

North Carolina Department of Transportation
Division of Highways
Transportation Mobility and Safety Division

**Standard Practice
for
Interstate Route Designations**

The purpose of this standard practice is to establish guidelines for Interstate Designations. The procedure set forth in the Standard Practice for Interstate Designation shall be utilized in the engineering investigation and evaluation for a requested route:

- 1) A review should be completed by the Regional Traffic Engineer and/or staff (RTE) for any anticipated route modifications. If review determines that a route modification is required, the RTE will hold discussions concerning the potential route modification with the Signing and Delineation Unit, Division Staff and any additional group or agency directly affected by the possible modification.
- 2) If a proposed Interstate route is developed through the STIP (State Transportation Improvement Program) process, a plan review meeting for the STIP Project is held with the Signing and Delineation Unit, Division Staff, RTE, Transportation Planning Branch, Program Development Branch, and Highway Design Branch. The proposed plans are presented for comments, to include but not limited to route designation changes and/or additions.
- 3) All formal requests for designation, addition, relocation or deletion of Interstate routes shall be submitted to the Transportation Mobility and Safety Division (TMSD) Staff Engineer with a copy to the Traffic Ordinance Program Coordinator on the [Route Change Request Form](#) with a map indicating location for initial approval from the State Traffic Engineer.
- 4) The TMSD Staff Engineer will review the request and determine the feasibility of the addition, relocation or deletion by verifying the following:
 - A. Route must meet minimum interstate criteria.
 - B. Route must be on the [National Highway System \(NHS\)](#) or [Strategic Highway Network \(STRAHNET\)](#)
 - C. Route must be a logical addition or connection to the [Interstate System](#).
 - D. Route should not duplicate another Interstate System route.
 - E. Route directly serves: a) major traffic generator (urban areas over 100,000); b) major government centers; c) principle industrial complexes; d) major military complexes; or e) major transportation terminals.
- 5) Once the State Traffic Engineer has signed the [Route Change Request Form](#), the TMSD Staff Engineer will notify the RTE and Traffic Ordinance Program Coordinator of approval by providing the signed copy of the Route Change Request Form.

- 6) If the route does not meet the above mentioned criteria a letter or email shall be written for the State Traffic Engineer by TMSD Staff Engineer denying request and state the reasons for the denial.
- 7) If we are proceeding, the TMSD Staff Engineer must request in writing, through Federal Highway Administration (FHWA NC Division), the addition or modification of a route to the Interstate System. The request must include a justification for the addition and description (begin/end point, exact length) of the route.
 - a) Draft letter will be sent to FHWA (NC Division) office with map.
 - b) Map will be produced by Traffic Ordinance Program Coordinator.
 - c) Once a letter is finalized for State Highway Administrator signature, State Traffic Engineer would review and approve for submission to Administrator.
 - d) Letter is signed by State Highway Administrator and sent to FHWA (NC Division).
 - e) The FHWA (NC Division) will submit a concurrence letter to FHWA Headquarters office with the NCDOT request and attachments.
 - f) FHWA Headquarters concurrence must be obtained, in order for an American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) application to be approved for an Interstate modification.
- 8) For existing facilities a field investigation is conducted by FHWA (NC Division), RTE and Division Staff to determine if any deficiencies exist. The types of measures required to bring the facility to Interstate standards shall be determined or a request by TMSD for design exceptions will be made to FHWA (NC Division). If facility requires additional construction, funding sources should be discussed and determined.
- 9) Once receiving initial approval, RTE will compile and complete the information on the [Segment Worksheet](#) for route change requests and submit to the TMSD Staff Engineer with a copy to the Traffic Ordinance Program Coordinator. A map will accompany the worksheet. The segments located on the labeled map will correspond with the segments listed in the work sheet. (Ex A, B, C)
- 10) For STIP projects, State Signing and Delineation Engineer will incorporate written notification that will be sent to the TMSD Staff Engineer for Interstate route modification during the sign requisition process.
- 11) The NCDOT (RTE or Division) must obtain a resolution from all municipal officials, county commissions, Rural Planning Organizations and Metropolitan Planning Organizations approving Interstate System modification, as appropriate. (Note: RTEs may incorporate any required municipal concurrence speed zone ordinances within the resolutions at this time.)
- 12) The Traffic Ordinance Program Coordinator will begin the process of compiling the AASHTO application at the same time as the FHWA review of the route. This process includes the research and completion of the AASHTO application through the AASHTO Interstate/ US Route Subcommittee. Please see "Review of Policy, Procedure, and AASHTO Applications for Interstate and US Routes" for details concerning the AASHTO Interstate/ US Route Committees referenced in this document. Once the application is completed, the AASHTO Interstate/ US Oversight (NCDOT) Committee reviews the application from a statewide perspective to ensure

- the route follows all necessary guidelines and the addition or modification is in the best interest of North Carolina.
- 13) If AASHTO approves the route modification, the TMSD Staff Engineer will notify the Traffic Ordinance Program Coordinator of AASHTO approval. The Traffic Ordinance Program Coordinator will update the [North Carolina Truck Network \(NCTN\)](#) map, TEAAS, the Route Change webpage and notify the appropriate personnel.
 - 14) RTE is responsible for writing any appropriate ordinances for the route modification utilizing the TEPPL Practice H-11 (Highway Ordinances). The only ordinances the RTE will not be responsible for are the Route Change and STAA ordinances (Ordinance Type 22 and Ordinance Type 40-46). The Route Change and STAA ordinances will be written by the Traffic Ordinance Program Coordinator.

NOTE: For a High Priority Corridor follow High Priority Corridor requirements.

- a) The United States Congress designated over 40 [high priority corridors](#) on the 163,000-mile NHS in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991
- b) The NCDOT (and adjoining States- if applicable) must request, through the FHWA (NC Division), the addition of a high priority route to the Interstate System. The request must include a justification for the addition and description (begin/end point, exact length) of the route.
- c) Approval for the addition of a high priority route to the Interstate System is left with the United States Secretary for the Department of Transportation and are not required to be submitted to AASHTO.
- d) The high priority route must be built to Interstate System standards.
- e) The high priority route must be connected to an Interstate System route at one end and an NHS route at the other end.
- f) Future Interstate Signs may be placed within a high priority corridor at any time (25-year construction period and environmental documentation requirements do not apply).
- g) Submittal of an AASHTO application is not required for a [high priority corridor](#).