

Plan & Permit Review Process for Widening and New Location Projects

(Requiring Individual Permits and/or CAMA Major Permits)

Design plans and/or recommendations from Roadway, Structures, Geotechnical, Hydraulics, Roadside, Traffic Control, Utilities, Traffic Engineering, and the Division are an integral part of the permit drawings used for the Department's permit application submittal to the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Division of Water Quality (DWQ), and Division of Coastal Management (DCM). In order to improve the accuracy and coordination between the permit drawings and roadway design plans, a revised process is needed that will provide final plans earlier in the process. In other words, there needs to be a time when design changes that occur beyond that point are the extreme and not the norm. To allow this to happen, the following changes to the project development process have been developed.

Listed below are some of the major activities that occur on a project between the public involvement phase and letting. Embedded in this timeline are certain components that will now occur earlier in the project development process.

- **Hearing Map Review** – *Corridor / Design Public Hearing for New Location & Design Public Hearing for Widening*

During this meeting, Design, PDEA, Division, Transportation Planning Branch, Transportation Mobility & Safety, the Right of Way Unit, and the Utilities Unit will all formally review and agree on the typical section, number of lanes, median width, etc. basically, any design elements that affect the overall roadway "footprint." Although these design features should be discussed and agreed upon earlier in the planning process, the hearing map review will be the last forum when the Department will internally agree on design features prior to showing the design hearing map to the public.

- **Concurrence Point #3 (LEDPA)** – *typically 3 years prior to R/W for New Location projects (max. 2 ½ years prior to R/W for widening projects)*

During this meeting, the selection of the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative is selected.

- **Request for Surveys** – *at Concurrence Point #3 for New Location and major widening Projects & after the Citizens Informational Workshop for short widening projects*

Typically, Roadway Design will request final surveys from the Location & Surveys Unit as soon as concurrence point 3 has been achieved on new location and major widening

projects and after a citizens' informational workshop, as the schedule necessitates, on short widening projects. At this same time, if needed, updated traffic projections should also be requested. Delivery of updated traffic volumes could coincide with the delivery of surveys. Desirably, this will be the last request for updated traffic projections.

- **Concurrence Point 4A** – *approximately 0 to 6 months after Concurrence Point #3 meeting*

During this meeting concurrence is gained on impact minimization based on the horizontal and vertical alignment. A preliminary design is reviewed at the meeting that shows the proposed horizontal alignment and any associated impacts.

- **Request for Drainage Design** – *approximately 18 months before right of way acquisition*

When the Roadway Design Unit sends plans to the Hydraulics Unit for the drainage design to begin, plans shall also be sent to the following groups. The Roadway Design Unit will also request and/or submit information as listed.

- 1) Pavement Management Unit – *request a final pavement design*
- 2) Geotechnical Unit – *request subsurface recommendations*
- 3) Structure Management Unit – *submit structure recommendation plans*
- 4) Division Office – *request comments concerning the horizontal alignments, grades, and constructability concerns, etc.*

The following groups will also be sent plans with a request for preliminary comments and recommendations. Please note that this is not the first request for input. The majority of the groups listed will have been involved during the development of the preliminary design for the public hearing map. A request for additional input is being made at this stage since the horizontal alignment and grades have been further developed for the right of way plans. Also, if additional input is received, the input can be considered prior to the completion of the drainage design. After receipt of the request, each unit will have one (1) month to respond.

- 5) Work Zone Traffic Control
- 6) Congestion Management
- 7) Roadside Environmental
- 8) Roadway Construction Engineer
- 9) Bridge Construction Engineer
- 10) Division Right of Way Agent

11) Utilities Unit

12) Human Environment Section (if there are Section 106 concerns)

*Early investigation of utility relocation will be necessary. Utility permitting plans will be required and are critical components to the permit application. **The permit application cannot be submitted without these items.**

- **4B Meeting** – typically 12 months prior to R/W

The purpose of this meeting is to present to the Merger team the preliminary drainage design, stormwater treatment, bridges, box culverts, potential utility conflicts and construction, and discuss impacts to the wetlands and streams.

The Division Engineer, Division Construction Engineer, and the Division Environmental Officer shall be notified of the 4B meeting.

Bridge and Culvert survey reports will be available for the 4B meeting. Availability of this information for this meeting will initiate more detailed discussion of bridge and/or box culvert types and construction methods prior to the Final Design Field Inspection (FDFI) so they can then be finalized prior to the 4C meeting.

- **Final Design Field Inspection (FDFI)** – 3 months prior to R/W

At the FDFI, the design should be reviewed very closely. The types of information that should be finalized during this meeting are drainage, turn lanes, right of way, utilities, etc. This includes any design features that affect the slope stake limits especially those impacts in or near environmentally sensitive areas (ESAs). Also, final structure foundation recommendations will be available so the bridge construction techniques can be discussed and bridge construction methods can be finalized prior to the 4C meeting. The attendees for this meeting will be the same attendees as has previously been invited to the preliminary field inspection (Design, Transportation Mobility & Safety, Right of Way, Division personnel, etc.) In addition, the Division Environmental Officer will also be invited to attend.

- **Submit R/W Acquisition Plans** – Design sends plans to the Right of Way Unit so right of way acquisition can begin

- **Permit Drawings Review Meeting (4C)** – Minimum 2 months after R/W (and no later than 18 months prior to letting)

The main purposes of the 4C meeting are to review the permit drawings and review and finalize the construction phasing of all bridges and/or box culverts. The Roadside Environmental Unit will also be available to provide generalized information pertaining to preliminary erosion control concepts in environmentally sensitive areas (ESAs).

The Utilities Unit will provide utility permitting plans depicting impacts in ESAs. Utility permit plans for this meeting are required and are critical components to the permit application. **The permit application cannot be submitted without these items.**

The Division Construction Engineer and the Division Environmental Officer shall be invited to the 4C meeting and their attendance is strongly encouraged.

After the permit review meeting (4C), the Hydraulics Unit will finalize the draft permit drawings and submit the Permit Action Letter to the Natural Environment Section (NES) to inform them that the draft permit drawings are complete.

- **Begin permit application / plan consistency review process**

- 1) No later than 14 months before the letting, NES will request final permit drawings from the Hydraulics Unit, roadway plans from the Roadway Design Unit, structure information from the Structure Management Unit, and the utility permitting plans from the Utilities Unit.
- 2) After Hydraulics receives a request for the final permit drawings, Hydraulics will submit electronic copies of the permit drawings and summaries to the Roadway Design Unit for a consistency review.
- 3) After consistency review, the Roadway Design Unit will send an email to NES notifying them that the roadway plans are available on the server.

The Hydraulics Unit, Roadway Design Unit, and Structure Management Unit have one month to submit final permit drawings or information upon receipt of the NES request. This information should be sent to NES no later than 13 months before the letting. **AT THIS POINT, NO CHANGES SHOULD OCCUR ON THE ROADWAY CONSTRUCTION PLANS THAT WILL AFFECT THE ESAs.**

- 4) The Utilities Unit will provide impact information and drawings, if necessary, to NES 13 months prior to letting. **AT THIS POINT, NO CHANGES SHOULD OCCUR BEYOND THE FOOTPRINT OF THE PROPOSED UTILITY CORRIDOR THAT WILL AFFECT THE ESAs AS SHOWN ON THE UTILITY PERMITTING PLANS.**

After the permit drawings, roadway plans, structure information, and utility permitting plans are submitted to NES, any requests that affect the permit drawings should be minimized. If it is necessary to revise the design and it affects the permit drawings, the requesting party will be required to submit a schedule change if the changes require a movement in the proposed letting date. The schedule change should include an explanation of the need for the design change in the ESA. Also, plan changes should be coordinated with the Utilities Unit to avoid further impacts that could affect the ESAs.

- 5) After NES completes the draft permit application they will submit the draft to the following units to ensure completeness and accuracy: Hydraulics, Roadway Design,

Structure Management, Utilities Unit, Roadside Environmental, Division, and Construction. (All comments should be submitted to NES within one month of receipt of the draft permit application.)

- **Permit Applications Submitted to Agencies** – No later than 9 months before letting

After NES has reviewed and resolved all comments, they will submit the final permit application to the USACE, DWQ, and/or DCM. Relevant commenting agencies should be copied.

- **Pre-Let Field Inspection** – 5 months before letting

The purpose of the Pre-Let Field Inspection is to discuss implementation of the design shown in the construction plans, the erosion control plans, the permit application drawings, and the project “green sheet” or environmental commitments. If the permit has been received, the permit conditions will also be discussed at the Pre-Let Field inspection.

The attendees at this meeting will be the same as the current final field inspection. In addition, the Division Environmental Officer will also be invited.

- **Permit Condition Review** – as soon as permits are received

In order to ensure compliance capability of the permit conditions, the NES will circulate the draft permit conditions or final permit conditions to the Preconstruction Units, the Division, and Roadside Environmental Unit. This process informs the relevant parties of their obligations under the permit and allows them to request the condition to be revised, if necessary.

- **Final Plans Submitted to Contract Office** – 3 months before letting