

What is a PD&E Study?

A Project Development and Environment (PD&E) study is an environmental and engineering process developed by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to determine social, economic, natural, and physical environmental effects associated with a proposed transportation improvement project. The process follows procedures set forth in the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and federal and state laws and regulations. It requires the combined efforts of professional engineers, planners, and scientists who collect and analyze project-related information to develop the best solution for transportation needs. An important component of the process is public and agency coordination. The basic activities of a PD&E study include:

Data Collection

The first major work effort is the collection of all available data pertaining to the study corridor including existing roadway characteristics, traffic counts, existing and future land uses, drainage patterns, locations of wetlands and habitat for threatened or endangered species, potential contamination sites, areas of historic and cultural significance and population demographics.

Alternatives Development and Analysis

During the PD&E process, the study team develops feasible alternatives for roadway improvement projects, called “build” alternatives. They evaluate the “build” alternatives based on environmental, engineering, and socioeconomic conditions; safety needs; and public comment. The team also evaluates the need for additional right-of-way for stormwater ponds and environmental mitigation during the PD&E study phase. Throughout the process, the study team also considers the “no-build” alternative, which assumes no improvements to SR 544 other than routine maintenance. The environmental and social effects and costs of the “build” and “no-build” alternatives are quantified and summarized in an evaluation matrix.

Public Information Meeting

FDOT will hold a Public Information Meeting where the public will have the opportunity to speak one-on-one with project team members, review project plans, and aerial displays. With input received at the public meeting, FDOT will select a recommended alternative. Please see our documents for meeting materials. FDOT welcomes and appreciates everyone's participation in the project. This meeting complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes. FDOT solicits public participation without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability or family status.

Public Hearing

FDOT will hold a formal Public Hearing for this study in Polk County. The study team will present the final evaluation and preferred alternative for the widening of SR 544. FDOT invites the public to attend the hearing and give public testimony regarding the proposed improvements.

Final Acceptance

FDOT District One will submit the study to the Office of Environmental Management (OEM) for Location and Design Concept Acceptance after the study team receives and evaluates comments from the public hearing. The PD&E study phase of the project is completed once the project is accepted by OEM. The phases that follow the PD&E study are final design of the project, acquisition of right-of-way (if necessary) and construction of the proposed improvements.

FDOT welcomes and appreciates everyone's participation in the project. Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability or family status in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes.

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) pursuant to 23 U.S.C 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated December 14, 2016 and executed by the Federal Highway Administration and FDOT.