

NCDOT Rail Involvement Coordination Guidelines

The NCDOT's Rail Division serves as the Department's liaison with railroad companies to facilitate, mediate, and resolve rail-related issues that will potentially impacted the Department's mission.

Coordination with the Rail Division should be initiated by the Roadway Design Unit as soon as potential rail involvement is discovered. If the project is in the planning phase when rail involvement is determined, the PDEA Project Engineer will initiate coordination with the Rail Division.

The Rail Division has two primary points of contact that will need to be notified:

- Ms. Meredith McLamb, Highway/Railroad Project Manager, and
- Mr. Richard E. Mullinax, PE, PTOE, Rail Signals Manager.

Ms. McLamb's Unit addresses highway-rail crossing surfaces and encroachment agreement related issues; whereas, Mr. Mullinax's Unit addresses highway-rail crossing traffic control warning devices related issues.

The coordination should start with a review of the preliminary design plans (plans used to develop the project hearing maps) and a follow-up review of the 25% final plans (to hydro with horizontal and vertical alignments, slope stake limits and preliminary right of way limits) and the Final Design Field Inspection plans (final design plans that are reviewed prior to submitting plans for right of way acquisition).

The parameters for initiating Rail Division coordination are as follows:

- 200' parallel proximity to the centerline of the railroad tracks.
- 200' proximity to the end construction limits for perpendicular rail crossings along -L- lines and -Y- lines.

Coordination should consist of plans and any accompanying information sent to Ms. McLamb and Mr. Mullinax.

- Care should be taken during design to avoid drainage encroachment and use of the railroad drainage system as a destination for the proposed roadway drainage.
- PUE encroachment in the railroad right of way must be avoided.
- For multilane improvements with narrow medians, early coordination at rail crossings is necessary to ensure sufficient median width to accommodate gates required for the rail crossings.
- Coordination of traffic phasing, signal placement and gate placement is required for most at-grade crossings.
- The elevation of the tracks at the at-grade crossings may be raised during the planning and design phases of project development.

Coordination should include ensuring that right of way and construction cost estimates include flagging and signal costs where applicable. Costs associated with these can be a significant cost. Rail Division review of the flagging costs is required prior to completion of the right of way estimate. Construction cost estimates should be reviewed by the Rail Division to ensure rail signal costs are included.

This coordination between the business units is an important part of our on-going efforts to improve highway project delivery when railroads are involved. Rail-related issues that are not addressed during planning and design can create complex coordination issues and extensive delays during construction.

If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact Jay A. Bennett, PE or Doug Taylor, PE.