Title
Efficient Transportation Decision Public Web Site: Bridging the Gap Between Transportation Planning and the Public

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Author
Roaza, Ruth

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Abstract

The State of Florida has developed a new process for accomplishing transportation planning and project development for major capacity improvement projects. The goal of this process – the Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Process - is to make transportation decisions more quickly without sacrificing the quality of the human and natural environments. The ETDM Process enables agencies and the public to provide early input to the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) about potential effects of proposed transportation projects.

Early in the planning process, the public and District-wide Environmental Technical Advisory Teams (ETATs) review projects for potential environmental effects. The ETAT consists of government representatives with statutory authority for issuing permits or providing environmental consultation. When they are notified to review a project, the District or MPO Community Liaison Coordinators (CLCs) inform the public that the project information is available for their review on the ETDM Web site or through the MPO or FDOT District Office. Project information includes: project details, results of GIS analyses, and resource maps. Members of the public provide comments through normal public involvement channels (for example, workshops, correspondence, telephone communication, and emails). At the end of the 45-day review period, ETDM Coordinators summarize and respond to comments in a screening summary report, which is published on the ETDM Web site and available at the FDOT District Office. The project information, ETAT comments, and summary reports continue to be available as the project progresses through subsequent phases. Updates are posted when new phases begin. A history record of the project is available as well. During Project Development, Project Managers post technical studies, environmental documents, and project-specific Web sites as they are completed. People using the site may elect to sign up to receive email notifications to keep informed about project updates in their area of interest.

One of the challenges in public involvement is providing access to information. The ETDM Web site is one means of providing that information in a timely manner. The Web site has been recently updated to comply with the American Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations. The new site was released on October 31, 2006. This interactive poster session provides an overview of the site.

Biographical Sketch: Ruth Roaza is a senior project manager at URS with over 15 years of experience in the technical fields of geographic information systems (GIS) and database management. For the past 7 years, she has worked under contract with the Florida Department of Transportation to support development of Florida’s Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Process. Originally, Ms. Roaza led the development of the Environmental Screening Tool (EST), an Internet application which supports the ETDM Process. Currently, she is the project manager of the ETDM consultant team. Prior to joining URS in 1998, Ms. Roaza managed the enterprise-wide GIS and Applications Development programs for the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP). Ms. Roaza received her bachelor’s degree in Computer Science and Religion/Philosophy from Muskingum College. She also completed two years of graduate studies in Cross Cultural Communication at Ohio University.