

ETDM Performance Measures Annual Report

Before ETDM Implementation

Prior to MOU and agreements, describe in detail how your agency conducted daily business on FDOT projects.

1) Describe how your agency was organized in Florida?

The Florida Department of Community of Community Affairs (DCA) is a centralized state agency. All staff is located in Tallahassee. The Division of Community Planning is a part of DCA and is responsible for comprehensive state planning. DCP is comprised of two bureaus: the State Planning Bureau and the Comprehensive Plan Review Bureau. Comprehensive Plan Amendments and transportation consistency reviews are reviewed by planners according to their assigned regional planning council boundaries defined by state statutes. The State Planning Bureau provides technical and policy assistance to staff and external agencies in specified areas of expertise with transportation being a statewide planning initiative.

Several years ago, a transportation review group existed within DCA for the purpose of providing technical assistance regarding transportation impacts associated with comprehensive plan amendments and to review transportation projects and their impacts on local land use. The group was comprised of approximately 4 full-time staff members. The group was funded through grant funds provided by FDOT; however, it was dissolved in 2001 due to state budget cuts.

2) How did project information enter your organization?

- a. *Advanced Notifications (AN) for Project Development and Environmental (PD&E) projects were received through the Intergovernmental Coordination and Review Process (ICAR) and were then distributed directly to plan review staff by region. The plan review staff reviewed the project for consistency with the appropriate local government comprehensive plan (LGCP) and comments were transmitted back to the ICAR representatives via an administrative assistant.*
- b. *The transportation planner received the Draft FDOT Five-Year Work Program (WP) at the beginning of each year to identify new WP projects. These WP projects were then distributed to plan review staff for review and comments were collected and transmitted to FDOT, the Governors Office, the appropriate MPO, Regional Planning Council, and local government planning agency by the Transportation Planner.*
- c. *Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP) from each MPO were received through the ICAR and distributed to plan review staff for consistency reviews.*

3) How many staff were involved and how were they allocated?

Several staff members were involved (Approximately 15-18 staff members)

4) How were projects assigned?

Projects were assigned to the plan review staff based on project location by region.

5) How frequently did staff consult or coordinate with FDOT on projects?

Infrequently. It was dependent on the reviewer.

6) How many FDOT projects were reviewed and coordinated with FDOT each year?

Unknown – they were not tracked. An estimate of 30 projects per year may have been reviewed. Many more requests for reviews were submitted, but reviews were not always completed due to time constraints.

7) Describe your typical involvement with FDOT projects and at what phase that involvement usually occurred: planning, PD&E, permitting, etc...

There was little or no interaction with FDOT regarding projects. DCA reviewed the projects during the AN stage of the PD&E process or during the programming phase through the TIPs or WP.

8) How many staff hours per month were typically devoted to working on FDOT projects? Planning Phase? PD&E phase? Permitting?

Unknown – an estimate would be 5 to 6 hours per month. Possibly 2 hours in the planning phase which includes time spent on special projects such as the Suncoast Parkway and Wekiva Parkway. Possibly 1 to 2 hours per month on Advanced Notifications and 2 hours per month on WP and TIP projects.

9) What were the major barriers to coordination and involvement with FDOT projects: Budget? Staff? Other Resources? Time? Communication? Meetings? Field Reviews?

- a. *Staff time– In relation to LGCP reviews, transportation project reviews were not a high priority. LGCP reviews must meet statutory time frames and little time is available for other project involvement or reviews. Often the AN, TIP and WP projects were not reviewed by staff due to time limitations.*
- b. *Staff resources – After the transportation group was dissolved, the one and only DCA transportation planner participates in several FDOT and other transportation planning programs and does not have time to participate in the planning process for each individual transportation project.*
- c. *Coordination – Since DCA reviews transportation projects at various stages of project production, several planners may have reviewed the same project and provided different review comments. This lack of project tracking and coordination led to duplicative reviews of projects, and, in some instances, conflicting review comments.*

10) Describe your involvement with the MPO's planning process?

Staff reviewed the MPO TIPs on an annual basis. On a few occasions, DCA has been requested to participate in the planning of transportation projects and the development of Long Range Transportation Plans. DCA's involvement is dependent on staff availability and DCA priorities.

11) When did your agency typically provide review on DOT transportation projects? *DCA's coordination with FDOT is primarily regarding potential transportation impacts created by proposed comprehensive plan amendments. See answers above regarding specific transportation projects.*

12) How often have you published joint notices with FDOT?

None that I am aware of.

After ETDM Implementation

After MOU and agreements, describe in detail how your agency conducts daily business on FDOT projects.

1) Describe how your agency is organized in Florida?

DCA is still centralized. DCP is still organized into two bureaus. A staff transportation planner is responsible for providing technical assistance regarding comprehensive plan amendment transportation impacts and for the review of transportation project impacts. Additionally, this position is responsible for liaising with FDOT and other state transportation agencies regarding transportation policies and programs. An in-house consultant which reports to the transportation planner has been provided by FDOT to perform ETDM reviews. The consultant position is responsible for coordination with internal DCA staff reviewers and external planning and transportation agencies regarding project impacts. Additionally this position now tracks all transportation project reviews.

2) How does project information enter your organization?

- a. *TIPs and Advanced Notification projects are reviewed through the ICAR and distributed to planning staff through the Transportation Planner and in-house consultant. Reviews are coordinated through the consultant. .*
- b. *Work Program projects are delivered to the transportation planner for review and distributed to planning staff by the in-house consultant. Reviews are coordinated through the consultant.*
- c. *ETDM projects are sent to the transportation planner and consultant via email for review.*

3) How many staff are involved and how are they allocated?

Several staff members (20-30) are still involved in reviewing and approving projects, however, for a majority of the plan review staff, their time spent reviewing projects has been decreased due to a more streamlined and coordinated process, while review time has increased for the transportation planner and in-house ETDM consultant.

4) Describe how Section 1309 funds have been used to streamline process?

The process is much more streamlined. The consultant conducts the project reviews and distributes the project review comments to the assigned plan review staff review for their consideration. The final review comes back through the Transportation Planner for final approval. Additionally, the consultant now tracks all transportation projects that are reviewed including Advanced Notifications, TIP and WP projects. Prior to conducting the review, the consultant checks the tracking program to see if the project has been previously reviewed. If the project has been reviewed, the previous comments are confirmed to see if further action has been taken by the responsible agency to address the previous comments, if the comments are still applicable, they are submitted by the consultant. This coordinated and streamlined process eliminates duplicative reviews, thus reducing plan review staffs involvement, and eliminating conflicting responses.

5) How are projects assigned?

The transportation planner receives all TIP, AN and WP projects and assigns them to the consultant for review. The consultant receives ETDM projects directly through email notifications.

6) How frequently does staff consult or coordinate with FDOT on projects?

On behalf of the DCA, the consultant spends much more time coordinating with FDOT, MPOs and local governments in collecting project information and coordinating staff responses. This coordination occurs as frequently as several times a week.

7) How many FDOT projects have been reviewed or coordinated with FDOT over the past year? How does this differ from prior business practice?

An estimated total of 200 projects have reviewed over the current year. DCA is now participating in a greater amount of project reviews, approximately 6 times as many as in previous years.

Additionally, with the provision of an ETDM consultant, the transportation planner and plan review staff has more time to proactively participate in transportation planning projects and long-range planning efforts.

8) Describe your typical involvement with FDOT projects and at what phase that involvement occurs: Planning, PD&E, Permitting, etc...

Typically, DCA did not review transportation projects until the AN-PD&E phase. However, with ETDM, project reviews during the planning phases have significantly increased. The ETDM program has ensured DCA's involvement early-on in the project development process. The opportunity for early review has decreased the identification of potential negative impacts associated with the project during the programming phases and has reduced interagency conflicts.

Project reviews during the PD&E process have decreased due to DCAs involvement during the planning phase. DCA involvement in reviewing projects during the programming phase has increased the least due to the fact that DCA has always reviewed projects during the TIP and WP processes, dependent upon staff availability.

9) How many staff hours per month are typically devoted working on FDOT projects? Planning Phase? PD&E phase? Permitting?

Overall, staff hours utilized for FDOT project reviews have increased due to the inception of the ETDM process and the increased volume of projects requiring review in addition to the availability of consultant staff devoted entirely to transportation project reviews. One full-time consultant staff, at 40 hours per week, is responsible for reviewing ETDM, AN – PD&E, TIP and WP projects.

Plan review staff spends less time reviewing projects due to the streamlined process and information provided by consultant review staff, however, the increased volume of projects and more attention to project reviews have caused

an increase in staff hours spent on project reviews to approximately 8 hours per month.

10) Describe your involvement with MPO's planning process?

Typically, DCA is statutorily responsible for reviewing the TIP on an annual basis. However, with the inception of the ETDM program, more coordination with MPO staff has occurred at ETAT meetings and otherwise to discuss project issues. Additionally, because of the ETDM process, the plan review staff is more aware of the MPO functions and Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) development and is more likely to utilize these resources in comprehensive plan and transportation project reviews.

11) Describe instances of where early collaborative decision-making with FDOT has occurred to eliminate duplication or resolve issues?

As mentioned previously, due to the initiation of the ETDM program and the DCA project tracking system, duplication of project reviews has been eliminated and the potential for conflicting responses has also been eliminated. Additionally, previous to the ETDM program, DCA's involvement at the planning phase of a project was almost non-existent, unless a local government asked the Department for their review and participation. Now that the Department reviews projects during the planning phase, project issues can be raised and addressed prior to the programming phase. During DCA's TIP and WP reviews, projects are often identified as inconsistent because they are not addressed in the LGCP and it is recommended that they not be considered for further programming.

12) When did your agency become aware of and receive public input on a transportation project? Planning? Programming? Project development?

Typically, DCA was not notified of a project until the Advanced Notification during the PD&E phase. DCA was not notified of public meetings or workshops related to specific projects. Currently, DCA receives several public meeting or workshop notices over the course of a year, however, public meeting information is more available through the ETDM process.

13) How often have you published joint notices with FDOT?

None that I am aware of.

14) What are the major barriers to coordination and involvement with FDOT projects: Issues to consider Budget? Staff? Other Resources? Time? Communication? Meetings? Field Reviews? Environmental Screening Tool?

Even with a full-time consultant staff member, there are times, particularly during the summer months, that the workload is in excess of what the staff can reasonably handle. Additional part-time staff may still be necessary during these periods of high volume. No budget or staff is available to take over the duties of the ETDM consultant or regularly attend the ETAT meetings.

District ETAT meetings have assisted with project coordination and the EST tool has assisted enormously in providing and storing data, project documentation, and coordination of project reviews between partnering agencies.

15) What are some of the findings or results you have discovered related to your agencies operations, FDOT operations or the environmental process in general since participation in the MOU and agreements?

- a. *For DCA plan review staff, participation in transportation planning projects is not a high priority, however, they appreciate the opportunity to become aware of the project during the early planning phases and to review the project's potential impacts.*
- b. *Having a wealth of GIS data in one tool is excellent and the fact that can be used for a number of purposes is powerful.*
- c. *There is little coordination between MPOs and local government regarding transportation planning and the LGCP.*
- d. *The ETDM is not a mandatory process and several recently adopted LRTP Cost Feasible projects have not been subjected to the ETDM process*
- e. *Projects are still being submitted at the programming phase without prior planning review, which still makes it difficult when they are inconsistent with the LGCP.*
- f. *Although projects are reviewed through the ETDM process, in some instances DCA receives Advanced Notification notices through the ICAR process for the same projects, which without the DCA tracking tool, would cause duplicative reviews.*
- g. *Local governments which conduct their own planning and PD&E studies for local roads do not participate in the ETDM process.*

16) What recommendations would you make to improve the environmental streamlining of the process?

- a. *Seek stronger coordination between FDOT, MPOs and local governments through the ETDM, LRTP and Local Government Comprehensive Planning processes.*
- b. *Make the ETDM process mandatory for all federally/state funded projects.*
- c. *Encourage local governments to participate in the process*
- d. *Eliminate the Advanced Notification process when ETDM becomes mandatory.*

Agency Specific Performance Measures (PM) Questions

1) If your agency has established Performance Measures, describe your Performance Measures and how participation in ETDM process and streamlining has contributed to meeting these measures?

The ETDM process assists DCA in achieving its objective of providing technical assistance to local governments, the general public and partnering agencies regarding state planning issues.

2) Using EST reports, discuss how your agency has met the performance measures established in the ETDM Agreements.

The DCA has fulfilled its responsibilities identified in the Agency Operation Agreement by completing the following ETDM activities:

- *Review and comment on ICAR – AN project reviews*
- *Being a cooperating agency in the ETDM process*
- *Determining if DRI development orders impact the transportation projects*
- *Agreeing through formal documentation on adequacy of corridor-wide resource inventory*
- *Review and comment on project issues on growth management*
- *Review and comment on Class of Action*
- *Review project consistency with LGCPs and statewide planning goals*
- *Review and comment on summary of community issues and public concerns*
- *Submitting corridor or addition technical information regarding projects*
- *Participate in ETAT meetings*
- *Attending EST Training courses*
- *Submit concerns electronically within 45 calendar days*
- *Providing updated land use data in GIS format, where possible*