

Planning and Environmental Linkages

Questionnaire and Checklist



November 2012

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The Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) seeks to employ unified and dedicated efforts to deliver transportation solutions that improve the quality of life for those in Nevada. Improvements to the transportation system are typically accomplished through projects. Federal and State transportation improvement funds and NDOT's construction program and projects are scheduled and delivered through the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). For 40 years, Congress directed this sequencing of funding flow, triggered by metropolitan and statewide transportation planning processes that serve as the basis for project decisions and incorporate an emphasis on public involvement, environmental considerations, and other factors.

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) established a national environmental policy intentionally focused on federal activities and the desire for a sustainable environment balanced with other, essential, present and future needs of generations of Americans. NEPA mandated that federal agencies consider the potential environmental consequences of their proposed actions, document the analysis, and make this information available to the public for comment prior to implementation. These requirements form the basic framework for federal decision making and the NEPA process. NEPA applies only where there is a federal action. For the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), implementation of NEPA is based on the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations set down in 40 Code of Federal Regulations [C.F.R.] §§ 1500–08 and 23 C.F.R. § 771.

1978 CEQ regulations call for an integration of “the NEPA process with other planning at the earliest possible time to insure that planning and decisions reflect environmental values, to avoid delays later in the process, and to head off potential conflicts” (40 C.F.R. § 1501.2). Despite this statutory and regulatory emphasis on the early integration of transportation planning with NEPA, these two activities have, in practice, been carried out in a separate and sequential manner. Environmental analyses prepared to support the project development/NEPA process are typically disconnected from the analyses used to develop long-range transportation plans, statewide and metropolitan Transportation Improvement Programs, and planning-level corridor/subarea/feasibility studies. When transportation planning and NEPA processes are not well coordinated, duplication of work and delays in implementing transportation improvements frequently occur.

New legislation has been adopted known as Moving America forward in the 21st Century (MAP-21). MAP-21 replaces Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) and the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA_LU). While MAP-21 has numerous changes related to transportation the portion related to Planning and Environmental Linkages was relatively unchanged.

The federal government is currently updating reference documents to provide proper reference to MAP-21. As this process is completed this document will be updated to correctly reference regulations establishing the Map-21 guidelines.

This questionnaire and checklist is designed to assist in linking planning with potential environmental concerns and should be viewed as a tool, not a mandatory exercise when reviewing potential transportation projects. As noted in 23 CFR Appendix A to Part 450.

“The Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) and the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) specifically exempted transportation plans and programs from the NEPA process as part of, or concurrently with, a transportation planning study does not subject transportation plans and programs to NEPA. Implementation of this Appendix by States, MPOs and public transportation operators is voluntary.”

23 CFR APPENDIX A to PART 450

Please reference 23 CFR Appendix A to Part 450 for more information regarding how the PEL process is designed to assist in the planning of transportation projects. Federal Legislation enacted in 2012 and known as MAP-21¹ includes several provisions to link transportation planning and NEPA processes. However, guidance on this legislation is still being developed. SAFETEA-LU¹, which was enacted in 2005 and precedes MAP-21 which established the guidelines to better integrate transportation planning and NEPA. Regulations (23 CFR § 450) implementing this legislation included requirements as well as nonbinding guidance to enhance the process. Sections 1310 and 1311 of MAP-21 (Sections 6001 and 6002 of SAFETEA-LU); among other requirements, define criteria that a federal agency must consider in deciding whether to adopt planning-level analyses or decisions in the NEPA process:

- involvement of interested state, local, tribal, and federal agencies
- public review
- reasonable opportunity to comment during a statewide or metropolitan transportation planning process and development of a corridor or subarea planning study
- documentation of relevant decisions in a form that is identifiable and available for review during the NEPA scoping process and that can be appended to or referenced in the NEPA document
- review by FHWA and FTA, as appropriate

FHWA’s *SAFETEA-LU Environmental Review Process: Final Guidance* (2006) provides a framework for carrying out existing requirements under NEPA and other laws. Among other items, it requires the development of a coordination plan as part of the environmental impact statement process. Such plans add review and comment points to the traditional NEPA steps:

- public and agency involvement when developing the project’s purpose and need
- public and agency involvement when developing the project’s alternatives
- collaboration with participating agencies (no public involvement required) in determining the appropriate impact assessment methodologies to be used and the level of detail required for the analysis of alternatives

A requirement to consider mitigation activities in long-range plans and a requirement to consult with resource and land management agencies and related plans, maps, or inventories during the development of long-range transportation plans provide an opportunity for early identification of environmental and design considerations that could cause project costs to rise and jeopardize schedules. This initiative is referred to as planning and environmental linkages (PEL). The goal of PEL is to create a decision-making process that minimizes duplication of effort, promotes environmental stewardship, and reduces delays, from the visioning and planning stages all the way through project development to project implementation. At the time of preparation of this document, final guidance under MAP-21 was not yet available. Once more guidance becomes available this document will be updated.

NDOT developed the attached *Project Development and Scoping Guidelines – Linking Planning and NEPA: Project-Level Scoping* in 2009 to address challenges in the STIP process that can delay the delivery of its projects. Unrealistic expectations for projects, unrecognized schedule risks, and unrealistic cost estimates characterize such challenges and, when combined, can threaten delivery of the STIP, result in schedule delays, cost escalation, and even project cancellation. The integrity of the STIP is enhanced through advancing the project scoping process by placing an early focus on developing realistic project definitions, schedules and costs.

The PEL process seeks to develop subarea and corridor studies that have been scoped to more directly inform the NEPA process for those projects that ultimately become part of the STIP. Effective, conceptual-level transportation planning studies that follow the PEL process provide opportunities both to identify important issues of concern early and to build agency, stakeholder, and public understanding of the project. Such early, integrated planning is not driven solely by regulatory requirements and the quest for more efficient and effective processes, although those are desirable results. Transportation and environmental professionals—as well as those in metropolitan planning organizations, state and federal resource agencies, and nongovernmental organizations—are finding that early collaboration helps achieve broader transportation and environmental stewardship goals through better decisions regarding programs, planning, and projects.

This document has been developed by NDOT to provide guidance, particularly to transportation planners and NEPA specialists, regarding how to most effectively link the transportation planning and NEPA processes. By considering the questions and issues raised in this questionnaire, transportation planners will become more aware of potential gaps in their subarea or corridor studies, better understand the needs of future users of the studies, and be reminded of the benefits of wider and/or deeper collaboration with agencies, the public, and other stakeholders. NEPA specialists who fill out the checklist will assume a new role in the transportation planning process: becoming advocates for early awareness of environmental issues before the NEPA process begins.

The following PEL questionnaire and checklist are intended to be used as tools to guide proper documentation and selection of information gathered during the planning process that can later be made available for input, review, and possible incorporation by reference during the NEPA project development process.

This questionnaire and checklist will be used to effectively influence the scope, content, and process employed for NDOT transportation planning studies that focus on specific transportation corridors or on transportation network subareas (versus statewide transportation studies). Completion of this questionnaire and checklist will support the PEL process and serve dual objectives:¹

- provide guidance to transportation planners on the level of detail needed to ensure that information collected and decisions made during the transportation planning study can be used during the NEPA process for a proposed transportation project
- provide the future NEPA study team with documentation on the outcomes of the transportation planning process, including the history of decisions made and the level of detailed analysis undertaken

Major issues to consider when conducting a transportation planning study that links to the future NEPA process include:²

- identifying the appropriate level of environmental analysis for the study

¹ Objectives are based on the Federal Highway Administration's online document: *Case Studies: Colorado: Colorado Department of Transportation: Tools and Techniques to Implement PEL*, <www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/integ/case_colorado2.asp> (accessed October 24, 2011).

² Further guidance is available in the Federal Highway Administration's *Guidance on Using Corridor and Subarea Planning to Inform NEPA*, dated April 5, 2011, available online at <www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/integ/corridor_nepa_guidance.pdf>.

- identifying the appropriate level of agency, stakeholder, and public involvement
- defining unique study concurrence points for seeking agreement from relevant resource agencies, stakeholders, and members of the public
- developing a process to ensure that the study will be recognized as valid within the NEPA process
- identifying when to involve resource agencies in the study, and to what extent they influence decision making
- identifying how to persuade U.S. Department of Transportation reviewers to accept the use of these studies in the NEPA process

These issues should be considered throughout the transportation planning study process. Users of this *NDOT Planning and Environmental Linkages Questionnaire and Checklist* should review the entire document at the beginning of the study to familiarize themselves with whatever local and general issues may be operative. The questionnaire is provided in two parts: one to be completed by transportation planners at the beginning of the study and one to be completed at the end. The checklist (Part 3) should be used by NEPA specialists throughout the study and should be finalized at the end of the study.

Upon completion of the transportation planning study, this document should be included as an appendix to the study's final report to document how the study meets the requirements of 23 C.F.R. § 450.212 or § 450.318 (Subpart B: Statewide Transportation Planning and Programming or Subpart C: Metropolitan Transportation Planning and Programming, respectively).

The flowchart on the following page outlines the major inputs, decision points, and outcomes that occur during implementation of a transportation planning study using the PEL process.

	Transportation Planners	Both	NEPA Specialists
PEL Launch	Review Part 1 and Part 2 of questionnaire Complete Part 1 of questionnaire	Become familiar with local and general issues Modify study scope to include or deepen analysis of specific resources or environmental issues	Review checklist Advocate inclusion of resources and issues Seek resource agency assistance in changing study scope
Analysis and Comment	Define, clarify, analyze, and screen modes, corridors, and alternatives (including no-action alternative) Involve relevant stakeholders, agencies, and public in comments and reviews to ensure later acceptability and defensibility in NEPA	Become familiar with local and general issues Modify study scope to include or deepen analysis of specific resources or environmental issues	Continue to advocate addressing collection and analysis of data pertinent to effective application in NEPA process
PEL Completion	Complete Part 2 of questionnaire	Include questionnaire and checklist in appendix to study Document relevant findings for use in later NEPA documents	Complete checklist (Part 3)



Beginning of NEPA Process

NEPA specialists review completed PEL questionnaire and checklist and confirm that study recommendations and analyses can support the anticipated NEPA process(es) and document type(s), including, if applicable, incorporation into the content of a Notice of Intent

Questionnaire for Transportation Planners – Part 1

This part of the questionnaire should be completed by transportation planners at the beginning of the transportation planning study. Please note that planners should also review Part 2 of the questionnaire to understand what additional issues will need to be considered and documented as the study progresses.

Project identification	
<i>What is the name of the study? What cities and counties does it cover? What major streets or highways are covered? For corridor studies, what are the intended termini?</i>	
<i>Who is the study sponsor?</i>	
<i>Briefly describe the study and its purpose.</i>	
<i>Who are the primary study team members (include name, title, organization name, and contact information)?</i>	
<i>Does the team include advisory groups such as a technical advisory committee, steering committee, or other? If so, include roster(s) as attachment(s).</i>	
<i>Have previous transportation planning studies been conducted for this region? If so, provide a brief chronology, including the years the studies were completed. Provide contact names and locations of the studies and study websites.</i>	
<i>What current or near-future planning (or other) studies in the vicinity are underway or will be undertaken? What is the relationship of this study to those studies? Provide contact names and locations of the studies and study websites.</i>	
Study objectives	
What are your desired outcomes for this study? (Check all that apply.)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder identification <input type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder roles/responsibilities definition <input type="checkbox"/> Travel study area definition <input type="checkbox"/> Performance measures development <input type="checkbox"/> Development of purpose and need goals and other objectives <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative evaluation and screening <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative travel modes definition	<input type="checkbox"/> Operationally independent segments <input type="checkbox"/> Scheduling of infrastructure improvements over short-, mid-, and long-range time frames <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental impacts <input type="checkbox"/> Mitigation identification <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<i>Have system improvements and additions that address your transportation need been identified in a fiscally constrained statewide or regional long-range transportation plan?</i>	

<i>Will a purpose and need statement³ be prepared as part of this effort? If so, what steps will need to be taken during the NEPA process to make this a project-level purpose and need statement?</i>
Establishment of organizational relationships
<i>Is a partnering agreement in place? If so, who are signatories (for example, affected agencies, stakeholders, organizations)? Attach the partnering agreement(s).</i>
<i>What are the key coordination points in the decision-making process?</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Project Development Checklist for funding request <input type="checkbox"/> Initial NDOT risk assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Initial Project Development Committee review <input type="checkbox"/> Project Scoping Report <input type="checkbox"/> Project inclusion in TIP/STIP
Planning assumptions and analytical methods
<i>Is the time horizon of the study sufficiently long to consider long-term (20 years or more from completion of the study) effects of potential scenarios?</i>
<i>What method and what planning year will be used for forecasting traffic volumes (for example, traffic modeling or growth projections)? What are the sources of data being used? Has USDOT validated their use? Are the models and their output conducive for use with NEPA-related noise and air quality modeling?</i>
<i>Will the study use FHWA's Guide on the Consistent Application of Traffic Analysis Tools and Methods⁴? If not, why not? How will traffic volumes from the travel demand model be incorporated, if necessary, into finer-scale applications such as a corridor study?</i>
<i>Do the travel demand models base their projections on differentiations between vehicles?</i>
Data, information, and tools
<i>Is there a centralized database or website that all State resource agencies may use to share resource data during the study?</i>

³ For an explanation of purpose and need in environmental documents, please see the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA's) "NEPA and Transportation Decisionmaking: The Importance of Purpose and Need in Environmental Documents," <[Purpose and Need](#)>. This website provides links to five additional resources and guidance from FHWA that should be helpful in understanding the relationship between goals and objectives in transportation planning studies and purpose and need statements of NEPA documents.

⁴ FHWA November 2011 publication: <[Traffic Analysis Tools and Methods](#)>

Questionnaire for Transportation Planners – Part 2

This part of the questionnaire should be completed by transportation planners at the end of the transportation planning study. This completed document should become an appendix to the study’s final report to document how the study meets the requirements of 23 Code of Federal Regulations § 450.212 or § 450.318.

Purpose and need for this study
<i>How did the study process define and clarify corridor-level or subarea-level goals (if applicable) that influenced modal infrastructure improvements and/or the range of reasonable alternatives?</i>
<i>What were the key steps and coordination points in the decision-making process? Who were the decision-makers and who else participated in those key steps?</i>
<i>How should this study information be presented in future NEPA document(s), if applicable? Are relevant findings documented in a format and at a level of detail that will facilitate reference to and/or inclusion in subsequent NEPA document(s)?⁵</i>
<i>Were the study's findings and recommendations documented in such a way as to facilitate an FHWA or Federal Transit Administration decision regarding acceptability for application in the NEPA process? Does the study have logical points where decisions were made and where concurrence from resource or regulatory agencies, stakeholders, and the public was sought? If so, provide a list of those points.</i>

Establishment of organizational relationships – tribes and agencies ⁶			
Tribe or agency	Date(s) contacted	Describe level of participation	Describe the agency's primary concerns and the steps needed to coordinate with the agency during NEPA scoping. ⁷
<i>Tribal</i>			
<i>Federal</i>			
Bureau of Indian Affairs			
Bureau of Land Management			
Bureau of Reclamation			
Federal Highway Administration			
National Park Service			
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers			

⁵ For an explanation of the types of documents needed under the NEPA process and the nature of the content of those documents, please see “NEPA Documentation: Improving the Quality of Environmental Documents,” <[Documentation](#)>.

⁶ Users may add rows to this table to accommodate additional tribes and agencies. Unused rows may be deleted.

⁷ If the transportation planning study final report does not adequately document interactions (for example, meeting notes, resolutions, letters) with the relevant agencies, append such information to the end of this questionnaire and checklist.

Establishment of organizational relationships – tribes and agencies⁶			
Tribe or agency	Date(s) contacted	Describe level of participation	Describe the agency's primary concerns and the steps needed to coordinate with the agency during NEPA scoping.⁷
U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service			
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency			
U.S. Department of Defense			
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service			
Other			
<i>Bi-State Regional Environmental Planning Agency</i>			
Tahoe Regional Planning Agency			
<i>State</i>			
Nevada Division of Environmental Protection			
Nevada Department of Public Safety			
Nevada Department of Fish and Wildlife			
Nevada Division of State Lands			
Other			
<i>County</i>			
<i>Local</i>			
<i>Transportation agencies</i>			

Establishment of organizational relationships – stakeholders and members of the public ⁸			
Public and stakeholders	Date(s) contacted	Describe level of participation	Describe the primary concerns expressed by members of the public and stakeholders.
Public			
Members of the public			
Stakeholders			
Other (for example, Audubon Society, Center for Biological Diversity, citizens groups, homeowners associations, Sierra Club, private mining or energy interests, railroad companies)			

Planning assumptions and analytical methods
<i>Did the study provide regional development and growth assumptions and analyses? If so, what were the sources of the demographic and employment trends and forecasts?</i>
<i>What were the future-year policy and/or data assumptions used in the transportation planning process related to land use, economic development, transportation costs, and network expansion?</i>
<i>Were the planning assumptions and the corridor vision/purpose and need statement consistent with each other and with the long-range transportation plan? Are the assumptions still valid?</i>
Data, information, and tools
<i>Are the relevant data used in the study available in a compatible format that is readily usable? Are they available through a centralized web portal?</i>
<i>Are the completeness and quality of the data consistent with the quality (not scale or detail) of inputs needed for a NEPA project-level analysis⁹?</i>
<i>Are the data used in the study regularly updated and augmented? If regularly updated, provide schedule and accessibility information.</i>
<i>Have the environmental data been mapped at scales that facilitate comparison of effects across different resources and at sufficient resolution to guide initial NEPA issue definition? If not, what data collection and/or manipulation would likely be needed for application to the NEPA scoping process?</i>

⁸ Users may add rows to this table to accommodate additional stakeholders.

⁹ For an explanation of the types of information needed to evaluate impacts in environmental documents, please see FHWA’s “NEPA and Transportation Decisionmaking: Impacts,” <[Analysis of Impacts](#)>. This website provides links to six additional resources and guidance that should be helpful in understanding the types of impacts that need to be assessed, their context, and their intensity.

Examine the Checklist for NEPA specialist, at the back of this document, for more detail about potential impacts that could be mapped. Below is an abbreviated list of resources that could occur in the study area and may be knowable at this time and at the study's various analytical scales:

Resource or issue	Is the resource or issue present in the area?	Would any future transportation policies or projects involve the issue? Would there be impacts on the resource?	Resource or issue	Is the resource or issue present in the area?	Would any future transportation policies or projects involve the issue? Would there be impacts on the resource?
Sensitive biological resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	Section 4(f) ¹⁰ wildlife and/or waterfowl refuge, historic site, recreational site, park	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
Wildlife corridors	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	Section 6(f) ¹¹ resource	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
Wetland areas	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	Existing development	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
Riparian areas	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	Planned development	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
100-year floodplain	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	Title VI/ Environmental justice populations ¹²	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
Prime or unique farmland or farmland of statewide or local importance	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	Utilities	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
Visual resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	Hazardous materials	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
Designated scenic road/byway	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	Sensitive noise receivers ¹³	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
Archaeological resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	Air quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
Historical resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	Other (list) _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable

¹⁰ Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (49 U.S. Code § 303, as amended); see <[Section 4\(f\)](#)>.

¹¹ Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act

¹² refers to Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and 1994 Executive Order 12898 on environmental justice

¹³ under FHWA's Noise Abatement Criterion B: picnic areas, recreation areas, playgrounds, active sports areas, parks, residences, motels, hotels, schools, churches, libraries, and hospitals

<p><i>Did the study incorporate models of, for example, species/habitat locations (predictive range maps), future land use, population dynamics, stormwater runoff, or travel demand? What models were used? Did the study adequately document what models were used, who was responsible for their use, and how they were used (with respect to, for example, calibration, replicability, contingencies, and exogenous factors)?</i></p>
<p><i>In scoping, conducting, and documenting the planning study, participants have come across documents and leads from agency staff and other sources that NEPA specialists may be able to use in conducting their studies. List any applicable memoranda of understanding, cost-share arrangements, programmatic agreements, or technical studies that are underway but whose findings are not yet published, etc.</i></p>
<p>Development of alternatives</p>
<p><i>Were resource agencies, stakeholders, and members of the public engaged in the process of identifying, evaluating, and screening out modes, corridors, a range of alternatives,¹⁴ or a preferred alternative (if one was identified—the latter two refer to corridor plans)? If so, how? Did these groups review the recommendation of a preferred mode(s), corridor(s), range of alternatives (including the no-build alternative), or an alternative? Were the participation and inputs of these groups at a level acceptable for use in purpose and need statements or alternatives development sections in NEPA documents? If not, why not?</i></p>
<p><i>Describe the process of outreach to resource agencies, the public, and other stakeholders. Describe the documentation of this process and of the responses to their comments. Is this documentation adequate in breadth and detail for use in NEPA documents?</i></p>
<p><i>If the study was a corridor study, describe the range of alternatives or modes of transportation (if any) considered, screening process, and screening criteria. Include what types of alternatives were considered (including the no-build alternative) and how the screening criteria were selected. Was a preferred alternative selected as best addressing the identified transportation issue? Are alternatives' locations and design features specified?</i></p>
<p><i>Also regarding whether the study was a corridor study, for alternatives that were screened out, summarize the reasons for their rejection.</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Are defensible, credible rationale articulated for their being screened out?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Did the study team take into account legal standards¹⁵ needed in the NEPA process for such decisions?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Did the study team have adequate information for screening out the alternatives?</p>
<p><i>What issues, if any, remain unresolved with the public, stakeholders, and/or resource agencies?</i></p>

¹⁴ For an explanation of the development of alternatives in environmental documents, please see FHWA's "NEPA and Transportation Decisionmaking: Development and Evaluation of Alternatives," <[Alternatives](#)>.

¹⁵ 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 771.123(c), 23 CFR § 771.111(d), 40 CFR § 1502.14(a), 40 CFR § 1502.14(b) and (d), 23 CFR § 771.125(a)(1); see FHWA Technical Advisory T 6640.8A, October 30, 1987, <[FHWA Technical Advisory T 6640.8A](#)>.

Identification of potential environmental mitigation activities
<i>Could the transportation planning process be integrated with other planning activities, such as land use or resource management plans? If so, could this integrated planning effort be used to develop a more strategic approach to environmental mitigation measures?</i>
<i>With respect to potential environmental mitigation opportunities at the PEL level, who should NDOT consult with among federal, State, and local agencies and tribes and how formally and frequently should such consultation be undertaken?</i>
Formally joining PEL with the NEPA process
<i>Lead federal agencies proposing a project that will undergo the NEPA process will want to most effectively leverage the transportation planning study's efforts and results. How could a Notice of Intent (for an environmental impact statement¹⁶) refer to the study's findings with respect to preliminary purpose and need and/or the range of alternatives to be studied?</i>
<i>Could a Notice of Intent in the NEPA process clearly state that the lead federal agency or agencies will use analyses from prior, specific planning studies that are referenced in the transportation planning study final report? Does the report provide the name and source of the planning studies and explain where the studies are publicly available? If not, how could such relevant information come to the NEPA specialists' attention and be made available to them in a timely way?</i>
<i>List how the study's proposed transportation system would support adopted land use plans and growth objectives.</i>
<i>What modifications are needed in the goals and objectives as defined in the transportation study process to increase their efficient and timely application in the NEPA process?</i>
<i>Jurisdictional delineations of waters of the United States frequently change. Housing and commercial developments can alter landscapes dramatically and can be constructed quickly. Noise and air quality regulations can change relatively rapidly. Resource agencies frequently alter habitat delineations to protect sensitive species. Will the study data's currency, relevance, and quality still be acceptable to agencies, stakeholders, and members of the public for use in the NEPA process? If not, what will be done to rectify this problem? Who will be responsible for any needed updating?</i>
Other issues
Are there any other issues a future NEPA study team should be aware of (mark all that apply)? In the space below the check boxes, explain the nature and location of any issue(s) checked.
<input type="checkbox"/> Public and/or stakeholders have expressed specific concerns <input type="checkbox"/> Contact information for stakeholders <input type="checkbox"/> Utility problems <input type="checkbox"/> Special or unique resources in the area <input type="checkbox"/> Access or right-of-way issues <input type="checkbox"/> Federal regulations that are undergoing initial promulgation or revision <input type="checkbox"/> Encroachments into right-of-way <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Need to engage—and be perceived as engaging—specific landowners, citizens, citizen groups, or other stakeholders

¹⁶ While Notices of Intent are required by some federal agencies for environmental assessments, they are optional for FHWA. Please see “3.3.2 Using the Notice of Intent to Link Planning and NEPA,” in *Guidance on Using Corridor and Subarea Planning to Inform NEPA* (Federal Highway Administration, April 5, 2011), <[Notice of Intent](#)>.

Concurrence

By signature, we concur that the transportation planning document meets or exceeds the following criteria in terms of acceptability for application in NEPA projects:

- Public involvement (outreach and level of participation)
- Stakeholder involvement (outreach and level of participation)
- Resource agencies' involvement and participation
- Documentation of the above efforts
- Applicability of the general findings and conclusions for use, by reference, in NEPA documents

Approved by: _____ Date: _____

Assistant Director, Engineering
Nevada Department of Transportation

Approved by: _____ Date: _____

Assistant Director, Planning
Nevada Department of Transportation

Approved by: _____ Date: _____

Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration

Checklist for NEPA Specialists – Part 3

By completing this checklist, NEPA specialists will be able to systematically evaluate the transportation planning study with regard to environmental resources and issues. It provides a framework for future NEPA studies by identifying those resources and issues that have already been evaluated, and those that have not. The role of NEPA specialists during the study’s various stages is laid out in the flowchart on page 4. This role includes timely advocacy for resources and issues that will later be integral to NEPA processes.

Checklist for NEPA specialists

Resource or issue	Is the resource or issue present in the area?	Are impacts to the resource or issue involvement possible?	Are the impacts mitigable?	Discuss the level of review and method of review for this resource or issue and provide the name and location of any study or other information cited in the planning document where it is described in detail. Describe how the planning data may need to be supplemented during NEPA.
<i>Natural environment</i>				
Sensitive biological resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	
Wildlife corridors	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	
Invasive species	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	
Wetland areas	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	
Riparian areas	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	
100-year floodplain	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	
Clean Water Act Sections 404/401 waters of the United States	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	
Prime or unique farmland	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	
Farmland of statewide or local importance	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	

Checklist for NEPA specialists

Resource or issue	Is the resource or issue present in the area?	Are impacts to the resource or issue involvement possible?	Are the impacts mitigable?	Discuss the level of review and method of review for this resource or issue and provide the name and location of any study or other information cited in the planning document where it is described in detail. Describe how the planning data may need to be supplemented during NEPA.
Sole-source aquifers	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	
Wild and scenic rivers	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	
Visual resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	
Designated scenic road/byway	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	
Cultural resources				
Archaeological resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	
Historical resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	
Section 4(f) and Section 6(f) resources				
Section 4(f) wildlife and/or waterfowl refuge	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	
Section 4(f) historic site	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	
Section 4(f) recreational site	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	
Section 4(f) park	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	
Section 6(f) resource	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	

Checklist for NEPA specialists

Resource or issue	Is the resource or issue present in the area?	Are impacts to the resource or issue involvement possible?	Are the impacts mitigable?	Discuss the level of review and method of review for this resource or issue and provide the name and location of any study or other information cited in the planning document where it is described in detail. Describe how the planning data may need to be supplemented during NEPA.
Human environment				
Existing development	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	
Planned development	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	
Displacements	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	
Access restriction	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	
Neighborhood continuity	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	
Community cohesion	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	
Title VI/Environmental justice populations	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	
Physical environment				
Utilities	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	
Hazardous materials	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	
Sensitive noise receivers	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	
Air quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	
Other (list)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable	

Identification of potential environmental mitigation activities

Off-site and compensatory mitigation areas are often creatively negotiated to advance multiagency objectives or multiple objectives within one agency. Who determined what specific geographic areas or types of areas were appropriate for environmental mitigation activities? How were these determinations made?

To address potential impacts on the human environment, what mitigation measures or activities were considered and how were they developed and documented?

Prepared by: _____ Date: _____
