Linking Planning and NEPA

PennDOT’s Improvements to the Project Delivery Cycle

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Smart Transportation Principles Break the Unsustainable Transportation/Land Use Cycle

1. Money counts
2. Choose projects with high value price ratio
3. Enhance the local network
4. Look beyond LOS
5. Safety first, and maybe safety only
6. Accomodate all modes
7. Leverage and preserve existing investments
8. Build towns and not sprawl
9. Understand the context; plan and design within the context
10. Develop local governments as strong land use partners
The Project Process

• Joint PennDOT/FHWA Executive Session and Workshop, April 2005
  – Five Action Items
    • Statewide Planning
    • MPO/RPO Planning
    • Planning Studies
    • Agency Coordination Meetings
    • Information Gathering/Sharing
  – Associated Tasks
  – Initiatives Underway or Planned
Similar Efforts in Other States

• Transportation Research Board
• National Cooperative Highway Research Program
• Other State DOT’s Best Management Practices
• TIP Evaluation Criteria
State DOT Best Practices

- Program Description
- Purpose and Need Statement
- Evaluation of Alternatives
- Interagency Roles and Coordination
- Project Evaluation Criteria
- Project Process Delivery Map
State DOT Best Practices
TIP Evaluation Guidance

• Scan of PA MPOs/RPOs and other states
• Optional as Part of Project ID and Prioritization
• PennDOT’s Process Considers:
  – Federal Planning Factors
  – State Planning Criteria
  – Regional/Local Criteria
Scan of Non-PA MPOs’ Evaluation Criteria

- Boston, MA
- Albany, NY
- Eugene, OR
- Tulsa, OK
- San Francisco, CA
- Albuquerque, NM
- Nashville, TN
- Northern NJ
- Southern NJ
- Seattle, WA
- Vancouver, WA
SAFETEA-LU – Sections 6001 and 6002

Federal Register

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Part III

Department of Transportation

Federal Highway Administration
23 CFR Parts 450 and 456

Federal Transit Administration
49 CFR Part 643

Statewide Transportation Planning
Metropolitan Transportation Planning
Final Rule

SAFETEA-LU ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS
FINAL GUIDANCE

This guidance is non-binding should not be construed as rules of general applicability and legal effect.
The Transportation Planning Provisions of SAFETEA-LU (Section 6001) and regulations include the following:

• All TIPs, STIPs and plans adopted after July 1, 2007
• Participation Plans
• Federal, state, and local agency and tribe consultation
• Focus on mobility and safety while being consistent with planned growth and economic development.
• Potential mitigation opportunities included in statewide and metropolitan plans
Environmental Provisions (Section 6002) and Proposed Question and Answer Guidance:

- Environmental Review Process
- Project Initiation Letter
- Coordination Plan and Schedule
- Lead/Cooperating/Participating Agencies
- Project Management Plan/Major Projects
- Participating agencies
- A Dispute Resolution Process
- Review of Public Involvement/Hearing Procedures
- Preferred Alternative Level of Detail
- 180-day Statute of Limitations
- Federal Funding for Agency Reviews
- 180 days from ROD or complete application permit requirement
What’s Changing?

• Preliminary Engineering Steps Integrated into Planning
  – Shortlisted Project Scoping Field Views
  – Analysis & Review of Project Needs
  – Screening of Preliminary Alternatives
  – Joint PennDOT-MPO/RPO Costing & Scheduling

• Remove Agency Concurrence Points

• Create ONE Process for ALL Projects
New Transportation Project
Development Process

Decision Point
- If project is well-defined  →  TIP
- If not  →  project definition phase
- BOD/Planning certification of PPC

Go/No Go decision (PennDOT & planning partner)
- Costs
- Environmental review
- Land use implication
- Mode choice(s)

Prioritized Listing of Projects by District
New Process Activities

- Long Range Plan (LRP)
  - Environmental Overview
  - Conceptual Mitigation Opportunities
• **Project Identification/Prioritization**
  – Project Proposal Form (P2 Form)
  – Project Evaluation Methodology (Short List of Projects)
• **Project Initiation Phase**
  – Planning and Programming Checklist
  – Conceptual Engineering
  – Project Field View
  – District Task Force
New Process Activities

- Project Definition Phase
  - Refined Purpose and Need
  - Environmental Concerns
  - Public Participation
  - Preliminary Alternatives Screening
  - Right-Sizing
  - Central Office Task Force
Primary MPO/RPO Responsibilities

- Complete LRTP
- Solicit P2 Forms from project sponsors
- Use evaluation criteria to shortlist TIP candidates
- Complete Planning and Programming Checklist portion of P2 Form for shortlisted candidates
- Participate in all District Task Force meetings
- Develop and adopt final TIP
Primary District Task Force Responsibilities

- Coordinate shortlisting of projects with MPO/RPO
- For all shortlisted projects, complete a Conceptual Engineering Form
- Make a preliminary determination on the necessary NEPA documentation
- Participate in scoping field view
- Determine whether projects move to the Project Definition or TIP Phase
New Process Activities

NEPA

Project Analysis Phase → Engineering & Environmental Study Phase → Environmental Decision Phase → Final Design → Construction
Organizational Changes

- PennDOT technical and/or fiscal support to MPOs/RPOs for new responsibilities

- Multidisciplinary task forces
  - PennDOT District Offices
  - PennDOT Central Office
Revising the Project Development Process ---

• Addresses SAFETEA-LU legislation
• Creates ONE process for ALL projects
• Streamlines project delivery efforts
• Incorporates Smart Transportation & Right-sizing
• Results in better cost estimates & more realistic schedules
Next Steps

• Finalize draft handbook
• Confirm agency roles & responsibilities
• Conduct education, training and outreach
• “Piloting” of projects
• Update applicable manuals
• Adjust TIP update schedules as necessary
Lessons Learned

• Extensive coordination necessary
  – PennDOT
  – Resource Agencies
  – Planning Partners

• Help from Technical Advisory Committee essential

• Need to manage expectations
For More Information

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