



# PLANNING STUDY TYPES

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DIVISION OF PLANNING  
FEBRUARY, 2008



# PLANNING STUDY TYPES

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- Used a number of names in the past
  - Project Planning Report
  - Advanced Planning Study
  - Intermediate Planning Study
  - Corridor Planning Study
  - Scoping Study
  - Planning Study



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- Other past study names
  - Engineering Report
  - Feasibility Study
  - Corridor Needs Study
  - Impact Study
  - Interchange Justification Study
  - Many Others



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- Realized a need for more consistent naming of study types
  - To avoid confusion
  - To increase consistency
  - To use a name that reflects the study purpose and content



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- A team was established to review study types and names
- Most common types of studies were analyzed for appropriate name
- Recommendations for study names were made
- Approved by Director, Division of Planning



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- Six study type names were recommended
  - Feasibility Study
  - Programming Study
  - Pre-Design Scoping Study
  - Alternative Study
  - Interchange Justification Study
  - Special Study



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- Feasibility Study
  - Evaluate the feasibility of proposed highway improvement
  - Generally improvement of national, statewide, or regional significance
  - Usually evaluates improvement concepts (2-lane arterial, 4-lane arterial, interstate-type facility, etc.)



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- Feasibility Study (continued)
  - Generally compares benefits to costs
    - Road user benefits (travel time savings, operating cost savings, crash reduction cost savings)
    - Economic impact benefits (employment gains, new/relocated industry, increase in personal income, increase in tax revenues)
  - Economically feasible when benefits exceed costs





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- Feasibility Study (continued)
  - Study products
    - Evaluation of feasibility of proposed highway improvement (do benefits exceed costs)
    - Comparison of feasibility of various alternatives, if several alternatives are being evaluated



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- Programming Study
  - Purpose is to develop information that can be used for future programming documents
  - Two general types
    - Corridor Programming Study
    - Project Programming Study



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- Corridor Programming Study
  - Evaluates roadway improvements, generally of regional or statewide nature
  - Identifies and prioritizes projects for future programming documents
  - Part of a long-range planning effort



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- Project Programming Study
  - Usually for shorter, localized highway needs
  - Does project description meet purpose and need
  - Does project description represent a logical, constructible solution



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- Programming Study (continued)
  - Abbreviated study
  - No detailed analysis of alternatives
  - Evaluate general corridor/project needs
  - Identify most likely type of improvement
  - Based on available office data, brief field visits, limited detailed analysis, per-mile costs



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- Programming Study (continued)
  - Study products
    - Recommended projects for future programming purposes
    - Priorities, better project descriptions, preliminary costs



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- Pre-Design Scoping Study
  - Generally done for projects that will start design in one or two years
  - Typically conducted on projects that have
    - Little or no previous planning activity
    - No public involvement
    - Little or no investigation of environmental impacts
    - No clear purpose and need



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- Pre-Design Scoping Study (continued)
  - Study purpose
    - Identify issues associated with the project corridor
    - Define project goals
    - Establish or verify project termini
    - Initiate coordination with local officials and resource agencies
    - Identify potential environmental concerns
    - Initiate public involvement activities





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- Pre-Design Scoping Study (continued)
  - Study products
    - Identifies community issues and restrictions that will be considered during design phase
    - Helps identify public support or opposition
    - Initiates National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process



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- Alternatives Study
  - Study to evaluate alternative corridors for a proposed project
  - Corridors generally 2000 feet or more in width
  - Project that is in or being considered for Six-Year Highway Plan



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- Alternatives Study (continued)
  - Comparisons of alternate corridors usually based on
    - Traffic and operational characteristics
    - Socioeconomic features
    - Costs
    - Environmental features
    - Public input



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- Alternatives Study (continued)
  - Study purpose
    - Establish project goals
    - Develop alternatives that will meet these goals
    - Set screening criteria with which to evaluate the alternatives
    - Evaluate and analyze the alternatives
    - Select one or more alternative corridors to be carried forward to the design phase



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- Alternatives Study (continued)
  - Study products
    - Establishment of the no-build alternative as a viable alternative and a baseline condition against which other alternatives are compared
    - Recommendation of a corridor (or corridors) in which alignment studies will be developed in the design phase



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- Interchange Justification Study
  - Study to evaluate traffic, geometrics, costs, and land use issues associated with an interstate interchange
  - Applies to new or reconstructed interchanges
  - Submitted to Federal Highway Administration for access approval



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- Interchange Justification Study (continued)
  - Study products
    - Federal Highway Administration approval of new or modified access to an interstate highway



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- Special Studies
  - Studies that do not fit in any of above categories
  - Past examples
    - Access Management Study
    - Truck Parking Needs Study for interstates
    - Interstate Rest Area Study
    - Parkway Interchange Needs Study





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- Special Studies (continued)
  - Study products
    - An analysis and recommendation to respond to some special need



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- Summary
  - Each project is unique
  - Project Team will make final decision about tasks associated with each study type
  - Task list shows project tasks generally associated with different studies