
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS THE NEPA PROCESS?

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) directs federal agencies, when planning projects or issuing permits, to conduct environmental reviews to consider the potential impacts their proposed actions may have on the environment.

For transportation projects, NEPA requires the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and other transportation agencies to consider potential impacts to the social and natural environment. In addition to evaluating the potential environmental effects, FHWA must take into account the transportation needs of the public in reaching a decision that is in the best overall public interest. (23 USC 109(h)).

The NEPA statute and implementing regulations initiate a process to evaluate potential impacts of a project and contain requirements for documentation of decisions. The key elements of the process include the following:

- Determining the project's purpose and need;
- Determining the range of alternatives to be considered;
- Assessing potential environmental impacts;
- Coordination with relevant agencies;
- Public involvement;
- Determining mitigation for unavoidable impacts;
- Documentation of the analysis and decisions through an environmental impact statement, an environmental assessment, or a categorical exclusion supported by the administrative record.

WHAT IS A PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT (PD&E) STUDY?

A Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study is conducted to meet the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act. During the study, preliminary engineering will be conducted to develop feasible build alternatives for the roadway improvements. The environmental, social and economic effects of the feasible alternatives will be assessed. A No-Build Alternative, which retains the roadway in its present state with routine maintenance, remains a viable alternative throughout the study. In addition, public outreach and agency coordination is performed. In summary, it is a tool used to evaluate transportation improvements that are technically sound, environmentally sensitive, economically feasible and socially acceptable.

The study is along S.R. 79 from S.R. 8 (Interstate 10) to the Alabama State Line in Holmes County, Florida. In addition, a potential by-pass around the city of Bonifay will be examined.

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WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY?

The overall goal of this study is to develop a viable concept that satisfies the project purpose and need, minimizes social, economic and environmental impacts, incorporates community input, and receives approval from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), FDOT, and agency partners. The results of the study will determine the type, location and design configuration of the S.R. 79 corridor. The study will evaluate alternative typical sections (roadway concepts), special treatments and/or additional lanes at major intersections and widening of crossroads where necessary to provide appropriate intersection operation. The study will also evaluate pedestrian and bicycle facilities where appropriate.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

Check the website regularly for meeting times and dates. Should you have any questions regarding the project, contact the FDOT General Consultant Project Manager, Kimberly Stephens, P.E., at (850) 415-9001 or via email at kistephens@hntb.com. You may also contact Ian Satter, District Three Public Information Director, at (888) 638-0250, extension 1205 or via email at ian.satter@dot.state.fl.us.

WHEN WILL THE PROJECT BE BUILT?

Future phases of the project, design, right of way (ROW), and construction are not currently funded. However, it is typical that projects such as this take between 5-7 years to complete, once the PD&E study is final.

WHEN IS THE NEXT PUBLIC MEETING?

A Public Kick-Off Meeting is anticipated to be held March 2016. At this meeting, the public will be introduced to the project and have an opportunity to make comments to the project team. It will also afford the public a chance to express concerns or issues they may have.

Additional information will be posted to the project website prior to the meeting.

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

For additional public involvement opportunities, visit the [FDOT Public Notices website](http://www2.dot.state.fl.us/publicsyndication/PublicMeetings.aspx/publicmeetings_district3) at http://www2.dot.state.fl.us/publicsyndication/PublicMeetings.aspx/publicmeetings_district3.