



Georgia Department of Transportation

Understanding Environmental

Baseline Schedule Training

March 24, 2021 Q&A

Understanding Baseline Schedules

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SCHEDULES

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What are the causes for delayed Notice to Proceed (NTP)?

While the new Recovery Schedule process is being developed and rolled out, do you have a recommendation for easier ways to incorporate recovery schedule tracking now?

What happens if a schedule is not initially modified via a Schedule Modification Form? How is the Office of Environmental Services (OES) team notified to start or assigned?

PROJECT MILESTONES

Please share the Environmental & PDP Milestone workflow slides

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Which set of plans or series are needed to complete Environmental Technical Studies? Trying to identify which plans OES needs exactly, and the level of complete they need to be at roughly?

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When should a Project Changes and Revised Request to Assess Project Impacts (PCRAPPI) be submitted? Where can I find more information on Hot Button changes versus minor items?

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SHELF PROJECTS

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Are Shelf Approval Forms available to consultants to view?

FISCAL YEAR

Please confirm the months for GDOT's FY.

INTRODUCTION

Georgia DOT (GDOT) hosted a Microsoft Teams live event on March 24, 2021. This “Understanding Environmental Baseline Schedules” session highlighted GDOT metrics and the timing of project activities. Learning objectives included an environmental perspective of baseline schedules, initial schedule development, environmental schedules and the Plan Development Process (PDP), setting workload priorities, recovering the schedule, when schedules “go off the tracks,” and the “shelf.” Session presenters developed the following responses to questions posed by attendees.

SCHEDULES

Can you please clarify what milestones will be occurring with the 12 months under the new Federal guidance? Also, does this apply to all EAs and EISs?

The 2020 revision of the Council on Environmental Quality’s (CEQ) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations established time limits for both Environmental Assessments (EA) and Environmental Impact Statements (EIS). In accordance with 40 CFR 1501.10(b)(1), EAs should be completed within one year; 40 CFR 1501.10(b)(2) requires that EISs be completed within two years. Projects requiring an EA or an EIS and have their Concept approved after September 14, 2020 will be subject to the new regulations and guidance. Activities that will need to occur within the specified schedule include

- Section 106 (Assessment of Effect report and State Historic Preservation Officer [SHPO] concurrence),
- Legal counsel review of 4(f) evaluation,
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) approval of the EA or draft EIS,
- Public Hearing held,
- Review of the 4(f) evaluation by cooperating agencies and the Department of the Interior,
- Response to Public Hearing comments,
- FHWA approval of the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) or final EIS and Record of Decision (ROD).

Note that the Preliminary Field Plan Review (PFPR) occurs around the time the Public Hearing is held and prior to approval of the FONSI or final EIS/ROD.

How do schedules work for Quick Response projects?

For minor or quick projects, a schedule is not sent out for approval. Instead the schedule is placed on a project by the Office of Program Control (OPC) and does not go through Schedule Review Committee (SRC).

What are the causes for delayed Notice to Proceed (NTP)?

There could be several reasons for delayed NTP. Occasionally internal delays with procurement might arise. Also, there are times when the Project Manager (PM) may fall behind on

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preparing/processing the Task Order. On occasion, the Prime consultant, after having received NTP, did not provide a timely NTP to its sub-consultants.

While the new Recovery Schedule process is being developed and rolled out, do you have a recommendation for easier ways to incorporate recovery schedule tracking now?

The Office of Environmental Services (OES) will begin training on the new Recovery Schedule Process in August 2021. Until fully implemented, the use of shared storing locations for ease of access and tracking is recommended. If consultants do not have access to the project file in ProjectWise, they should send the recovery schedule to the GDOT Environmental Analyst for filing. This way, GDOT staff can readily access the recovery schedule. Also, for tracking purposes, the utilization of an Outlook calendar specifically dedicated to the project you are working to recover will allow the project team to save and track all upcoming deliverable dates included in the recovery schedule.

What happens if a schedule is not initially modified via a Schedule Modification Form? How is the Office of Environmental Services (OES) team notified to start or assigned?

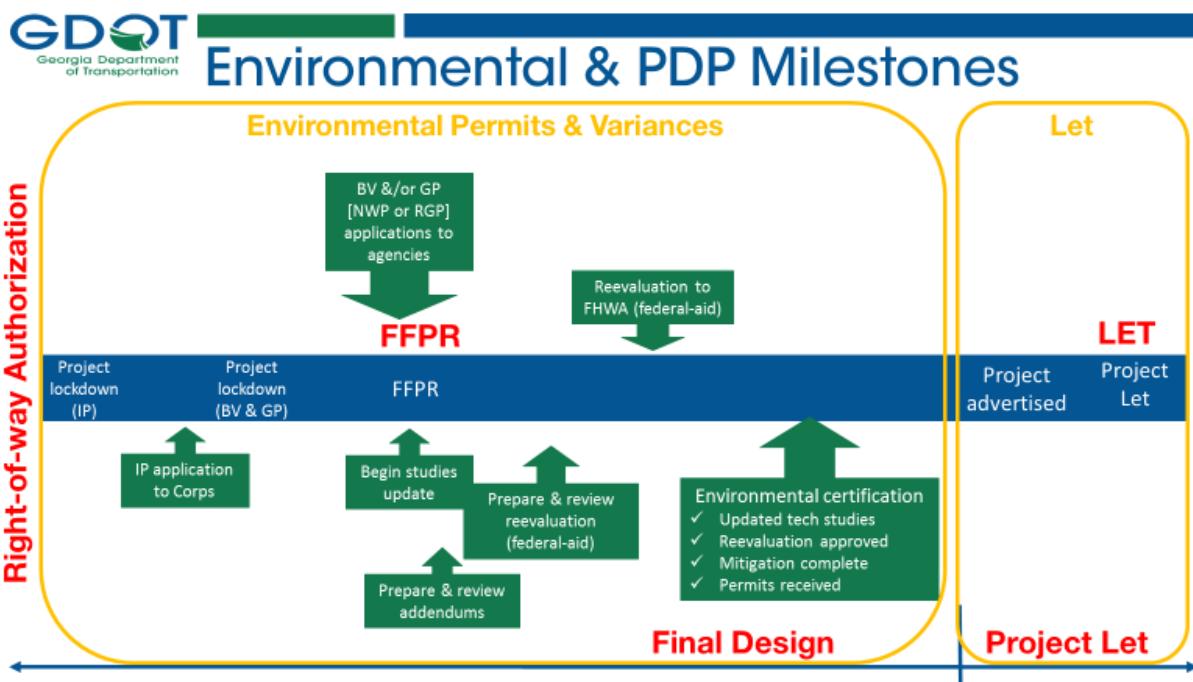
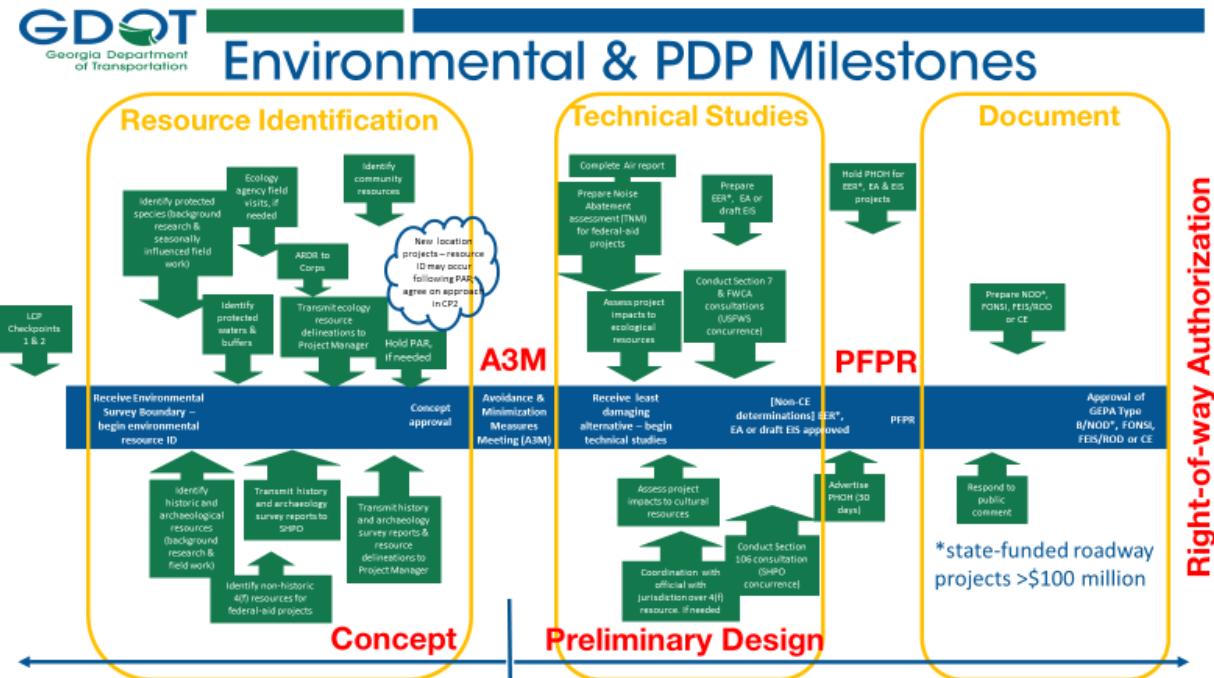
A Schedule Modification Request Form is used by the PM to request the addition or removal of activities from the baseline schedule or to revise the baseline schedule due to a late NTP of the project's initial task order.

When projects aren't approved through the SRC, OES' scheduling group runs a routine report for projects scheduled to receive Environmental Survey Boundary (ESB)/start studies as a double check. All projects should appear on that list and the scheduling group then sends a schedule active letter to the project team and if unassigned, requests SME assignments.

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PROJECT MILESTONES

Please share the Environmental & PDP Milestone workflow slides.



How long is a certification good for? For example, a project sits on the shelf for a period of time.

The most recent environmental approval must match the plans submitted for the authorization of funds. If there are no changes, a certification for right-way (ROW) and construction (i.e., certification for let) is good for one year.

AVOIDANCE AND MINIMIZATION MEASURES MEETING (A3M)

When should a A3M be conducted? During the concept phase? After preliminary design has started?

Two tasks should be completed for A3M – environmental resource identification and design's 1st run of cross sections. The A3M typically occurs early in preliminary design. Activity 20937 is included in the "Preliminary Plans" work breakdown structure (WBS). Predecessors include developing preliminary vertical alignments. Completion of environmental resource identification and design's 1st run of cross sections should allow for a productive discussion. See [Preliminary Design flowchart](#).

We have a current project where the schedule shows A3M during the concept phase. This does not seem correct since cross sections should be provided?

Activity 20937 is included in the "Preliminary Plans" WBS. A batch of bridge projects utilized a template that scheduled A3M immediately after the completion of environmental resource identification which did not allow adequate time to prepare for a meaningful A3M discussion. For these projects, the Office of Program Control (OPC) recommends scheduling the A3M in accordance with the "late finish" date shown in P6. Though it falls later than the baseline finish for A3M, the overall project schedule will not be affected. Additional projects have not used this template.

PLANS

Is there a way to standardize environmental resource delineation submittals so they reference in correctly to design files? They often come in in the wrong location.

A GIS guide for ecologists, located on the Ecology Library, has instructions for properly creating and transmitting DGN files to design. If delineations are not properly georeferenced in the field, the resource will not be located correctly in the design file.

GDOT archaeologists currently use a letter transmittal with an attached file. In the coming year, they hope to adapt the guidance created by the ecology section.

Do Office of Environmental Services (OES) Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) need to be included in all approved ROW plan revision distributions?

ROW plan distributions should be sent to the OES Environmental Analyst. Environmental SMEs receive this plan set if changes have been made that require updates.

When does the environmental team need box culvert construction information including face of box culvert cross sections, stream profile, baffle elevations?

This information is needed for the 404 permit applications. To allow submittal to the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) shortly after right-of-way authorization, this information is needed with the corrected Preliminary Field Plan Review (PFP) plan set.

Which set of plans or series are needed to complete Environmental Technical Studies? Trying to identify which plans OES needs exactly, and the level of complete they need to be at roughly?

Appendix O (page 2) of the PDP Manual defines which plan sets to include in each submission. The lockdown plans for permit & variances: cover sheet, mainline roadway plan sheets, crossroad sheets, profile sheets, construction staging sheets, cross-sections, utility plans, bridge plans, Section 20 plans, and Erosion Control Plans.

PROJECT CHANGES

When should a Project Changes and Revised Request to Assess Project Impacts (PCRAPPI) be submitted? Where can I find more information on Hot Button changes versus minor items?

The Project Manager (PM), working with the Designer (GDOT or consultant), is responsible for completing this form. The PM submits the completed by email, with supporting information (attached or linked), to the GDOT Environmental Analyst for review. The Environmental Analyst's team leader also must review and sign the request before it can be submitted by the Environmental Analyst to the environmental Subject Matter Experts (SMEs).

A PCRAPPI is submitted anytime there are Hot Button changes which are highlighted on the form and listed here.

- Change in right-of-way (ROW), easement or cut/fill line within an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA)
- Drainage structure within an ESA
- Alignment or edge-of-pavement shift (horizontal or vertical)
- Project limits increased beyond the Environmental Survey Boundary (ESB)
- Addition/removal of a thru, auxiliary or passing lane
- Updated traffic volumes
- Addition of a signal
- New displacements
- Access removed
- Off-site detour added

Hot Button changes can result in the need for additional field work, preparation and review of addendums and documents, and re-opening of consultation with agencies. If these types of changes occur after plans have been locked down for permit and variance applications,

resubmitting applications to the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and/or the Environmental Protection Division (EPD) will affect the project letting.

If there are no Hot Button Changes than the PCRAPI should outline all minor changes that have occurred during the reevaluation for let P6 activity.

This form may be needed either before or after an approved environmental document. This form may also be needed in the event a project is pulled off the “shelf” and given a new schedule, regardless of whether there have been changes or not.

AGENCY REVIEWS

Is there a way to expedite agency review times? What are some of the in-house expediting criteria for permits with agencies?

Every effort must be made to avoid the need for an expedited agency review by submitting applications on time to allow the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) adequate time for their reviews and public notices. Every time we request an expedited review, agency staff must set aside another review which then puts the schedules for both projects in jeopardy.

In State Fiscal Year (SFY20), the USACE reviewed and authorized 81 Section 404 permits for GDOT. In this same reporting period, the EPD reviewed and authorized 21 vegetative buffer variances. In addition to variance applications, the EPD also reviews erosion control plans submitted with Notice of Intents. In Spring 2021, EPD had 50 GDOT plan sets in review at one time. Given this workload, disrupting an existing review in progress for an expedited review is difficult.

Requests for expedited reviews need to be made by an Assistant Office Head in Environmental Services or the Interagency Office of Environmental Quality (IOEQ). Agency personnel will accommodate expedited review requests, if possible. An expedited request should not be factored into a recovery schedule since it is not guaranteed.

SHELF PROJECTS

If a project has approved concept but hasn't been funded for preliminary plans phase, is that considered "on the shelf"?

No, to be on the shelf the plans for right-of-way (ROW) and or let (depending on phase) must be complete. Schedules that only take a project through concept are referred to as a scoping schedule.

Are Shelf Approval Forms available to consultants to view?

Shelf Approval Forms are not directly available to consultants. Review and discussion of these forms can be held with the GDOT Project Manager (PM).

FISCAL YEAR

Please confirm the months for GDOT's FY.

A fiscal year is a 12-month period used for budgeting and financial reporting purposes. Georgia's state fiscal year (SFY) runs from July 1 of the previous budget year and ends on June 30 of the fiscal year being described. For example, SFY21 runs from July 1, 2020 (year immediately prior to 2021) and ends on June 30, 2021 (fiscal year being described). The federal fiscal year (FFY) begins on October 1 and ends on September 30, with FFY 21 running from October 1, 2020 until September 30, 2021.