

CASE STUDY 8

New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) New York State DOT's Environmental Initiative

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STATUS	Implemented (at least in part).
FOCUS	Planning, Design, Construction, and Operations and Maintenance
DOT's BASIS FOR SELECTION OF FOCUS	<p>The Environmental Initiative began with a call from state and department leaders, including the Governor, to "...foster a new ethic in the Department." This mandate directed NYSDOT to move from a policy of simple regulatory compliance to one where NYSDOT continually improves its operational and environmental performance, and works with agencies and the public to enhance the State's environment.</p> <p>NYSDOT has fostered this environmental ethic agency-wide to empower staff to make decisions that have a positive effect on the environment and urge every NYSDOT employee to look for opportunities to enhance the Department's environmental performance.</p>
RELEVANCE TO THE EMS PROCESS ROADMAP	The initial and continuing efforts to develop and implement the Environmental Initiative and the Environmental Initiative processes follow a Plan – Do – Check – Act structure and, thus, reflect the basis steps of the AASHTO EMS Process Roadmap. The foundation that has been laid by the work so far will support further development of the EMS process in the Department.
ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND BENEFITS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NYSDOT has won multiple AASHTO environment awards for its Environmental Initiative, and thus, gained unprecedented endorsement as a leader in the delivery of environmental sound transportation services. New York State won AASHTO's first Environmental Best Practices Competition, and later, AASHTO's President's Award. These awards have resulted in increased awareness within the Department and the involvement of more personnel in stewardship activities.• NYSDOT routinely includes specific environmental elements in its projects and activities, has developed programmatic approaches to ensure compliance and meet environmental objectives, and has instituted a cultural change throughout the Department to adopt an environmental ethic.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Examples of project-specific elements include fishing and boat access sites, right-of-way management practices for habitat enhancement, birdboxes in rights-of-way, wildlife and fish passage, scenic vistas, bikeways and multi-use trails, interpretive kiosks and trailhead improvements, and historic preservation.○ Programmatic approaches to address significant environmental aspects of NYSDOT operations include New York's Ozone Action Days program, NYSDOT historic bridge inventory and management plan, context sensitive solutions, environmental research, Adirondack Park non-native invasive plant species initiative, and alternatives to herbicides demonstration project.

CASE STUDY 8

New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) *New York State DOT's Environmental Initiative*

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND BENEFITS (cont'd)

- Cultural change within the Department is demonstrated by management support and executive leadership in conveying the environmental ethic, supporting it through environmental staffing resources, including the regional landscape/environmental units and regional environmental staff in operations (maintenance and construction), and embracing a multidisciplinary approach, as evidenced by interagency meetings and committees, partnering efforts with agencies, contractors and communities, the Department-wide erosion and sediment control task force, and the agency recycling team.
- NYSDOT has gained stronger, more positive working relationships with external agencies, citizens, local municipalities and other environmental groups, which in turn have avoided costs by reducing delay, litigation, and frustrating rework, as well as wasted effort arguing contentious issues.
- NYSDOT has developed Department-wide environmental policies and objectives on which an EMS can be based, including:
 - NYSDOT Environmental Policy (MAP 1.6-3)
<http://www.dot.state.ny.us/eab/files/policyen.pdf>
 - Environmental Initiative Guidelines and Procedures (EI 99-026)
<http://dotweb1.dot.state.ny.us/eab/eieab3.pdf>
 - Context Sensitive Solutions Engineering Instruction (EI 01-020)
<http://dotweb1.dot.state.ny.us/design/css/files/enginst.pdf>
- To ensure that employees involved in Department Operations receive consistent environmental guidance, NYSDOT has developed an Environmental Handbook for Transportation Operations (<http://www.dot.state.ny.us/eab/oprhbook.html>) which is intended to provide general awareness and guidance of the primary environmental requirements that apply to the types of activities conducted by NYSDOT Operations. It is not intended to substitute for the actual regulations and interpretations by environmental resource personnel, but rather to serve as a flag for certain issues that may require more assistance. The handbook is periodically updated to incorporate changes in regulations, activities and policies.
- NYSDOT developed ECOPAC (Environmental Commitments & Obligations Package for Construction) (EB 99-055) as a systematic, simple and standardized form to highlight and transfer environmental commitments made during project design to construction staff, to provide an environmental audit tool for construction projects, and to serve as an environmental awareness tool for planning, design and construction staff.
<http://www.dot.state.ny.us/cmb/consult/eib/files/eb99055.pdf>
- NYSDOT reports and tracks compliance with state regulations in an annual state environmental audit, which uses the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) automated database and self-reports audit violations of NYSDEC regulations.
- NYSDOT developed the ETRACK database, a Microsoft application linked to NYSDOT's Program Support System, which tracks projects and their major milestones. The ETRACK database details specific aspects of the project, such as environmental, landscape architecture, and social impacts. The goal of the ETRACK effort is to establish a method to assure consistency in reporting and tracking statewide environmental information.

CASE STUDY 8

New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) *New York State DOT's Environmental Initiative*

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND BENEFITS (cont'd)

- To supplement staff in the regional landscape/environmental units, NYSDOT created and filled construction and maintenance environmental coordinator positions in each of the NYSDOT eleven regions. This staffing expansion broadens NYSDOT's environmental stewardship efforts from environmental analysis and design into construction and maintenance. These environmental coordinators are senior NYSDOT staff focusing on regional priorities while providing oversight, quality assurance, and technical advice. This program is designed to minimize permitting problems and inconsistencies in overall regional approaches, including meeting environmental commitments throughout the project development lifetime.

IMPLEMENTATION NEEDS

- The NYSDOT Environmental initiative, which evolved into the Environmental Ethic, serves as the foundation on which an EMS could be further developed. Though the Department has made progress in incorporating the principles of EMS, NYSDOT is in the process of exploring the full integration of EMS within its organization. Short-term efforts include:
 - conducting a broad review of its operations throughout the Department to identify legal requirements, environmental concerns and comprehensive goals;
 - assessing existing tools to determine applicability to the development of an EMS;
 - exploring plans for implementation, measurement and auditing;
 - seeking support from management and functional units throughout the department.

KEYS TO SUCCESS

- The commitment of senior management, beginning with the Governor, over several years ensures that resources to implement the Environmental Initiative are available and that all NYSDOT units and employees recognize and practice environmental stewardship in their day-to-day activities and decisions.
- Implementing a new program involves developing plans, revising procedures and guidelines, and monitoring progress.
- The success of the Department's environmental stewardship efforts relies on building a strong team with partners that share the vision. Internal partners include managers and staff from all the program areas. External partners include federal and state agencies, local municipalities, community groups, environmental organizations, and the public.
- It is important to communicate results to the public, leaders in government, and regulatory agencies and to recognize employee achievements. This helps build employee "buy-in" and input and provides a foundation for enhanced relationships (and shortened review schedules and costs) with external parties.
- The Department's Environmental Ethic integrates and progresses other concepts such as Context Sensitive Solutions, Quality Communities, and public outreach.

CASE STUDY 8

New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) *New York State DOT's Environmental Initiative*

KEYS TO SUCCESS (cont'd)

"The environmental ethic has permeated into the planning, design, construction, maintenance and operations of transportation systems. The Department is now doing business differently instead of progressing a new concept. The Environmental Ethic is more than a vocabulary change or a volunteer effort – it's an integral part of DOT procedures." Gary McVoy, Former Director of the Environmental Analysis Bureau, now Director of Transportation Maintenance Division

BACKGROUND, ADDITIONAL INFO

NYSDOT's Environmental Initiative began in 1998 with the creation of the Environmental Initiative Statement and announcement of the initiative by the Governor. Since that time, NYSDOT has undertaken deliberate actions to address gaps and has adopted an explicitly proactive approach to addressing environmental matters. NYSDOT's pioneering commitment to environmental enhancement has made the Department a national model in the field. Information on the NYSDOT Environmental Initiative can be found at its website at: <http://www.dot.state.ny.us/eab/envinit.html>.

The Environmental Initiative is discussed in two papers presented at Transportation Research Board (TRB) meetings:

- Nelson, D. A., G. R. McVoy, and L. Greninger. Promoting Environmental Stewardship in Transportation Maintenance and Operations in New York State Department of Transportation. Presented at Transportation Research Board (TRB) Environmental Stewardship Session, January 15, 2002.
 - Also found at: <http://www.dot.state.ny.us/eab/envinit/trb2re1d.pdf>.
- McVoy, G., M. Sengenberger, and E. Novak. New Paradigm for State Department of Transportation Environmental Initiatives. In *Transportation Research Record 1702*, TRB, National Research Council, Washington, D.C., 2000, pp. 92-96.
 - Also found at: <http://www.dot.state.ny.us/eab/eitrbdot.pdf>.

CONTACT(S)

Mary Ivey, Acting Director, Environmental Analysis Bureau, 518/457-5672
Debra Nelson, Environmental Analysis Bureau, 518/485-5479

EXAMPLE TOOLS, PROCEDURES

Exhibit 1 presents the *NYSDOT Environmental Initiative Statement*. This statement provides a brief overview of the Initiative.

Exhibit 2 provides an excerpt from New York State DOT's *Environmental Initiative Guidelines and Procedures*. This information demonstrates the commitment of top management to the Environmental Initiative and describes how the initiative will function (including focus areas).

CASE STUDY 8 Exhibit 1

NYSDOT Environmental Initiative Statement

1. [DEDICATED ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFIT PROJECTS](#)
2. [ENVIRONMENTAL BETTERMENTS PROGRAM](#)
3. [STRENGTHEN NYSDOT'S ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE](#)

*It is the mission of the New York State Department of Transportation to ensure our customers -- those who live, work and travel in New York State -- have a safe, efficient, balanced and **environmentally sound** transportation system.*

As part of this mission and as New York State's largest public works agency, the Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) has an obligation and a responsibility to the people of New York to enhance, improve and protect the environment in accordance with state policies and objectives.

Under the leadership of Governor George E. Pataki, the New York State Department of Transportation, has reviewed its own environmental performance and has determined that it is time to become more proactive than reactive.

As a result, DOT has begun an environmental initiative that has as its purpose and goals to:

- Advance State environmental policies and objectives
- Promote an environmental ethic throughout the Department
- Strengthen relationships with environmental agencies and groups

As an action-oriented agency, DOT can most effectively attain these goals by doing dedicated environmental work in support of its corporate environmental ethic. This, in turn, will advance a shift in attitudes. This will provide real environmental protection, assure staff that the agency has a strong environmental ethic and provide opportunities to engage the environmental community in positive joint undertakings that will demonstrate the Department's commitment.

The Initiative has three separate approaches:

1 - DEDICATED ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFIT PROJECTS

NYSDOT will fund and implement a number of environmental benefit projects that are well-suited to the Department's mission and capabilities. To program environmental enhancements on property owned by the New York State Department of Transportation will be a simple, straightforward and visible demonstration of environmental commitment. These projects will be designed to:

Improve water quality because studies done by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) have shown that non-point source runoff is now the major cause of water pollution. Non-point

source pollution enters a water body from diffuse origins on the watershed and does not result from discernible, confined or discrete convergences such as a pipe or ditch. NYSDOT, with its extensive network of state highways, is in an excellent position to assist in improving New York's water quality.

Since, non-point source water pollution control is most practically achieved through the construction of stormwater control measures that NYSDOT routinely incorporates into its projects. NYSDOT will also retrofit existing highway drainage systems by designing and building:

- created wetland and stormwater management structures;
- bioengineered streambanks; and,
- specialized water quality inlet structures.

Restore wetlands because the initial construction of New York State's transportation infrastructure caused negative impacts on wetland acreage, function and value. During the last two decades, the New York State Department of Transportation has gained extensive experience both in delineating state and federal wetlands and in avoiding, minimizing and mitigating adverse impacts to wetlands.

NYSDOT will continue to use this new knowledge to go beyond regulatory state and federal no-net-loss goals by helping to increase New York State's wetland acreage and function by:

- improving or restoring wetlands affected by federal-aid highway projects that were done before regulatory mitigation was required;
- constructing additional wetland acreage in projects beyond that required for state and federal wetland permits;
- working cooperatively with The Nature Conservancy and the resource agencies to preserve important existing wetland sites;
- creating new wetlands to control non-point source pollution as well as to provide other wetland functions, such as wildlife habitat.

Protect fish and wildlife because fisheries habitat in New York State has been degraded by the channelization and siltation of state waterways, and DOT has the capability to deliver restoration measures in an efficient and practical manner. The New York State Department of Transportation will protect wildlife by planting specialized food and cover crops along state highway rights-of-way and by providing more and safer wildlife crossings under state and local highways. For example, NYSDOT will design and install:

- boulders and stone weirs to improve fisheries habitat;
- culverts for wildlife crossings; and,
- plantings for wildlife habitat.

Promote eco-tourism because people travel on state highways. And, through access to nature, people develop a deeper sense of why the environment warrants protection.

Eco-tourism is a growing and sustainable part of New York State's economy. Because a large part of the eco-tourism experience depends on the appearance of state roadsides as well as access to natural features, the New York State Department of Transportation will develop:

- new or rehabilitated fishing access and trailhead parking areas;
- historic markers and other interpretive signing;
- improved bikeway and pedestrian facilities; and,
- new scenic overlooks.

Enhance transportation corridors because as a state agency, the New York State Department of Transportation's customers include the traveling public and the people who live and work in New York State's transportation corridors. They deserve improvements in the quality of their lives that can be achieved through:

- providing streetscape amenities;
- wild flower plantings;
- landscaping to enhance the appearance of noise barriers;
- reestablishing street trees in historic districts; and,
- rehabilitating comfort stations and rest areas.

2 - ENVIRONMENTAL BETTERMENTS PROGRAM

This program identifies specific environmental projects that can be advanced as part of the New York State Department of Transportation's capital construction program. Under this program, environmental projects such as landscaping, park amenities, historic preservation, noise barriers, wetlands, stormwater basins or wildlife plantings that are funded by local agencies or groups will be incorporated into NYSDOT projects.

These environmental enhancements will therefore benefit from the economies of scale realized by large public works projects. For example, if an enhancement can be accomplished with the construction personnel and equipment already on site for the larger project, the marginal cost of incorporating that enhancement into the existing contract is far less than the cost of constructing a stand-alone dedicated enhancement project.

As part of the New York State Department of Transportation's public outreach efforts, municipal governments as well as environmental groups and agencies are being invited to combine the construction of their environmental enhancements with DOT construction projects. NYSDOT will assume all of the contracting and oversight work necessary for the progression of the local

environmental enhancements at no cost to the sponsor. This initiative will also encourage more broad-based and long-term public participation in NYSDOT project development.

Although many groups in New York State, in addition to numerous local governments and state and federal resource agencies have funds to do environmental enhancements, most have neither the technical expertise nor the wherewithal implement their management plans quickly and effectively. In other words, money may be available, often as private or public matching funds, but the administrative and technical mechanisms for implementation may be lacking. The New York State Department of Transportation can bridge this gap by leveraging private and public funds to do larger, more cost-effective and meaningful environmental improvements.

3 - STRENGTHEN NYSDOT'S ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE

The New York State Department of Transportation will continue to make every effort to:

Reduce environmental toxins by

- using salt and sand for highway anti-icing and de-icing as judiciously as possible;
- sweeping roadsides better and more often;
- reducing herbicide applications; and,
- cleaning up wastes previously generated on NYSDOT projects and at NYSDOT facilities.

Improve air quality because up to half of the air pollutants emitted in New York State are emitted by single occupancy vehicles; that is, by cars with only a driver. To reduce these emissions, the New York State Department of Transportation will:

- implement Transportation Demand Management practices;
- encourage alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle commuting;
- expand Ozone Alert Day initiatives;
- promote the use of alternative fueled vehicles;
- provide facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists; and,
- support mass transit.

Increase the use of recycled materials because New York State's environmental policy calls for recycling as the first choice in dealing with solid waste. As a leader in this policy initiative, the New York State Department of Transportation will pilot and promote the use of recycled:

- tires in highway embankments;
- glass, plastics and aggregate in pavement mixes; and,
- plastic, rubber and aggregate in noise walls.

Preserve and enhance our New York State heritage because our historic and our natural heritage belongs to all New Yorkers. Because of the nature of

its work, NYSDOT is in a unique position to enhance this heritage by:

- preserving historic structures;
- promoting state bike routes and greenways;
- increasing highway tree plantings and other landscaping;
- providing streetscape amenities; and
- increasing roadside plantings and maintenance for aesthetic improvement.

Through active integration of environmental concerns into the Department's daily operations and coordination with regulatory agencies, environmental groups, municipalities and concerned citizens, the Initiative will attain the goals set forth above.

Last Revised: February 9, 1999

CASE STUDY 8

Exhibit 2

Title: Environmental Initiative Guidelines and Procedures

This Engineering Instruction (EI) does not supersede any previous issuances. This EI is effective immediately.

PURPOSE:

This Engineering Instruction (EI) provides guidelines and procedures for implementing the Environmental Initiative. These materials will be incorporated into updates of various Department manuals, such as the *Design Procedures Manual*, the *Environmental Procedure Manual*, the *Highway Design Manual*, and the Department's *Policy and Procedures Manual*.

TRANSMITTED MATERIAL:

Three appendices are transmitted with this EI:

1. Examples of Environmental Initiative Practices, Features, Programs and Activities;
2. State Laws Authorizing Funding for Environmental Protection and Enhancement; and
3. FHWA Policies and Funding Programs Supporting Environmental Protection, Mitigation, and Enhancements.

BACKGROUND:

As New York State's largest public works agency, the Department of Transportation (DOT) has an obligation and responsibility to the people of New York to protect, improve and enhance the environment. Strict regulatory compliance is only part of DOT's responsibility. This Department can and should use its organizational strengths and its employees' personal sense of environmental stewardship to contribute affirmatively to the State's environment and to proactively partner with communities to improve the environment and context sensitive design issues. Context sensitive design is the proactive approach to design that looks at the project within the context of its site, and gathering and including the public's input throughout the design process.

To that end, the Environmental Initiative is a Department-wide effort to:

- promote an environmental ethic throughout the Department,
- advance State and federal environmental policies and objectives, and
- strengthen relationships with environmental agencies and the public.

The Environmental Initiative was approved by the Department's Program Policy Committee on April 7, 1998 and was publicly announced by Governor Pataki on October 20, 1998. The DOT Environmental Initiative Statement is contained on the Department's Web-page.

NEPA and SEQRA, and many other State and federal environmental regulations, require that environmental considerations be addressed in transportation decision making, plans and programs. Most transportation capital and maintenance projects have the potential to affect natural and human-made resources in both positive and negative ways. The Department must ensure full and objective consideration of all reasonable alternatives that avoid adverse impacts to the environment and

communities. Where adverse impacts are unavoidable, the Department must identify the impacts and incorporate measures to mitigate impacts to the maximum extent practicable.

GUIDELINES:

It is the mission of the New York State Department of Transportation to ensure our customers -- those who live, work and travel in New York State -- have a safe, efficient, balanced and environmentally sound transportation system.

Within the context of the Department's mission and this initiative, it shall be the practice of the Department of Transportation to:

- Coordinate and communicate closely with State and federal resource agencies to identify opportunities to advance State and federal environmental policies, programs and objectives.
- Ensure that all necessary steps are taken in planning, design, and construction to avoid and minimize adverse effects of transportation projects and operations on important elements of the environment and adjacent communities.
- Proactively plan, design, construct and maintain transportation projects in an environmentally sound manner using context sensitive design to meet transportation needs while at the same time protecting, conserving, restoring or enhancing important natural and man-made resources.
- Incorporate into DOT capital and maintenance projects specific design features or facilities to mitigate unavoidable adverse impacts to the environment.
- Consider and implement, as appropriate, measures to enhance natural and manmade resources above and beyond project-specific permit and mitigation requirements.
- Incorporate, where practicable, environmental projects funded by local agencies or groups into ongoing DOT projects as "Environmental Betterments."
- Promote an environmental and context sensitive design ethic within all Department organizations.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Regional Directors and Main Office Division Directors are responsible for implementing the Department's Environmental Initiative in their respective program areas.

ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVE EXAMPLES:

The Department already does an excellent job of providing project-specific avoidance, minimization, and mitigation in transportation projects. In many instances, the Department also provides important environmental enhancements through close coordination with municipalities and State and federal resource agencies. However, a primary goal of this initiative is to encourage proactive consideration and implementation of context sensitive design and construction and maintenance practices beyond permit and mitigation requirements. See "Appendix A" for examples of features, practices and programs that should be incorporated into DOT capital and maintenance projects to improve DOT's current environmental performance.

FUNDING:

A. State and federal highway funds shall continue to be used for project-specific avoidance, minimization, mitigation and enhancement efforts. They may also be used to advance this Environmental Initiative consistent with State and federal funding programs.

- See "Appendix B" for State laws that support funding for environmental measures.
- See "Appendix C" for FHWA policies and funding programs that support environmental protection, mitigation and enhancements actions.

B. Other State agencies, municipalities and non-governmental organizations should be invited to provide funding for "Environmental Betterments" for inclusion in Department transportation projects.

PROCEDURES:

A. ACTIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVE

All Region and Main Office program areas shall identify and implement specific actions in their areas of responsibility to incorporate the Environmental Initiative into their operating and business practices pursuant to the Deputy Commissioner and Chief Engineer's memorandum on the Environmental Initiative, dated September 29, 1998. The Environmental Analysis Bureau (EAB) has issued recommendations for model plans. EAB is reviewing plans prepared by Region and Main Office units.

B. COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES

1. DOT Regional Directors shall meet quarterly with their counterpart DEC Regional Directors to:
 - a) discuss progress under the Environmental Initiative,
 - b) review DOT's five-year capital construction and annual maintenance program,
 - c) identify opportunities to improve resource protection and enhancement practices,
 - d) exchange lists of contact people.
2. DOT Regional Landscape/Environmental Managers shall meet monthly, or as mutually agreed upon, with their DEC counterparts to: a) discuss progress under the Environmental Initiative, b) identify specific opportunities to include resource protection and enhancement practices in DOT projects, and c) update lists of contact people.
3. DOT Regions shall meet as needed with DEC to progress individual projects through existing project development and permit review processes.
4. DOT Regions are encouraged to establish similar meetings with other State and federal resource agencies, as appropriate, with coordination assistance by EAB.

C. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

DOT's Regional Planning and Program Management and Regional Design Groups shall take leadership roles in expanding use of existing project planning and development processes to communicate with, solicit and encourage input from municipalities, environmental interest groups, citizens groups, corporations and the general public to assure early and full consideration of environmental and community concerns and innovative context sensitive solutions in transportation projects.

D. JOINT DEVELOPMENT

DOT Regional Design Groups should look for opportunities for joint development with municipalities, other agencies, and private developers whereby design, construction, land acquisition and maintenance responsibilities can be mutually and equitably shared. In some instances, for example, a combined stormwater management facility (e.g., an extended detention basin) might be sized and constructed to serve the stormwater needs of both DOT (for highway drainage) and of an adjoining land owner, such as another State agency, a municipality, or a corporate owner. DOT, for example, might cover the design and construction costs if the public or private owner provides the land for the facility and agrees to maintain it.

E. ENVIRONMENTAL BETTERMENTS

Specific environmental elements or facilities requested and funded by others (e.g., municipalities, other agencies, environmental groups) may, wherever practicable, be incorporated in DOT capital and maintenance projects as “Environmental Betterments.” These elements or facilities may include, but not be limited to, landscaping, park amenities, historic building preservation, noise barriers, created wetlands, stream restorations, stormwater basins, habitat improvements, and new municipal sanitary sewer lines, storm sewer lines and water mains that provide an environmental benefit.

These Environmental Betterments should benefit from the “economies of scale” possible on large public works projects and could cost the sponsors less than individual projects designed, constructed and let by themselves.

As part of the Department’s proactive public outreach effort, DOT Regional Design should invite local municipalities, environmental groups and agencies to combine their funded and designed environmental elements or facilities with ongoing DOT projects. The Department will provide added design services to assure that the “Environmental Betterment” work is appropriately integrated into the transportation project plans and specifications. The Department may provide contract letting and construction inspection of the Environmental Betterment work at no charge to the municipality, other agency or environmental group.

F. CONTEXT SENSITIVE DESIGN

An essential element in the implementation of the Environmental Initiative is context sensitive design. Context sensitive design strives to provide a product that is in harmony with the community because it considers the environmental, scenic, historic and natural resources of the area. Projects that recognize community goals, are designed, built and maintained with a minimal disruption to the community, add value and are sustainable are context sensitive projects. The Design Division will be developing written guidance on context sensitive design.

G. PROGRAM UPDATE

The Environmental Initiative has been identified as a component of the Department’s Capital Program Update process. As of August 1998, Regional Planning and Program Managers are required to include Environmental Initiative projects on their updated program. Regions are requested to identify those projects that have environmental or context sensitive design work which goes above and beyond regular mitigation or permit requirements. Any external coordination that has occurred with outside agencies or interested groups should also be identified. Regional Design shall provide appropriate information for the annual updates.

H. PROJECT AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (P/PMIS)

Environmental Initiative projects will be identified and tracked using the Department's Project and Program Management Information System (P/PMIS). Environmental Initiative work will be identified as a project attribute in P/PMIS. Various work types will allow environmental initiative projects to be grouped by a specific activity, (e.g., water quality improvement, wetland mitigation).

Until P/PMIS access permissions are defined in the Regions, Regional Design shall provide the appropriate information for data entry to the appropriate group. EAB shall regularly generate management reports from P/PMIS, allowing the Department to track Environmental Initiative projects and subsequent activities.

I. MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The Environmental Initiative also plays a role in implementing the Department's 1998 State Transportation Master Plan, "The Next Generation: Transportation Choices for the 21st Century." For example, several needs were identified by Regional DOT offices that relate to environmental processing, including better coordination with outside agencies, a proactive approach to public outreach, and presenting a more positive image of the Department. The initiative directly addresses these needs and will indirectly improve the Department's image, while improving the quality of life for New York State residents.

J. INCLUSION INTO DEPARTMENT GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS

All Divisions and Bureaus shall incorporate into their respective manuals appropriate guidance to support the Environmental Initiative.

For example, the *Design Procedure Manual*, Appendix B, already includes guidance on documenting Environmental Initiative actions in the design approval documents. The Environmental Analysis Bureau will incorporate portions of this EI into the *Environmental Procedures Manual* and the Design Quality Assurance Bureau will incorporate appropriate information in the *Highway Design Manual* and the *Design Procedure Manual*.

K. KEY RESULT AREAS

The Environmental Initiative will help the Department advance the following four **Key Result Areas**. Office of Engineering Division staff shall support KRA reporting as appropriate.

- **Public Involvement:** The Department will use the Environmental Initiative to encourage earlier involvement of municipal officials, environmental groups and the general public in DOT project planning and development processes. This will help to identify local community and environmental concerns, obtain timely input on project alternatives, and identify opportunities for inclusion of local "Environmental Betterments."
- **Economic Development:** Improvements to public access and the aesthetic character of transportation corridors will support eco-tourism, a growing and sustainable part of New York State's economy.
- **Public Sector Partnerships:** Partnering under the initiative will enhance our positive working relationship with municipalities, other State and federal resource agencies and with environmental organizations.
- **Continuous Improvement:** The Department will use the initiative to improve the quality of DOT delivered projects, programs and services through thoughtfully managed and environmentally sound planning, design, construction and maintenance actions.

CONTACT PERSON

Questions regarding this Engineering Instruction should be directed to Debra Nelson at (518) 457-5672.

APPENDICES ARE AVAILABLE FROM NYSDOT OR ON THEIR WEBSITE.