In the ideal world...

- Transportation planning addresses NEPA principles.
- Collaboration/involvement starts in transportation planning.
- Planning leads to early consensus on purpose and need and project concept.
- Planning decisions are rarely re-opened.

... a seamless and collaborative process.
Planning Products Used in NEPA

- Development and/or refinement of purpose and need statements.
- Corridor or subarea studies may evaluate or eliminate alternatives.
- Analysis of the affected environment.
- Analysis of indirect and cumulative impacts.
Purpose and Need

- Transportation planning-level goals and objectives.
- General travel corridor or general mode(s) resulting from planning analyses (e.g., corridor or subarea studies).
- Special funding sources (e.g., tolls or public-private financing).
- Results of analysis from management systems (e.g., congestion, pavement, bridge, and/or safety).
Corridor or Subarea Studies

- May evaluate or eliminate alternatives.
- These studies (and their results) can be incorporated into a NEPA document (under certain circumstances).
- Alternatives analysis from the transportation planning process must have a rational basis that is thoroughly documented.
- This record should be made available for public review during the NEPA scoping process.
Affected Environment and Indirect and Cumulative Impacts

- Regional development and growth analyses.
- Local land use, growth management, or development plans.
- Population and employment projections.
- Outputs of natural resource planning efforts:
  - Wildlife conservation plans;
  - Watershed plans; and/or
  - Multiple species habitat conservation plans.
Get Others Involved

For example, seek acceptance of problem statement and evaluation criteria as part of the transportation planning process:

- Decision-makers;
- Stakeholders;
- Environmental, regulatory, and resource agencies; and
- The public.
Linking Planning-Level Evaluation to NEPA

- Document the planning-level evaluation.
- Summarize and reference it in the NEPA document:
  - *Purpose and Need* chapter
  - *Alternatives Considered* chapter
  - *Evaluation* chapter
- Show that planning satisfied NEPA principles.
- Early involvement of resource agencies.
Goals of Environmental Analysis in Transportation Planning

- Influence the identification, development, and evaluation of alternatives.
- Ensure that decisions are “informed” by environmental information.
  - We know enough to make good decisions.
  - We know enough to make decisions that can be sustained through NEPA.
- Develop interagency and community relationships.
Planning/NEPA Handoff

- Data current
- Planning information format
- Resource agencies/public involved
- Reflects land use plans
- Planning products available to public
- Changes in study area
- Analysis and data/modeling reliable and defensible
- Reflects natural resource plans
Scoping

Opportunity at start of NEPA process to:
  – Present findings of planning process
  – Check-in with public and resource agencies
  – Make the connection from the work performed and decisions made in planning to project development
  – Determine remaining issues
Tips for Success

- Keep process transparent
- Planning and Environmental Staff involved in planning studies, advisory committee meetings and scoping
- Clear documentation of analysis and decisions
- Credible data
Putting It All Together

- Scenario Planning
- Context Sensitive Solutions/CSD
- Integrated Planning
- Linking Planning and NEPA
- Integrated Approaches
Unifying Principles

- Interdisciplinary
- Collaborative
- Public Involvement
- Resource agencies consulted/involved
- Honoring commitments

- Measures of Effectiveness
- Environmental context
- Data-appropriate scale
- GIS Potential