

Environmental Stewardship and Transportation in Tennessee

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East Tennessee Environmental Conference
March 11, 2009 • Kingsport, Tennessee

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act 2009



- \$572 Million for Roads and Bridges in TN
 - \$470 Million of which are state projects
- Shovel Ready Criteria
- TDOT committed to letting to contract all those projects within the first 120 days.

TDOT in the Past: Political and Policy Context

- In 2002, TDOT performance was high-profile political issue in gubernatorial election
- Bumper sticker in Knoxville region
 - TDOT = Total Destruction of Tennessee
- Quote from TDOT official
 - “We’re not in the water quality business, we’re in the road building business”
- Adversarial relationships with TDEC, other Resource agencies and environmental groups

A Paradigm Shift

- Governor Bredesen took office early 2003
- New management team at TDOT with charge to overhaul the agency
- TDOT more open to the public
- Commitment to work more closely with local governments
- Earlier consideration of environmental impacts in project planning process
- Improve mobility **AND** protect the environment



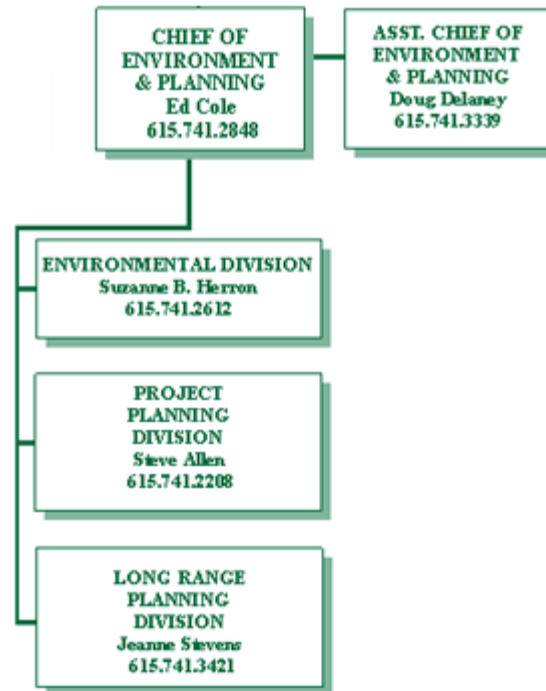
Making TDOT Greener

- Established Bureau of Environment and Planning
- State Environmental Management System
 - Early Environmental Screening Process
 - Tennessee Environmental Streamlining Agreement (TESA)
 - Commitments Tracking
- Context Sensitive Solutions
- Environmental Advisory Council
- TDOT Environmental Procedures
 - Tennessee Environmental Evaluation Report (TEER)
- Water Quality Consent Decree
- Environmental Compliance Office



Established Bureau of Environment and Planning

Planning and Environmental issues now reporting directly to TDOT Commissioner

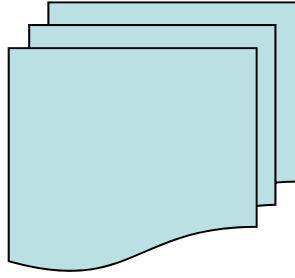


Statewide Environmental Management System (SEMS)

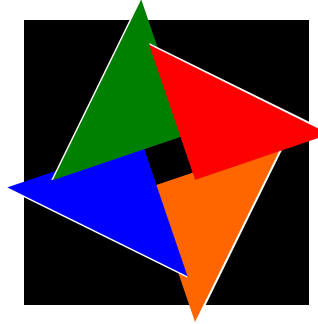
- Purpose
 - Facilitate collaboration and communication among TDOT and partners across project development process
- FHWA, federal resource agencies, state resource agencies, MPOs, RPOs, contractors, and other interested stakeholders
- Six goals for SEMS
 - Streamline project delivery
 - Promote environmental stewardship
 - Improve communication and collaboration
 - Demonstrate accountability
 - Manage organizational and cultural change
 - Leverage existing technology investments



Early Environmental Screening



Environmental Document Quality



Environmental Streamlining Agreement



Consideration
Commitment
Commitments Tracking

TD↑T

SMART

DELIVERY

Statewide Environmental Management System

Early Environmental Screening

- Purpose
 - To better link early planning and environmental document phases of project development
- Process indicates “red” and “yellow” flags for various GIS data layers during planning phase of project development
- Each GIS layer includes guidance based on each environmental factor
 - To aid in identification of environmental issues likely to result in delays or concerns
- Additional GIS data layers are being integrated into TDOT’s GIS system

Tennessee Environmental Streamlining Agreement (TESA)

- Purpose
 - Establish a coordinated planning and project development process by involving key stakeholders early and throughout the development of a project
- TESA establishes "one decision-making process" to identify and address agency issues at four key concurrence points during the early planning and NEPA process
 - Purpose and Need and Study Area
 - Project Alternatives to be Evaluated in the Environmental Document
 - Preliminary Draft Environmental Document
 - Preferred Alternative and Preliminary Mitigation



Intent of TESA Process

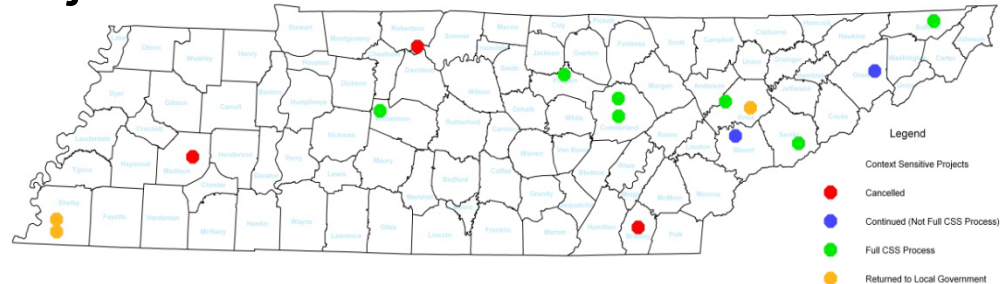
- To achieve general agreement between agencies before a project moves forward, precluding routine revisiting of decisions that have been agreed to earlier in the process
- TDOT will accomplish this by
 - Establishing a **coordinated planning and project development process** for major transportation projects
 - Ensuring **significant agency and MPO participation** and involvement early and throughout project development process
 - **Streamlining** NEPA process
 - **Coordinating** NEPA, permitting and Section 106 processes
 - Implementing **environmental stewardship and environmental review** process improvements

Commitments Tracking

- Purpose
 - To document and better monitor and track commitments made between TDOT and various stakeholders
- Commitments for tracking system
 - Received from **external stakeholders** (i.e., do not cut trees March-June due to bat habitat).
 - **Likely to be overlooked, revisited and changed** during subsequent phase of development (i.e., driveway location/width was condition of property acquisition/compensation).
 - Design element **is condition of getting permit approval** (i.e., when a bottomless culvert is required).
 - Design element **differs from normal expectation for construction** (i.e., when grade on a road was raised through a particular segment to accommodate caverns in an underground cave).

Context Sensitive Solutions

- Began with Controversial Projects in 2003



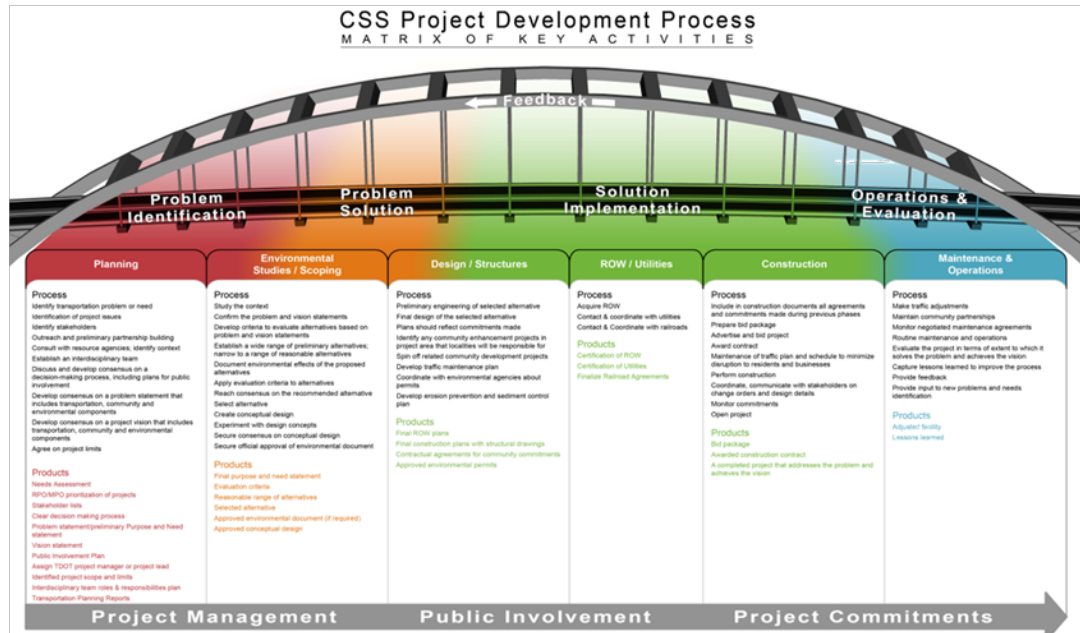
- Organizational Changes
 - Leadership Support
 - Community Relations Division
 - Project Management

- TDOT exposure to experiences in other states/training opportunities/FHWA encouragement

TDOT learned CSS by *Doing*

Context Sensitive Solutions

- Process that balances safety and mobility and the preservation of scenic, aesthetic, historic, environmental and other community values. - *TDOT CSS Statement of Commitment*



- Developed 2-Day Basic Training for TDOT and partners
 - Including context screening and communication tool
 - Training will further implementation



Corridor K-US 64 Ocoee Gorge

- Starting this project from the beginning
- Utilizing all new processes
- Including a combined Transportation Planning Report (TPR) and NEPA while also using CSS
- Quantum - new technology



Environmental Advisory Council

- TDOT formed a council of representatives from environmental organizations
 - Meet regularly to discuss TDOT activities and transportation/environmental issues
 - Sounding board for TDOT initiatives
 - Provide TDOT with advice regarding transportation and the environment

TDOT Environmental Procedures

- Revised TDOT Environmental Procedures Manual
 - Guide for TDOT Environmental Division staff and Environmental Consultants for preparation of environmental documents
- Created TN Environmental Evaluation Report (TEER) for state projects
 - Similar to NEPA requirements for federal projects

Water Quality Consent Decree

- The Amended Consent Order specifically addressed the following eight (8) areas:
 - SR 840 South/SR 26 Projects
 - Statewide Storm Water Management Plan (SSWMP)
 - Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC)
 - Storm Water Management Research Projects
 - Construction Contract Management
 - Education and Certification
 - Public Involvement
 - Penalties



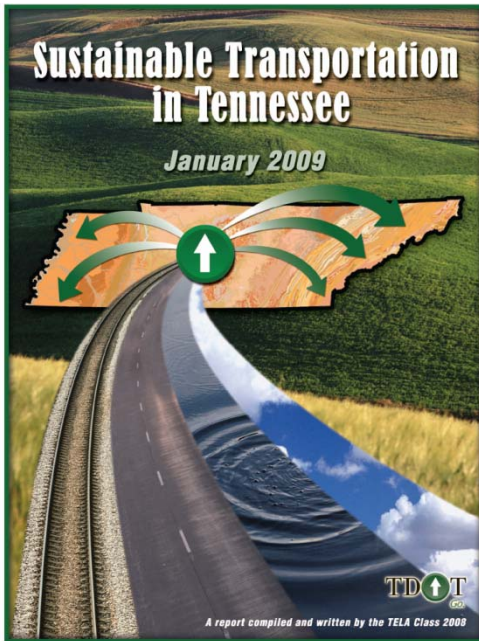
Statewide Storm Water Management Plan (SSWMP)

- The SSWMP is organized into the following six (6) products:
 - Product 1:** Program Rationale, Evaluations, and Recommendations – Sediment and Erosion Control Materials and Practices for TDOT Construction Projects
 - Product 2:** Methods, Criteria, and Procedures for Project Planning, Environmental Compliance and Impact Analysis for TDOT's Environmental Division
 - Product 3:** Construction/Maintenance Manual – Manual for Management of Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction Activities
 - Product 4:** GIS Layer Organization and Data
 - Product 5:** Waste and Borrow Management Manual – Erosion Prevention and Sediment Control for Waste and Borrow on TDOT Construction Projects
 - Product 6:** SSWMP Training and Public Input

Environmental Compliance

- Creation of **Environmental Comprehensive Inspections Office**
 - Oversight of construction sites/activities
 - Separate from TDOT Facility Compliance
 - Compliance Manager, 8 field personnel
- Revamped **Environmental Facilities Compliance Office**
 - Oversight of environmental compliance at TDOT facilities
 - MS4 permit oversight being evaluated

Sustainable Transportation in Tennessee



- Report by TDOT Executive Leadership Academy (TELA)
- Focused strategies in following areas for TDOT:
 - Administrative
 - Energy Conservation
 - Environmental Protection
- Sample of practical tools, could implement in next 2 years
- Used as starting point for TDOT Leadership
- Commissioner Nicely formed a committee to look at implementation of several strategies

Tennessee Roadscapes



- Grant provides opportunities to partner with city, county and community organizations for environmentally friendly landscaping projects along Interstates and highways throughout the state that will:
 - attract tourists, new residents and new businesses
 - create welcoming places where people live and work
 - build a sense of pride in local communities
 - create naturalized landscapes to reduce maintenance costs



For More Information

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