



# Session 7

## Miscellaneous Traffic Noise Policy, Procedure and Program Topics

- ▶ Briefing and Q&A led by:  
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with Mary Ann Rondinella, FHWA

# *Center for Environmental Excellence*

## *Noise Practitioners Summit*

### Session 7

## Miscellaneous FHWA Topics



U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration

Baltimore, Maryland: 10.22.2015

# FHWA Updates

- Update Noise Policy FAQs
  - [http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/noise/regulations\\_and\\_guidance/faq\\_nois.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/noise/regulations_and_guidance/faq_nois.cfm)
  - Transit only projects
  - Auxiliary Lanes
  - Soliciting Viewpoints of Benefited Receptors



# Transit Only Projects

- What level of noise analysis is needed for a transit only project requiring limited FHWA participation? (A10)
    - Lead Agency: FTA is the lead agency, the FHWA's is a cooperating agency.
    - Project Purpose: Is transit-related and not highway-related.
    - Funding: No Federal-aid highway funds are being used
- Use the FTA's Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Guidance Manual procedures to consider noise associated with the transit projects and any highway elements directly affected by the transit projects.



# Auxiliary Lanes

- How does the FHWA define auxiliary lanes when determining a Type I project? (C2)
  - The function of an auxiliary lane differs depending on the type of facility
  - An auxiliary lane should classify the project as Type I if the auxiliary lane is 2,500 feet or longer



# Soliciting Viewpoints

- Whom does the state DOT survey to obtain viewpoints? (G7)
  - Highway agencies should engage in robust and meaningful outreach in order to solicit the viewpoint of all benefited receptors and obtain enough responses on which to base their decision.
  - Highway agencies should only consider votes that are submitted, and should not assume a "no response" is a vote for or against the noise abatement.



# EJ/Title VI

- HUD has challenged projects on:
  - Noise
  - EJ/Title IV
  - Other environmental issues



# Noise Barrier Inventory

- Learning curve
- Currently analyzing the data, hope to have it posted by early 2016
- Will be making recommended changes to the efficiency of the spreadsheets.





# Quieter Pavements

- 2013 Federal Register Notice (16 states):
  - More specific pavement types are variables not adequately accounted for in current noise modeling predictions.
  - Designating a project as a Type I if the original pavement has to be prematurely replaced because it long longer achieves its noise reduction, or when a pavement is overlaid with a louder pavement, was not supported due to lack of funding resources and burden



# Quieter Pavements, cont.

- Had Discussions with Arizona DOT:
  - Based on premature replacement concerns, they are extending their QP3 out to 15 years, which is the maximum life of their ARFC
- Updating 2005 memo



# Updates to Noise Policies

- Need to be reviewed by your Division Office and FHWA Headquarters
- Be mindful of making changes too often
- May want to leave older versions on-line



# New Projects w/Existing Noise Barriers

- Guidance:

[http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/noise/noise\\_barriers/abatement/existing.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/noise/noise_barriers/abatement/existing.cfm)

- Conduct analysis with existing noise barriers, if there are no noise impacts behind the barrier, the process is complete
- If there are impacts, determine noise levels in a "no barrier" scenario. The SHA can then compare the "no barrier" case to the "with barrier" case to determine whether the existing noise barrier(s) satisfies the requirements of the SHA noise policy.
- If the existing barrier does not meet the current policy requirements the SHA should retrofit, or replace the existing barrier(s) to satisfy the SHA noise policy requirements

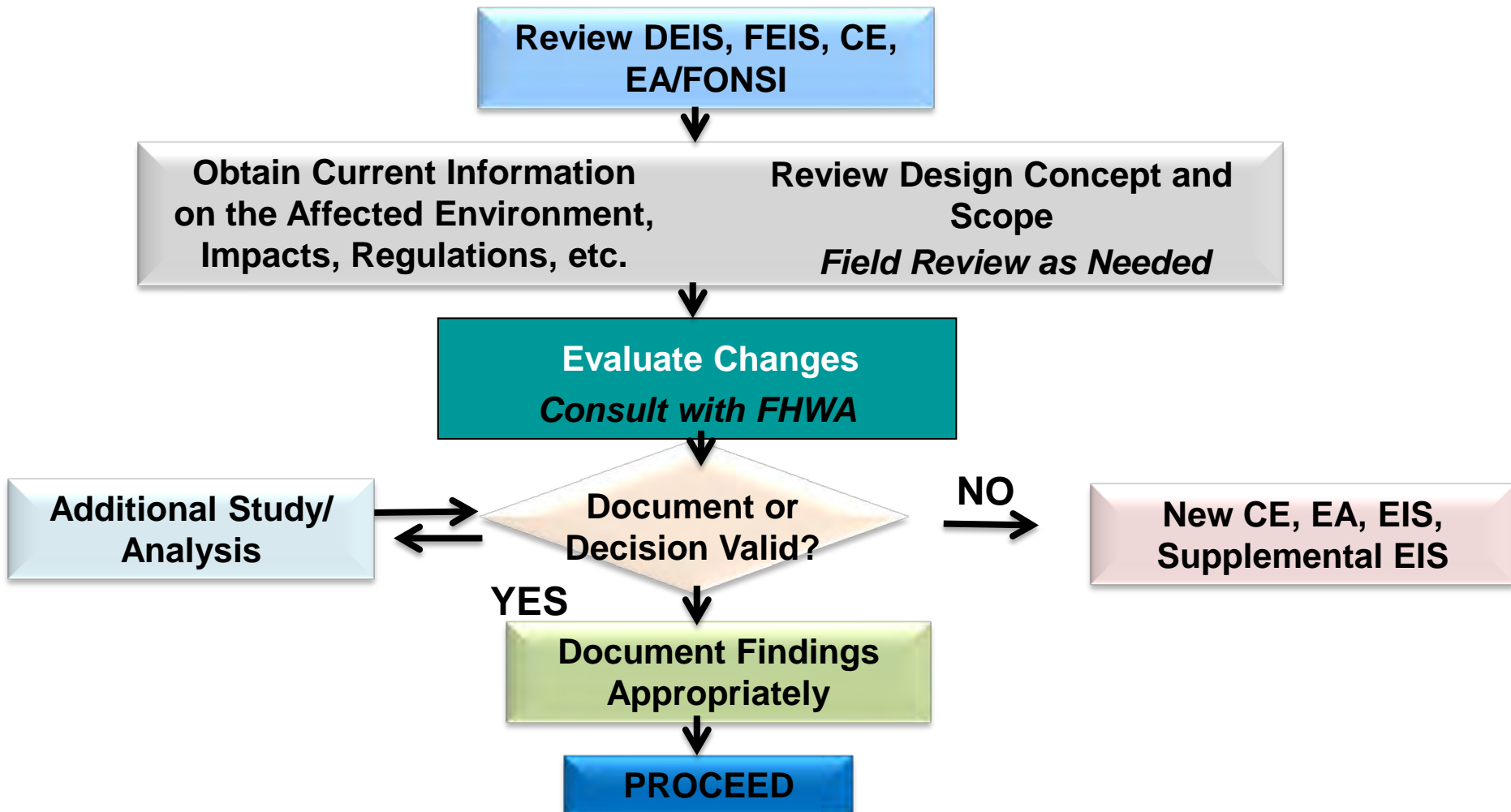


# Re-Evaluations

- [http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/noise/regulations\\_and\\_guidance/frule772.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/noise/regulations_and_guidance/frule772.cfm)



# Re-evaluation Process





## Session 7 - Questions

- ▶ Waldman, CO: What value is used in your definition of “substantial noise increase”?; 772.11(f)
- ▶ Do you consider optional alternative abatement measures?; 772.15(c)(2) to (c)(2)
- ▶ Hanf, MI: Will TNM requirement or approved model requirement, 772.9(a), be revised after the launching of TNM3.0?
- ▶ Procedures for PEL studies.
- ▶ Jordahl-Larson, MN: How to address noise impacts on projects that also include FRA and/or FTA partners.





## Session 7 - Questions

- ▶ Polcak, MD:
  - ▶ Guidance is needed to address the concept of impact “avoidance” (through design or other means) vs. standard abatement techniques and approaches.
  - ▶ What are the requirements for addressing alterations of an existing barrier, where a subsequent Type I project identifies levels that will be above the NAC as a result of the Type I project?
- ▶ Burcham, MO: Will questions be added to the FAQ list?
- ▶ Packard, NE:
  - ▶ Discussion of noise compatible planning – how states agencies communicate with local officials to promote noise compatible planning
  - ▶ Noise analysis for State funded projects – do other state agencies complete noise studies and provide abatement when federal funds are not used
  - ▶ HUD noise regulations – are state DOTs providing any information or data to complete HUD grants or environmental evaluations





## Session 7 - Questions

- ▶ Evans, NH: Can FHWA provide better guidance on noise impacts relating to Section 106 and 4(f)? Possible inclusion of clear definitions in 772? Guidance document?
- ▶ Guidance on assessment and abatement of rumble strip noise.
- ▶ Reeves, TX: DOT practices on “Cost Averaging” (neighborhood concept) of noise abatement.
- ▶ Waldschmidt, WI: Information is provided to locals in the form of noise contours for unplatted lands. The locals then allow construction in the undeveloped area that we have informed them will be impacted by noise from our project. Why would we be required to provide abatement for a future project when we have already informed the local unit of government that future development will be impacted? Can an SHA write their noise policy to correct this problem?



## Session 7 - Questions

- ▶ Waldschmidt, WI: A local unit of government has a required setback from freeways and expressways for the purposes of avoiding residential noise impacts. The local unit of government allows residential construction within that area (for whatever reason). The SHA comes forward with a Type I project in the area that was illegally allowed to develop. Can the SHA write its noise policy to make it so abatement is not required?
- ▶ Method for states to streamline updates to policy. Can we set policy, change it seldom (refer to new rules), but make changes to guidance more often and efficiently?
- ▶ Re-evaluations in NEPA process
- ▶ 772 Update suggestions from states