



INTEGRATED PROJECT DELIVERY (IPD)

a **CULTURE** where we **PROMISE**
what we are **GOING TO DO** and
DELIVER what we **PROMISE**.

— NCDOT's Project Delivery Vision

JANUARY 2021 NEWSLETTER

Consultant Evaluations

The N.C. Department of Transportation evaluates the quality of consultant services, provides feedback on consultant performance, and documents when there is need for improvement on a project. In the past, assessing consultant performance was underutilized and feedback to our industry partners was sporadic. Through a Lean Six Sigma project, the Division of Highways will soon update its consultant evaluation process, with a revised policy and a web-based system. These evaluations will be a standard business practice with established expectations and responsibilities to ensure NCDOT receives the services required for each project.

As part of this updated process, consultant evaluation performance scores and comments will also be used as input for selection of future work. Consultant firms will be evaluated on the following performance criteria, which is based on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 represents unacceptable and 5 represents outstanding):

- Adherence to schedule
- Adherence to scope and budget
- Quality/accuracy of the work performed
- Amount of assistance and coordination required
- Responsiveness
- Expertise exhibited

The policy and procedures can be found on [NCDOT's Professional Services Management Unit's \(PSMU\) web page](#) under Guidelines & Forms.

Cost Estimating Improvement Process (CEIP)

In June 2020, NCDOT's Division of Planning and Programming identified the need to improve the cost estimation process for STIP projects. This was done to clarify the process that frequently involves:

- Multiple estimates for the same project phase
- Different communication processes and updated schedules for right-of-way, utilities and construction estimates
- No single data-repository for all cost estimates

After meeting with senior management, NCDOT staff assembled a cost estimating team made up of employees from several units and divisions. The team aims to create a consistent, ingrained process for updating cost estimates at appropriate times during the life of a project and ensuring those estimates are properly stored, updated and distributed. This process will ensure the department is using the latest costs for budgeting and scheduling projects in the STIP.

The initial meetings were devoted to fact finding to understand the existing processes and identify the challenges with the current estimating practices. Based on these findings, the team is preparing a report that will be presented to NCDOT management and outline nine recommendations describing how business units can improve the cost estimation processes. This report will provide the strategy, timeframe and necessary resources for implementing each recommendation.

One of the team's primary goals will be to work with information technology staff to develop a user-friendly application to create, store, update, distribute and document ROW, Utility and Construction cost estimates. While this tool is being developed, the Division of Highways' Preliminary Engineering webpage will provide interim guidance on the cost verification process for NCDOT project managers and technical experts. Another recommendation will be to ensure consistency with the Project Delivery Network (PDN). Version 2.0 of the PDN will include estimate deliverables and expand on the Details section to better capture the estimating expectations.

PS&E Checklist

Each year, the Federal Highway Administration completes a Compliance Assessment Program (CAP) Review of NCDOT. For the most recent review, FHWA asked if projects' plans, specifications and estimates (PS&E) had been approved before authorization to advertise. In accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations, FHWA is to authorize advertisements based on PS&E approval and assurances that all other requirements have been met. This authorization has been given to NCDOT through the NCDOT/FHWA Stewardship and Oversight Agreement (S&O).

The results of the CAP Review showed that roughly half of the projects assessed did not have an approved PS&E before advertisement. Based on this finding, the chief engineer's office is creating a universal PS&E checklist for division-let projects. The checklist will be used for state and federally funded projects to ensure completeness of bid packages and to uphold the S&O that all FHWA guidelines and requirements have been met. The PS&E checklist must be completed, reviewed and signed denoting approval, prior to requesting construction fund authorization.

The PS&E checklist is being reviewed and finalized by NCDOT and FHWA. The checklist is expected to be available by the end of January.

ATLAS December Release

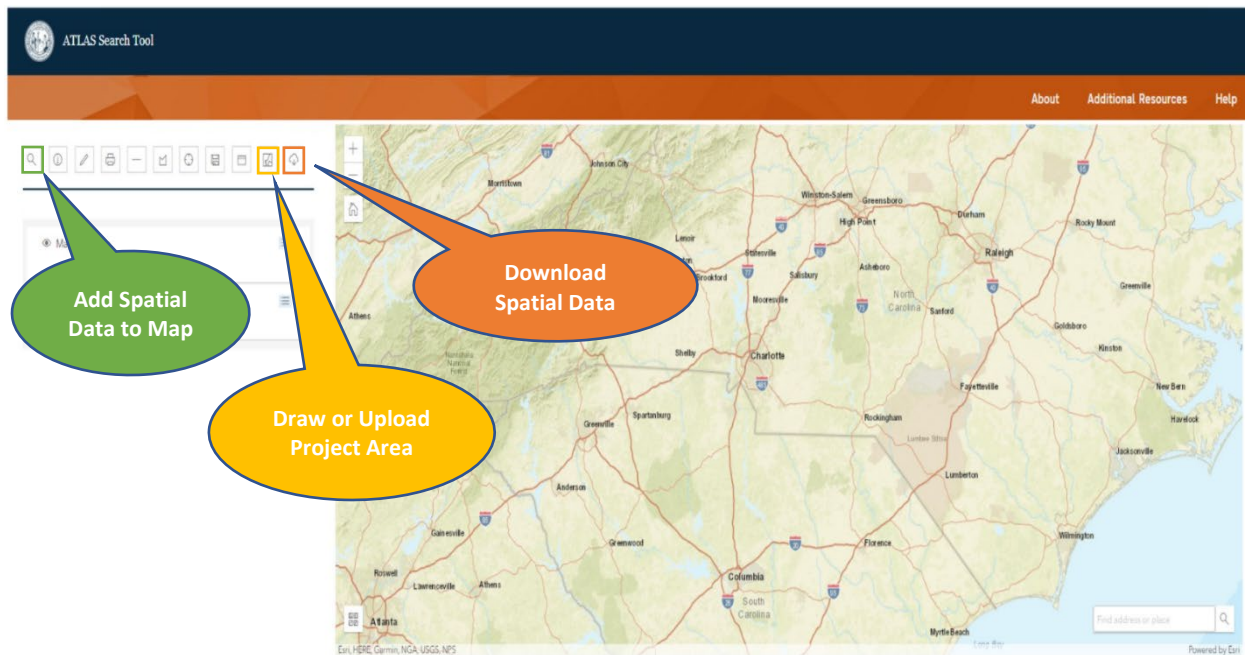
On Dec. 10, 2020, ATLAS Release 1.10.5 went into production. All three ATLAS Tools have additional functionality. Changes implemented with this release are outlined below.

Hint: You may need to restart your browser and clear your Chrome browsing data to view the updated application for the first time after the production release.

Search Tool – All New User Interface

The search tool has been revamped to make a *map-first* user experience. The search tool is your tool:

- To view more than 800 GIS layers on a map
- To find data tied to or referenced by specific DOT business processes
- To draw or upload a project study area, and
- To download GIS data for your project study area



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From the map, the user now can add and view layers before selecting the study area or area of interest and downloading the spatial data (SHP, GDB, DNG).

Screening Tool – New Hydrography and Natural Heritage Element Occurrence Sub-Reports

In addition to the user customized ATLAS Screening Report, if the user selects the ATLAS Hydrography or Natural Heritage Element Occurrence (EO) layer in the screening, the user will get two additional sub-reports that summarize the data. The ATLAS Team worked closely with the state's Natural Heritage Program on the design of the Natural Heritage Element Occurrence Sub-Report.

Workbench Tool

The ATLAS Workbench (Scoping and Preconstruction) was updated in December to reflect the latest merger process improvements being implemented by the IPD team.

The screenshot displays the ATLAS Workbench interface. On the left is a sidebar with a checklist of project tasks, including 'Basic Project Info', 'PreCon Scoping', 'Public Involvement', 'LGA Coordination', 'Merger', 'Survey & Photogrammetry', 'Community Characteristics Report (CCR)', 'Traffic', 'NRTR', 'Threatened & Endangered Species', 'Air Quality', 'Traffic Noise Analysis', 'Historical Architecture', 'Archaeology', 'Geo-Environmental', 'Permitting', 'Community Impact Assessment (CIA)', 'Hydraulics', 'ICE/ICI', 'Utilities', 'Right of Way', 'Bicycle, Pedestrian, & Transit', and 'Project Management'. The main content area is titled 'Merger - U-1050' and contains the following sections:

- 1. Merger Activities**
 - Is this section required? ☒ Yes ☐ No
 - * Select lead agency (last saved:ext-csmeyer)
 - US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
 - Merger Screening**
 - Only enter information here if Merger Screening was not completed as part of Project Initiation / Scoping phase.
 - * Was merger screening meeting held? (last saved:ext-csmeyer)
 - ☒ Yes ☐ No
 - If yes, enter meeting date. (last saved:ext-csmeyer)
 - 12/11/2020
 - Upload Merger Screening Meeting Minutes (PDF) (last saved:ext-csmeyer)
 - U-1050_MergerScreeningMeetingMinutes.pdf
 - What potential project impacts were identified? (last saved:ext-csmeyer)
 - Wetlands -
 - Merger Determination (last saved:ext-csmeyer)
 - Merger
- 2. Concurrence Points**

Reminder: Contact atlas@ncdot.gov if you think any Workbench content needs to be updated to accurately reflect a DOT project's business process.

ATLAS Plans for 2021

The ATLAS Team is collaborating with the Integrated Project Delivery (IPD) team to improve the ATLAS applications and develop new tools and data to support changing NCDOT business processes. The team is scoping four major releases for 2021. Also, you may request ATLAS training in 2021 for new users or a refresher for current users by contacting atlas@ncdot.gov.