



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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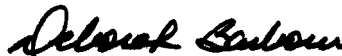
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November 6, 2008

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FROM: Deborah Barbour, PE


Director of Preconstruction

Jon Nance, PE


Director of Field Operations

SUBJECT: Establishing Permanent Utility Easements (PUEs)

The purpose of this memo is to serve as updated technical guidance regarding the identification of potential utility easements (PUEs). Please implement the four action items immediately on all TIP Projects.

During the identification and analysis of project alternatives, the Utility Unit will begin evaluating the alternatives for potential utility easements (PUEs). The Utility Unit will work with the Roadway Project Engineer to ensure that potential utility easements are shown on public hearing maps.

2. The Utilities Unit will utilize 25% plans to investigate, identify and isolate potential utility conflicts within the project limits. This information will be used to better define the utility easements (PUEs) to be shown left or right of the -L- and/or -Y- lines.
3. The final design of the PUEs will be determined based on the clear zone limits, which will be determined by the Roadway Project Engineer. The alignment for the PUEs will be finalized after the final design field inspection but prior to Right of Way Authorization. The Roadway Design Engineer will depict the PUEs on the final plans. If applicable the PUEs will be placed outside the project clear zone limits.
4. As part of the acceleration process for relocating conflicting utilities, the Utilities Unit will identify the parcels that need to be purchased during the early stages of the right of way acquisition and will work with the Right of Way Branch, so they can proceed with securing the parcels.

Please note the following:

Depending on the time needed to acquire the PUEs and the estimated time it will take to relocate the conflicting utilities, additional time beyond standard Right of Way acquisition time, might be requested by the Utilities Coordination Unit to clear conflicts prior to the project availability date. On the majority of TIP Projects, ample time should be available for securing the PUEs to relocate the conflicting utilities during the right of way acquisition phase of the project.

Depending on additional revisions to the roadway plans and the complexity of the project, additional time might be needed between the Final Field Inspection and Right of Way Authorization to finalize the alignment of the utility easements (PUEs). The Utilities Coordination Unit will make the request for additional time to the Roadway Project Engineer.

In most cases the requested PUEs will be a width of fifteen feet (15') to accommodate the back of the overhang (outside conductor) for a 12.4 KV power distribution line. Depending on the width of the clear zone to the edge of the travel lane, the poles could potentially be placed inside the highway right of way to reduce the width of the requested PUEs or eliminate the need for the PUEs. The department will make all efforts to accommodate the relocated utilities within the highway right of way to reduce the impacts on the adjoining properties. Also, the Roadway Design Engineer should strive to place the PUEs as straight as possible and parallel with the project alignment. By reducing the angles/turns within the PUEs, the number guys needed to stabilize the utility poles will be reduced. The Roadway Design Engineer should also avoid parallel alignments that would leave any separation between the highway right of way line and the PUEs. In other words, the existing right of way or proposed right of way line should serve as the inner boundary of the PUEs.

As with any highway project, it may not be feasible to place the poles outside the clear zone. Urban development, terrain, environmental impacts, historical property, structural conflicts, and cost for right of way and/or relocation cost may affect the feasibility of relocating utilities outside the determined clear zone. The final decision to leave or relocate overhead facilities within the clear zone will be the responsibility of the Roadway Project Engineer.

The decision to bury existing overhead facilities within the clear zone will be a joint decision among the Utilities Unit, Division Engineer, the Roadway Design Engineer and the cost review committee. Historically, the cost to bury existing overhead utilities has greatly increased utility relocation cost on TIP Projects.

By working together, we hope the four action items will reduce utility delays and construction cost by minimizing the risk of utility conflicts prior to the project availability date.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Robert Memory at (919) 250-4128.

DB/ JN/rm

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