

Indiana's Streamlined EIS Procedures

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Indiana's Streamlined EIS Procedures

These procedures are intended to eliminate the duplication of effort between the planning study and the NEPA study for major transportation projects by combining them into one study, “**one decision-making process.**” This is accomplished by initiating NEPA earlier in the planning process, i.e., by conducting the planning/corridor study in the context of NEPA. In this context, the word “corridor” is used in the broad planning sense to mean an entire travel-shed or sub area in which multiple transportation facilities are experiencing congestion, safety or other problems. The potential solution to these transportation problems may involve multiple facilities and multi-modal actions.

Planning Study in context of EIS

If the statewide and metropolitan planning process results in clear consensus between INDOT and the MPO regarding the design concept and scope for a project with independent utility, and there is agreement to fund the proposed action, the project will be programmed into the INDOT Production Schedule and MPO 20-year TP. The proposed action also will be programmed into the MPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)/Indiana Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (INSTIP), if federal funds are to be used for preliminary engineering (PE). If significant impacts are anticipated, a Notice of Intent (NOI) to initiate an EIS will be published in the Federal Register. The EIS process will address the major investment analysis requirements (per 23CFR450.318(f)(2), if the project is in an MPO area).

Planning Study in context of EA/Corridor Study

If the statewide and metropolitan planning process does not result in clarity or consensus between INDOT and the MPO regarding design concept and scope, as well as agreement to fund the proposed action, the planning study generally will be initiated as an EA/Corridor Study. For fiscal constraint and conformity purposes, the “no build” will be assumed for TIP/INSTIP programming purposes. The MPO may include its concept of the desired action as an illustrative project in its 20-year TP for informational purposes if it wishes, but it must be clear that the project is not included in the fiscally constrained conforming element of the TP.

The EA/Corridor Study will identify one or more projects of independent utility (Projects) within the corridor. For each Project, the EA/Corridor Study will determine the appropriate level of NEPA documentation – i.e., an EIS, EA/FONSI, or CE. For each Project that requires an EIS, and for other Projects if determined appropriate by FHWA and INDOT, the EA/Corridor Study will identify:

1. Purpose and & Need
2. Preliminary Alternatives and transportation modes considered
3. Alternatives retained for further study

The initial EA/Corridor Study is developed using primarily existing data sources. However, the EA/Corridor Study may need to be supplemented to include additional fieldwork and mitigation. For example, if the analysis of existing data indicates that a Project does not involve any significant impacts to the environment, the FHWA or INDOT may decide that the EA/Corridor Study should be augmented to include a more detailed analysis of impacts.

If FHWA determines, after the completion of the EA/Corridor Study (including any detailed analysis or field work) that a Project (or group of Projects) does not have significant impacts, the FHWA will publicly release the EA/Corridor Study and provide an opportunity for a Public Hearing. After holding a public hearing, or determining that there is not sufficient interest to hold such a hearing, FHWA will issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Project (or group of Projects). If appropriate, FHWA also may authorize the approval of one or more Projects covered in an EA/Corridor Study through Categorical Exclusions (CEs). In the case of Projects that qualify for CEs, it is not necessary to provide an opportunity for a public hearing.

If FHWA determines at any time that a Project examined in an EA/Corridor Study involves significant impacts and therefore requires preparation of an EIS, a FONSI will not be issued. Instead, FHWA and INDOT will consult to determine whether consensus has been reached regarding the design concept and scope for the Project. Once consensus is reached regarding design concept and scope, and the project is programmed into the INDOT Production Schedule, MPO 20-year TP, and TIP/INSTIP (if federal funds are used for PE), FHWA will issue a Notice of Intent (NOI) to initiate an EIS in the Federal Register for each Project.

The EIS for a Project will pick up where the EA/Corridor Study left off. In the typical process, there should be no need to “redo” any of the work accomplished under the previous EA/Corridor Study. Rather, the EIS would augment, as appropriate, the P&N and screening of preliminary alternatives that previously was completed in the EA/Corridor Study.

Basic Elements

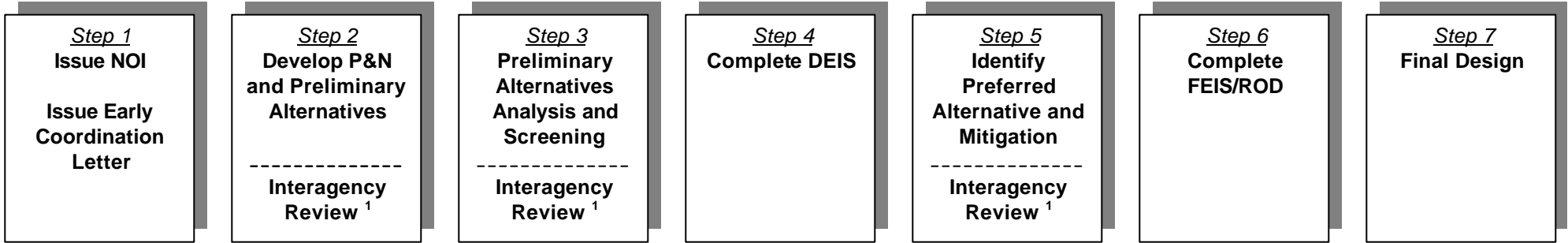
Regardless of whether the proposed action is initiated as an EIS or EA/Corridor Study, the following processes will be utilized. The Project Coordination Team may choose to combine certain steps or otherwise modify these procedures on a case-by-case basis.

Project Coordination Team

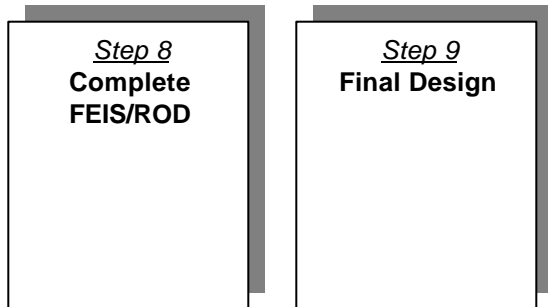
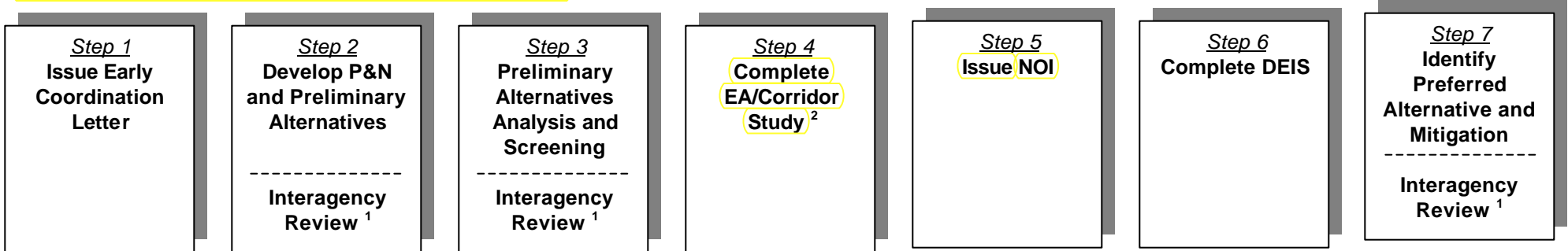
A Project Coordination Team will be assembled at the beginning of each project. The purpose of the Project Coordination Team will be to provide 1) input to the development of the consultant scope of services, and 2) guidance to the project consultant at each step of the project development process. The Project Coordination Team will include a

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Option 1 – Planning in Context of EIS



Option 2: Planning in Context of EA/Corridor Study



1 – Agencies will have 60-day review period, with interagency meeting about halfway through the review period. See Procedures for (a) what to include in Interagency Review Package and (b) desired feedback from agencies.

2 – If an EA/Corridor Study involves significant impacts, then a NOI to develop an EIS will be published in the Federal Register. The EIS analysis will begin where the EA/Corridor Study ended.