**Draft – 9/19/18**

**NCDOT Environmental Policy Unit**

**Vision**

Provide expertise in all matters related to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and North Carolina State Environmental Policy Act (NC SEPA).

**Mission**

Provide timely and efficient support to NCDOT Units (all modes) to ensure compliance with all applicable federal and state environmental laws, facilitate integrated project delivery, and increase accountability and environmental sensitivity that enhance the economy and vitality of North Carolina.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

**Process.** Advise and provide recommendations on NEPA/SEPA issues related to the overall project planning process and project delivery.

* Assist in updating processes to meet new regulatory requirements.
* Monitor opportunities for process improvements, including expediting timeframes.
* Serve as an advisor on innovative strategies for expediting project delivery.
* Review merger process materials for major projects and participate in meetings as applicable.
* Provide process recommendations/guidance regarding early project scoping/Start of Study.
* Review practices of other state DOT’s to determine any potential improvements for NCDOT.

**Policy.** Evaluate existing and new legislation, regulatory requirements, policies, and guidance and their effects on the project development process.

* Monitor federal and state legislation, policy, and guidance related to NEPA/SEPA and evaluate impact on project delivery.
* Develop NCDOT position/response to policy issues on state, regional, and national levels.
* Provide consistent guidance and information across NCDOT programs.
* Advise and participate as appropriate with other technical units’ guidance, manuals, programmatic agreements, Memorandums of Agreement, and Memorandums of Understanding.
* Monitor legal challenges/lawsuits and recommend approaches/procedures that best position NCDOT.
* Review practices of other state DOT’s to determine any potential improvements for NCDOT.

**Compliance.** Review NEPA/SEPA documents and related materials for compliance and adequacy and advise and serve as a NEPA/SEPA resource for the Department.

* Advise on determining class of action for NEPA/SEPA documents.
* Provide reviews of all NEPA/SEPA Environmental Assessments and Environmental Impact Statements.
* Conduct audits of Categorical Exclusions for compliance.
* Advise on greensheet commitments.
* Develop a document distribution procedure.
* Maintain and update NCDOT’s Minimum Criteria in accordance with SEPA.
* Assist in developing and tracking performance measures related to the NEPA/SEPA project development phase.

 **Partnerships.** Coordinate with key stakeholders on NEPA/SEPA and related issues. Advise and provide support to the Department on NEPA/SEPA issue resolution.

* Serve as NEPA/SEPA project planning resource for the Department and its partners.
* Coordinate with key stakeholders on NEPA/SEPA processes, merger process, and other related issues.
* Assist in prequalification of consulting firms in NEPA/SEPA practice area.
* Serve as key contact with resource/regulatory agencies regarding NCDOT compliance and coordination.

**Training and education**. Provide training and guidance materials related to NEPA/SEPA issues and processes. Serve as a resource for best practices and examples of streamlining and documentation.

* Conduct outreach to the Department and its partners on streamlining techniques and best practices.
* Maintain procedures, processes, and planning document templates.
* Create and update templates and guidance for scopes of services.
* Coordinate training for NEPA/SEPA issues and new processes and regulatory requirements.
* Develop guidance documents for NEPA/SEPA issues, merger process, and other related issues.
* Develop definitions of terms.

**Project Delivery and Tracking**. Facilitate NCDOT project delivery in accordance with scheduling metrics.

* Assist in achieving average completion times for CE’s within 1 year, Environmental Assessments within 2 years, and Environmental Impact Statements within 3 years.
* Assist PMU, Divisions, or other units in developing performance measures and tracking them to meet the target delivery timeframes.