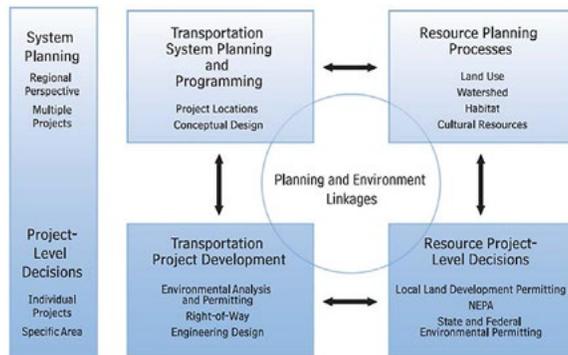




At the Intersection of Planning and the Environment

The Center for Environmental Excellence by AASHTO offers diverse products and programs for technical assistance, training, information exchange, partnership-building opportunities, and quick access to environmental tools. The Center helps practitioners incorporate environmental compliance, sustainability, and stewardship into transportation planning, design, construction, maintenance, operations, project delivery and multimodal systems. Visit <http://environment.transportation.org>.

How do Planning and Environmental Issues Intersect? Transportation planning is a cooperative, performance-driven process by which transportation improvement

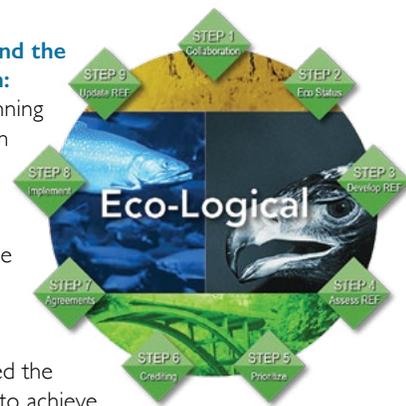


priorities are determined. Metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), States, and transit operators conduct transportation planning, with active involvement from the traveling public, the business community, community groups, environmental organizations, and freight operators. A key step in the planning process involves estimating how recommended improvements to the transportation system will impact the economy, shape development patterns and community character, and influence quality of life and the natural environment. (Graphic: FHWA)

Air Quality: Estimated emissions of pollutants from motor vehicles (including ozone, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, and particulate matter) are a key consideration in transportation planning. Areas that have nonattainment or maintenance air quality status for these pollutants must ensure that emissions from Federal transportation investments conform with levels set forth in State air quality plans. State DOTs and MPOs ensure compliance with these transportation planning requirements. The Center keeps practitioners informed through [Air Quality recent developments](#), an [Air Quality Community of Practice](#), [Peer Exchanges](#), and other resources.

Integrated Planning and the Eco-Logical Approach:

Using an integrated planning approach, transportation and natural resource agencies collaborate, share resource data and plans, and determine the location of ecologically important areas for protection. Agencies have developed the Eco-Logical framework to achieve the greatest ecosystem benefit. Steps for [Implementing the Eco-Logical Approach](#), developed under the Second Strategic Highway Research program (SHRP2), are among many resources highlighted on the Center website's [Planning and Environment Linkages topic](#). (Graphic: FHWA)



Planning for Sustainable and Healthy Communities:

Planners consider ways to incorporate multimodal transportation systems and land use patterns that facilitate safe and easy travel for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders. This can generate a number of public health benefits and lessen environmental impacts. Transportation agencies also are working to incorporate climate change mitigation into planning decisions, including operational efficiencies, reducing vehicle miles traveled, and building resilience of transportation infrastructure to extreme weather and climate impacts. A range of resources are provided on the Center's [Sustainability topic](#) and [Health and Human Environment topic](#).



Linking Planning and Project Delivery:

The Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) process represents an approach to transportation decision-making that considers environmental, community, and economic goals early in the planning stage and carries them through project development, design, and construction. This process can minimize duplication of effort, promote efficient and cost-effective solutions and environmental stewardship, and reduce delays in project implementation. Colorado DOT's PEL process, highlighted on the Center website's [PEL topic](#), illustrates how states are using this process. (Image: Colorado DOT)





Resources for Planning Practitioners

The Center website at <http://environment.transportation.org> offers access to a range of products and services for practitioners. The following resources are relevant to Planning Practitioners.

The Center website includes 21 separate environmental topics pertinent to transportation. Information can be sorted by discipline, mode, or state. **Topics of interest include:**

- Air Quality
- Context Sensitive Solutions
- Energy/Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Environmental Justice
- Environmental Management Systems
- Geographic Information Systems
- Health & Human Environment
- Historic Preservation/Cultural Resources
- Indirect Effects/Cumulative Impacts
- Infrastructure Resilience
- Invasive Species/Vegetation Management
- MAP-21
- NEPA Process
- Noise
- Planning & Environment Linkages
- Project Delivery/Streamlining
- Section 4(f)/Section 6(f)
- Sustainability
- Waste Management/Recycling
- Water Quality/Wetlands
- Wildlife & Ecosystems

- **Practitioner's Handbooks:** These comprehensive resources produced by the Center provide practical advice on a range of environmental issues that arise during the planning, development, maintenance, and operation of transportation projects and programs, including *Handbook 10 - Using the Transportation Planning Process to Support the NEPA Process*.
- **Case Law Updates on the Environment (CLUE) database:** CLUE is a storehouse providing summaries of pertinent environmental case law, including developments related to planning.
- **Transportation and Environmental Research Ideas (TERI) database:** TERI is a storehouse for tracking and sharing transportation and environment research ideas in over 20 topic areas including planning.
- **Conference & Workshop Materials:** The Center hosts a number of conferences and workshops for technical assistance, training, and information exchange, as well as partnership building opportunities.
- **Webcasts/Webinars:** The Center's webcasts/webinars provide training to advance the state-of-the-practice on important topics, archived on the Center website.
- **Communities of Practice:** The Center facilitates an ongoing dialogue with transportation practitioners in the topic areas of air quality, storm water management, and historic bridges.
- **Roadmap for Developing and Implementing Programmatic Agreements and the Programmatic Agreement Tracking Tool:** The Roadmap is a user-friendly, Web-based tool that guides practitioners through the process to develop and implement a programmatic agreement. The Tracking Tool provides a Web-based template for state DOTs to track the benefits of programmatic agreements.

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Center for Environmental Excellence by AASHTO Contact Information

How can we assist you? If you have a particular need for environmental information, technical assistance, partnership-building, or training, please contact us at environment@transportation.org.

