide a mechanism through which the agencies are able to accommodate FDOT's expedited review of proposed projects and our requests for timely technical support on project issues.

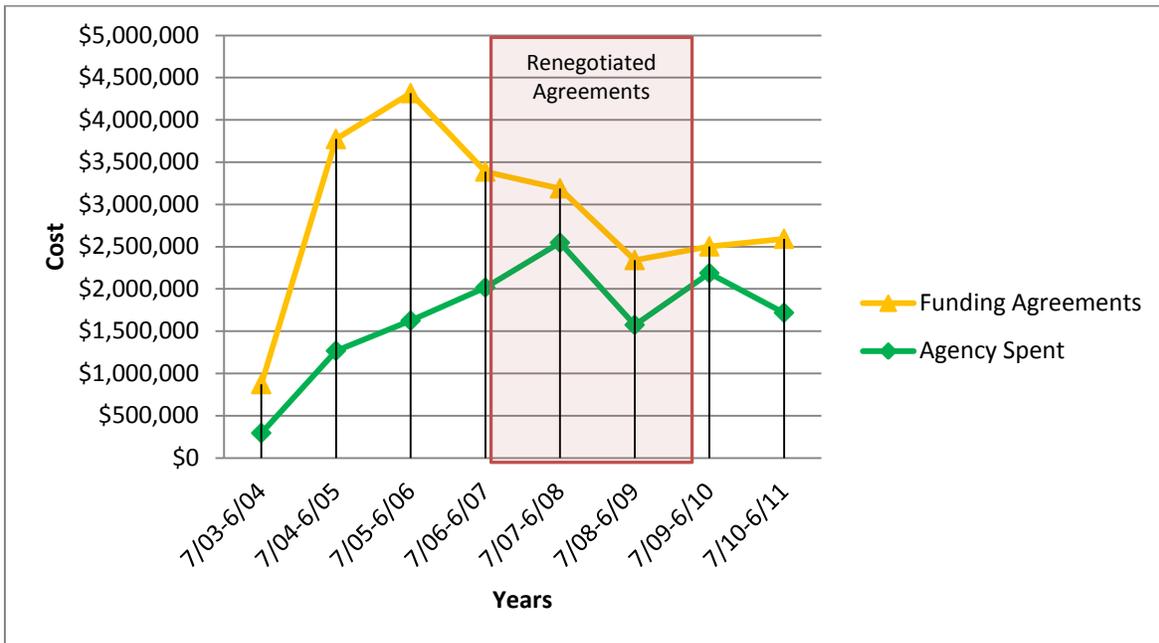
Over the next few years, funding reductions are expected to persist as FAs continue to be renegotiated based on workload requirements and program-specific initiatives mature. Funding for data administration should remain relatively constant while dollars set aside to support the program and technology may experience increases due to escalations in consultant support contract rates.

3.1.1 Agency Participation Costs

Out of the annual distribution of \$4.5 million allocated to FDOT to support the administration of the program, a significant portion is set aside to provide direct funding for agency participation, expedited project reviews and technical assistance. FDOT began funding agencies in FY 2003/04 to participate in the ETDM Process. The first generation agency funding agreements were executed based on anticipated workload requirements. After reaching a high of 17 executed FAs in FY 2007/08, FDOT is presently funding 11 agencies at an annual cost of approximately \$1.7 million.

After implementation in FY04/05 and monitoring workload requirements over the next three years, the existing funding agreements were renegotiated to reflect the actual workload including efficiencies identified by the agencies. **Figure 3-1** demonstrates the progression. For example, as the process was implemented, agencies recognized the ETDM process overlapped and often simplified existing activities and responsibilities. This resulted in reduction in staffing, procedural requirements, and funding needs. For instance FDEP cancelled their FA entirely and chose to continue their participation with existing internal funding sources.

Figure 3-1: ETDM Agency Funding Agreements vs. Agency Expenses



3.2 Program Benefits

Since the program's inception, participants have expressed a clear set of reoccurring process benefits: improvements in planning transportation projects, conducting environmental reviews, and developing projects for NEPA compliance. The benefit themes reported in earlier progress reports as captured by previous surveys and other evaluations were once again repeated in the 2010 ETDM Biennial Survey and 2011 project cost-benefit assessment. See **Appendix II** for specific quotes and summarized responses from the 2010 ETDM Biennial Survey and 2011 project cost-benefit assessment.

- Increased Early Awareness and Protection of Environmental Resources:** Participants consider effects to the natural and built environment throughout the ETDM Process. Survey and assessment respondents felt that the ETDM Process continues to increase awareness of environmental resources.
- Strengthened Interagency Coordination, Collaboration, and Communication:** Information accessibility is one of the most recognized benefits of the ETDM Process, as is its team-like approach to identifying transportation solutions and satisfying interagency goals and objectives. Participants have been willing to alter business practices to accommodate the program and the workload requirements because of their belief in the collaborative benefits of the program
- Enhanced Problem Solving on Transportation Projects:** The diverse array of agency expertise analyzing proposed projects supports enhanced problem solving. ETDM has illustrated this benefit where participants have successfully identified solutions to potential disputes early in the transportation planning process.

- **Promoted Better Decision Making for Transportation Projects:** The information resulting from the ETDM Process provides awareness of potential effects and results in focused analysis, better defined scoping, and/or removal of non-feasible projects from further consideration before unnecessary expenditure of resources.
- **Increased Public Accessibility to Project Information:** The accessibility of the EST through the internet allows for broad access by interested parties. Thus providing for an open and transparent process. Information related to proposed transportation projects is presented through an interactive interface that allows users to access reports, project details, mapping features, and contact information.
- **Increased Level of Trust between FDOT and the ETAT Agencies:** The ETDM Process increased level of trust between FDOT and ETAT agencies. Participants know who is commenting, where a project is located and why it's being completed, which environmental requirements must be met, and how project impacts will be taken into consideration.
- **Established Lasting Efficiencies in the Environmental Review Process:** Information centralization and widespread participation have made the environmental review process more efficient as a result of established review timelines, early awareness of potential project impacts, and automation of review notifications.
- **Reduced Interagency Conflicts:** The interjection of the ETDM Process into the early stages of project delivery allows for early consideration of agency commentary and resolution of potential conflicts.

3.3 Project Cost-Benefit Comparison

As noted in **Section 2.1**, 496 unique projects have been screened through the ETDM Process between October 2004 and December 2011. In November 2011, the FDOT Districts, including FTE, completed the project cost-benefit assessment – a project by project determination of projected savings or costs associated with completing an ETDM Screening. In conducting this assessment, each District and the FTE applied its own internal methodology. Establishment of a more consistent approach to calculating cost and time is under consideration.

Including the costs of program implementation, the results of the latest assessment show a projected cumulative cost savings (avoidance) of \$26.1 million and projected cumulative time savings of 805 man-months. The most frequently cited justifications for these savings estimates, as reported by the FDOT Districts and FTE, are the timely and expedited reviews provided by ETAT agencies alternative elimination, project scope of service reduction, project class of action reduction, and acceptance on purpose and need. See **Appendix III** for specific examples of project cost-savings projected by the districts.

Table 3-1: ETDM Project Cost-Benefit Comparison (Oct 2004 – Oct 2011)

Cumulative Comparison				
Projects Completing a Screening between Oct 2004 - Oct 2011				
District	Projected Savings		Projected Increases	
	Dollars	# of Months	Dollars	# of Months
D1	\$17,980,000	528	\$1,376,000	269
D2	\$50,000	1	\$0	0
D3	\$2,735,000	72	\$2,631,000	90
D4	\$14,622,000	336	\$0	0
D5	\$11,844,000	143	\$0	0
D6	\$14,030,000	230	\$780,000	153
D7	\$768,520	10	\$91,000	3
Turnpike	\$0	0	\$0	0
Total	\$62,029,520	1320	\$4,878,000	515
Total Projected Screening Savings (=Projected Savings-Projected Increases)				\$57,151,520
Cumulative Program Administration(2000-2011)				\$31,064,176
Projected Net Savings (=Total Projected Screening Savings-Cumulative Program Administration)				\$26,087,344
Projected Savings/Avoidance in Man Months				805

Section 4 Path Forward

The ETDM Process is in a continual state of improvement based on information and recommendations resulting from close coordination between FDOT CEMO, FDOT Districts and FTE, FHWA, and the ETAT agencies. In addition to improving ongoing processes, the ETDM Process refinements include support and development of new initiatives. Anticipated future enhancements and new initiatives to the ETDM Process are discussed below.

4.1 ETDM Performance Measures

As the ETDM Process matures, FDOT has realized that the original goals and the individual performance measures used to support them should to be reevaluated. The goals and measures developed at ETDM's inception were created and agreed upon to assure universal application of the process. For example, the original measures focused on ETAT agencies' level of participation and the timeliness of their comments. Through monitoring, it has been established that resource agencies are participating and commenting in a timely manner. Continued evaluation of these types of measures is no longer a primary need. What is more important now is the content of agency comments and actual coordination efforts. A revised ETDM Goal and supporting objectives are under development.

4.2 Alternative Corridor Evaluation (ACE)

The environmental and planning provisions of SAFETEA-LU encourage stronger linkages between transportation planning and NEPA.

The Alternative Corridor Evaluation (ACE) process aims to further solidify the connection between planning and NEPA through:

- Involvement of ETAT agency technical experts facilitated through the EST to satisfy the requirement to collaborate with resource agencies.
- Documented elimination of unreasonable alternatives during planning without detailed evaluation later in NEPA.
- Provide a platform to document planning decisions.

4.3 Deliver Cumulative Effects Evaluation Process

Updates to Cumulative Effects Evaluation (CEE) Handbook are occurring in response to feedback received from initial briefings and on-going project evaluations; the Cumulative Effects Evaluation Handbook is currently being updated to provide more detailed instructions for studies conducted during the Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Phase. Meanwhile, enhancements to the Environmental Screening Tool are underway to address recommendations by the Indirect and Cumulative Effects Task Group.

4.4 Providing Project Context

ETAT agency comments provide the true value of the early coordination that occurs during the ETDM screenings. Agency reviews intend to guide and support FDOT transportation decisions and project scoping by being specific, customized to the alternatives and issues presented, and actionable. To that end, the Department recognizes an opportunity to provide better project context and more detailed information to agency partners, which should lead to a more comprehensive understanding of a proposed project and therefore result in more meaningful agency comments. Two enhancements to support this concept are refining project content within the Advance Notification (AN) Package and the documentation of the Preliminary Environmental Assessment (PEA) prepared by the FDOT prior to ETAT agency review within the EST.

The AN Package enhancements will shift from a mostly automated EST GIS data report to a succinct, reader-friendly version which provides project context. This provides insight into anticipated effects and level of and method of analysis thereby assisting in the development of comments with greater utility by agency partners.

PEA prepared by FDOT prior to ETAT review will improve issue specific context by providing the ability to assign a preliminary degree of effect (anticipated level of potential effects) anticipated level of analysis and method highlighting details relative to a project alternative and issue.

4.5 ETDM Agreement Refinement

ETDM interagency agreements are the foundation of the ETDM program. As ETDM matures, each agreement is refined to focus agency participation and detail agency specific roles and jurisdictions. This effort includes combining the more general master agreements with the more specific agency operating agreements.

4.6 Implementation/Practice

FDOT will work to identify and showcase and implement best practices which can maximize cost and time savings throughout the state. We will continue to address issues and concerns and provide technical assistance, guidance and training to support ETDM practitioners in the Districts and MPOs. Initiatives currently underway include:

- Updates to the ETDM Manual
- Publication of the SCE Practical Application Guides

- Workshops development
- Expanded training opportunities

The ETDM Planning and Programming Manual together with the PD&E Manual provides transportation planners, project analysts and managers with the information needed to plan and screen qualifying transportation projects. It is the standard measurement for quality assurance through the Planning and Programming Phases. The Manual also provides direction for involvement of stakeholders and the affected community, procedures for obtaining and documenting their input.

Workshops will also serve as a valuable tool for future implementation of best practices. CEMO provided a statewide ETAT Workshop in Tallahassee in October 2011 to bring together ETAT agencies to discuss program components in detail, provide an overview of roles and responsibilities, and clarify the entire project delivery process. Similar workshops are under development for the internal FDOT team and a follow-up workshop to bring together all practitioners.

FDOT will continue to provide training for the ETDM Process and use of the EST. Currently, the following instructor-led webinars are provided:

- Introduction to the ETDM Process
- Using the EST for Sociocultural Effects Evaluations
- ETAT Review
- Project Management Tools
- Project Input Utilities

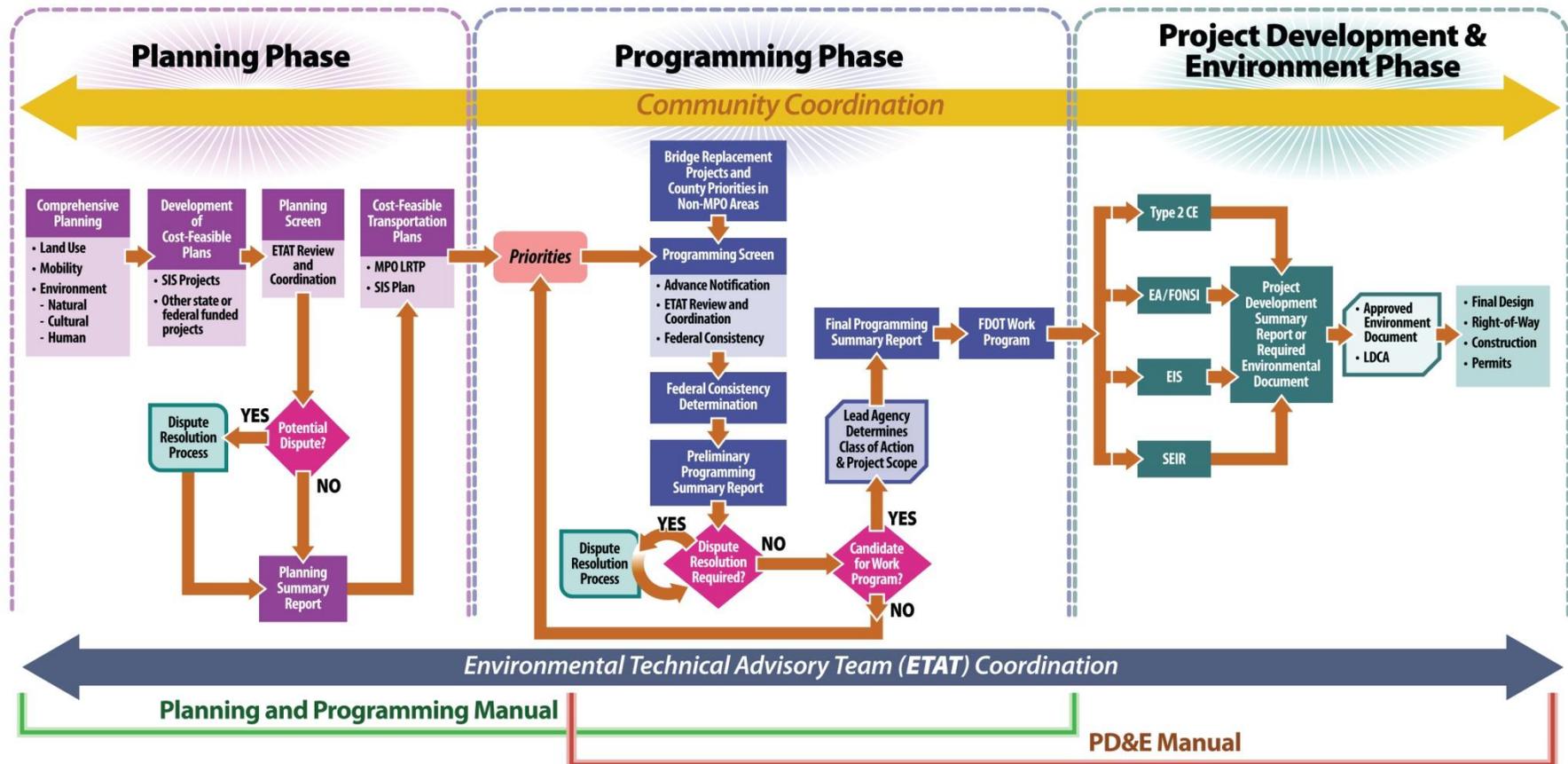
These classes will be updated and provided in downloadable video format so users can view them on demand. Several new training videos are also planned.

Section 5 Conclusions

The ETDM Process reduces the cost and time of project delivery. Consistent with the EDC initiative and the PEL program, ETDM provides a framework for considering and incorporating planning documents and decisions from the earliest transportation planning stages into the environmental review process. Analysis of 496 projects indicates a projected savings in cost and time to the State of Florida of approximately \$26.1 million and 805 man-months. Agency commentary identifies or confirms relevant project issues which focus future environmental studies and highlight critical path schedule drivers. Early awareness and interagency coordination has led to timely acceptance of purpose and need and project concepts, elimination of project alternatives, reduction in project scopes of service and classes of action, and the lessening frequency of late issue identification and project challenges.

These results are the primary reason for the ETDM Process being recognized as a national best practice. Nonetheless, there are opportunities to identify and implement efficiencies which address issues and maximize cost and time savings.

Appendix I. ETDM Process Diagram



Appendix II. Examples of Program Benefits

Highlighted below are *some* specific examples from the 2010 ETDM Biennial Survey and 2011 project cost/benefit assessment which cite various participants' reasons for identifying ETDM program benefits:

1) Increased Early Awareness and Protection of Environmental Resources

- **NFWFMD** – “The ETDM Process allows staff awareness of potential impacts to watersheds for planning and wetland mitigation planning purposes. For wetlands mitigation, early involvement to understand what future wetland impact mitigation needs will be have been particularly beneficial to both the District and FDOT. It [ETDM] has allowed the agency to be proactive in its water resources planning and to be involved early in FDOT’s environmental decision making process.”
- **FDOT District 6** – Pre-storm facility screenings and mapping expedite the development and verification of detailed damage inspection reports generated after an emergency event.
- **FFWCC** declared they are beginning to see examples of implementation of recommended strategies for avoidance, minimization, and mitigation of fish and wildlife-related impacts.
- **FDOT District 7** – “Environmental issues are clearly defined during early stages in the process and better addressed in PD&E.”
- **NMFS** – “Because of the ETDM Process NMFS has been able to review all FDOT projects that have come up for review for the past 5 years Previously, many projects ... did not get reviewed due to insufficient manpower or were reviewed very late in the process (permitting) after design was completed. ETDM has resulted in timely project reviews by the agencies and transportation projects that meet the needs of the public while still giving high priority to environmental considerations.”
- **FDOT District 1** – Released for review a large, complicated Rail Relocations Alternatives project. All 26 potential alternatives were analyzed by the ETAT. As a result, it is anticipated that future PD&E scoping activities and Class of Action determination should see dramatic cost/time savings as a result of the extensive information provided in the Planning Screen for this economic development project.

2) Strengthened Interagency Coordination, Collaboration, and Communication

- **FHWA** – “ETDM helps our agency track issues to ensure that agencies’ concerns are addressed in final documents.”
- **FDOT District 7** – “Continued development of better Purpose and Need Statements and coordination with the resource agencies. Coordination, communication and the working relationship with the County MPOs and several agencies, as well as FHWA, have improved. Project Purpose and Need Statements, descriptions, and issues are identified earlier in the process.”
- **NMFS** – “Early coordination on the Roosevelt Boulevard project in Key West, Florida is an example of a project that would have required substantially more time and effort had it not been for the existing working relationships formed by the ETDM Process. Because of these relationships and the guaranteed availability of agency staff, this project moved quickly through the permitting process.”
- **FDOT District 5** – “...through the ETDM Process, we have increased local agency awareness of the environmental process in general. The ETDM Process in general helps to clear up confusion, so there is less later on.”

- **FDOT District 4** – ETAT coordination facilitated meeting NEPA requirements and in turn allowed the District to use American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds for the construction phase on nine Programmatic Categorical Exclusions.

3) Enhanced Problem Solving on Transportation Projects

- **FDOT District 1** provided the following example using the I-75 Interchange at Everglades Boulevard in Collier County: “During the Programming Screen, significant environmental concerns were raised by Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service... a Cumulative Effects Evaluation (CEE) has been defined to further evaluate and define the potential cumulative effects of the proposed interchange to affected resources. It will entail close coordination with the ETAT Dispute Resolution sub-team throughout the study process.”
- **FFWCC** – “ETDM [Project] 8247, ETDM [Project] 3742, and ETDM [Project] 7559 – the Dispute Resolution Process aspect of ETDM facilitated resolution of dispute among the entities disputing the project proposals more quickly than the traditional processes.”
- **FDOT District 6** screened the SR 874 Ramp Connector on behalf of the Miami-Dade Expressway Authority (MDX). “The project had several disputes, which were resolved through coordination between FDOT, MDX, FDEP and USFWS... MDX was able to revise the Project Description/Purpose and Need Statement and the project's alternatives to avoid impacts to conservation lands. The agencies then agreed to remove their disputes... and the project is moving forward into PD&E without the controversial alternatives.”

4) Promoted Better Decision Making for Transportation Projects

- **FDOT District 1** – “Early identification of potential project effects resulting in projects not advancing to the Cost Feasible Long Range Transportation Plans.”
- **FDOT District 4** – “Better agency relationships, early identification of fatal flaws and environmental issues, better defined scopes of services and Class of Action determinations, reduction in time and cost for PD&E.”
- **FDOT Districts 4 and 6** – The ETDM Process expedited the review and production of the I-95 Managed Lanes Pilot Project: 95 Express by narrowing the range of required technical studies, reducing their scope, and achieving an early and clear Class of Action Determination.

5) Increased Public Accessibility to Project Information

- **FDOT District 6** – “Agencies that do not normally participate or have special requirements are coordinating through the EST, e.g., Miccosukee Tribe is commenting through ETDM.”
- **USEPA** – “The EST serves as a valuable tool in assessing potential environmental concerns as they relate to proposed transportation projects. The EST is an excellent source of information which can be used to make project-related decisions.”

6) Increased Level of Trust between FDOT and the ETAT Agencies

- **FDOT District 6** – “Records agency coordination in one place – agencies are held accountable for their comments.”
- **FDOT District 1** – “Communication between FDOT and members of the ETAT is enhanced.”
- **USFS** – “The biggest benefit is early involvement and also developing relationships with FDOT.”
- **NMFS** – “Having people dedicated to the review of FDOT projects via ETDM simplified the permitting process by allowing a more thorough project review early on, provides consistency via

having the same contact people for all FDOT projects, and builds trust and good, efficient working relationships between ETAT members and FDOT staff.”

- **FDOT District 7** – Through coordination with the Miccosukee Tribe, the scope and commitments for two segments of I-75 were considerably reduced.

7) Established Lasting Efficiencies in the Environmental Review Process

- **FDEP** stated the ETDM Process has resulted in “time and money savings. We are all saving a lot on postage now that we don’t have to mail out Advanced Notifications!”
- **FHWA** – “[ETDM] serves as the project initiation process required under SAFETEA-LU and provides the framework for a programmatic Coordination Plan that would otherwise be required.”
- **FTE** – “U.S. Army Corps of Engineers SAJ-92 program allows for regional general permit to be issued if ETDM screening has occurred.” This was very beneficial during the permitting of the Lake Jesup Toll Plaza project.
- **FHWA** – “[ETDM] Implements SAFETEA-LU without the need for development of letters to each agency to initiate each project, and the development of a project coordination plan.”
- **FDOT District 2** noted that the following benefits applied to most of their ETDM projects even if they did not result in a monetary savings in time or project cost: timely or expedited reviews, ETAT commentary helped avoid project time delays, ETAT coordination kept projects on schedule, and ETAT cooperation reduced review periods.

8) Reduced Interagency Conflicts

- **FDOT District 1** – “Our continued and strong working relationship with members of the ETAT has contributed to early problem solving on projects...”
- **SWFWMD** – “Participation has enabled us to coordinate with our planning, regulatory, operations, and land management staff to minimize conflicts between projects and our own programs.”

Appendix III. Examples of Project Benefits

Highlighted below are *some* project specific explanations provided during the 2011 project cost-benefit assessment:

- **FDOT District 1** – The I-75 Add Lanes projects in Manatee and Sarasota County both realized a 10-20 percent savings on the typical cost to produce a Wetlands Evaluation Report and Endangered Species Biological Assessment due to coordination with ETAT members.
- **FDOT District 1** – Working with the ETAT on the SR 41 Add Lanes project reduced the number of alternatives and focused the technical studies needed during PD&E. The Class of Action was subsequently downgraded to a Type 2 Categorical Exclusion, resulting in a savings of \$500,000.
- **FDOT District 3** – In the aftermath of Hurricane Ivan, when the I-10 bridges crossing Escambia Bay in Pensacola needed to be replaced, the EST helped distribute project information quickly and easily, and provided an avenue for agency responses. Moreover, FDOT was able to coordinate an early agency meeting and review by using the District ETAT representatives and because of that realized a savings of \$735,000 and a reduction of 12 months in the environmental review process.
- **FDOT District 4** – Working with FHWA and the ETAT SHPO representative on the replacement of the more than 40-year-old Bridges of the Isles (Isle of Venice Drive Bridge, Nurmi Drive Bridge, Royal Palm Drive Bridge, and Fiesta Way Drive Bridge) the group determined that these bridges were eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NHRP) as a thematic group, and as part of a potential historic district and protected under Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act. The team worked closely to reach an agreement that a Programmatic Section 4(F) evaluation and approval was appropriate rather than an Individual 4(f). This kept the Class of Action at a lower level, reducing costs by \$1.56 million.
- **FDOT District 4** – ETAT coordination on the Flagler Memorial Bridge project helped reduce the Class of Action from a possible Environmental Impact Study to a Type 2 Categorical Exclusion, saving \$637,000.
- **FDOT District 5** – A modified scope of PD&E studies resulting from ETAT commentary saved approximately \$100,000 on the Commerce Parkway project.
- **FDOT District 5** – Early and continuous coordination with ETAT representatives saved approximately \$100,000 and 6 months on the John Young Parkway project.
- **FDOT District 6** – Identified ETAT early coordination and issue identification as the primary reasons that allowed for the reduction of project alternatives requiring detailed NEPA analysis and the foundation supporting a downgrade on SR836 project from an Environmental Assessment to a Type II Categorical Exclusion at an estimated savings of \$1.1 million and 12 months.
- **FDOT District 7** – For the Tampa Bay Intermodal Center project, the ETDM Process assisted in eliminating four alternatives from consideration, saving approximately \$368,000.