


**PROCEDURE MANUAL**  
**FOR**  
**NEW OR REVISED INTERSTATE ACCESS APPROVAL**  
**IN CONNECTICUT**

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### Appendix A:

Electronic Links to United States Code and Code of Federal Regulations reference within this document

### Appendix B:

Memorandum – Changes to FHWA’s Policy on Access to the Interstate System, Federal Highway Administration, May 22, 2017

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Policy – “Policy on Access to the Interstate System,” published on May 22, 2017.

# 1. Executive Summary

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This manual explains the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) national policy for new or revised Interstate access approval (updated May 2017) and outlines procedures developed for applying that policy in Connecticut regardless of the funding source.

This report presents the resulting effort of a multi-disciplinary team of engineers and planners from FHWA and the Connecticut Department of Transportation (Department) to streamline and clarify the Interstate access approval process.

Section 111 of Title 23 United States Code (23 USC 111) (see Appendix A) requires that proposed new or revised Interstate access must be approved by FHWA before such access modifications can be made. This approval is traditionally a two-step process which consists of **“Concept Approval”** and **“Final Approval”**. The first step, “Concept approval”, is to verify that the request complies with the two considerations and requirements of the policy (listed in section 2), and is also known as the “Determination of Engineering and Operational Acceptability” (E&O). Step two is the “Final Approval”, which occurs upon completion of the NEPA process. If NEPA is completed prior to the determination of E&O acceptability, then final approval may be given upon the determination of E&O acceptability.

The local FHWA Division Office has been delegated additional approval authority, which serves to streamline the approval process. Most modifications to Interstate access can be approved by the local FHWA Division Office, although the most complex changes to existing Interstate access need FHWA Headquarters’ Concept Approval (prior to FHWA Division Office Final Approval). It should be noted that all Final Approvals can be obtained from the local FHWA Division Office.

FHWA approval constitutes a Federal action and, as such, requires that National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) procedures be followed. Therefore, this manual applies when changes in access to an Interstate facility are being financed with federal funds, as well as completely financed by the State of Connecticut, the local municipality, or a private developer. Final Approval for an access revision request can be granted after completion of the NEPA environmental analysis and documentation process.

## 2. Background and Policy

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The Interstate System was established for the movement of both military and civilian equipment, freight, and personnel over long distances between and within States. In order to move traffic the most effectively, the single most important design feature of freeways is the establishment of full access control. Freeways are arterial highways with full control of access. They are intended to provide for high levels of safety and efficiency in the movement of large volumes of traffic at high speeds. Control of access refers to the regulation of public access rights to and from properties abutting the highway. With full control of access, preference is given to through traffic by providing access connections with selected public roads only and by prohibiting crossing at grade and direct private driveway connections.

The principal advantages of access control include preservation of highway capacity, higher speeds, and improved safety for highway users. Highways with fully controlled access have grade separation at all railroads and grade separations at selected public crossroads. The remaining crossroads are interconnected or terminated.

The Federal Highway Administration has a specific policy on changes to Access control related to the Interstate system. This manual provided information and methods for analyzing access requests by considering the needs of the system on a national, State, and local level without compromising its integrity.

As requirement of Section 111 of Title 23, United States Code (23 USC 111), (see Appendix A) all agreements between FHWA and the Department for the construction of projects on the Interstate System contain a clause that the Department will not add any points of access to, or exits from, the project in addition to those approved by FHWA in the plans for such project, without the prior approval from FHWA. Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23, part 625, (23 CFR 625) (see Appendix A) designates those standards and policies that are acceptable to FHWA for the geometric and structural design of highways (including Interstate facilities).

FHWA policy regarding new or revised access points to existing Interstate facilities was originally published in the Federal Register on February 11, 1998. The policy was recently updated on May 22, 2017 (see Appendix B), and it further stipulates that new or revised access points to the existing Interstate System shall meet safety, operational and engineering acceptability requirements. The FHWA's decision to grant concept approval requests is dependent on the project proposal satisfying and documenting the following two considerations and requirements:

1. **An operational and safety analysis** has concluded that the proposed change in access does not have a significant adverse impact on the safety and operation of the Interstate facility (which includes mainline lanes, existing, new, or modified ramps, and ramp intersections with crossroad) or on the local street network based on both the current and the planned future traffic projections. The analysis should, particularly in urbanized areas, include at least the first adjacent existing or proposed interchange on either side of the proposed change in access (Title 23, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), paragraphs 625.2(a), 655.603(d) and 771.111(f)). The crossroads and the local street

network, to at least the first major intersection on either side of the proposed change in access, should be included in this analysis to the extent necessary to fully evaluate the safety and operational impacts that the proposed change in access and other transportation improvements may have on the local street network (23 CFR 625.2 (a) and 655.603(d)). Requests for a proposed change in access should include a description and assessment of the impacts and ability of the proposed changes to safely and efficiently collect, distribute, and accommodate traffic on the Interstate facility, ramps, intersection of ramps with cross road, and local street network (23 CFR 625.2(a) and 655.603(d)). **Each request should also include a conceptual plan of the type and location of the signs proposed to support each design alternative (23 U.S.C.109 (d) and 23 CFR 655.603(d)).**

- 2. The proposed access connects to a public road only** and will provide for all traffic movements. Less than “full interchanges” may be considered on a case-by-case basis for applications requiring special access, such as managed lanes (e.g., transit or high occupancy vehicle and high occupancy toll lanes) or park and ride lots. The proposed access will be designed to meet or exceed current standards (23 CFR 625.2(a), 625.4(a)(2), and 655.603(d)). In rare instances where all basic movements are not provided by the proposed design, the report should include a full-interchange option with a comparison of the operational and safety analyses to the partial-interchange option. The report should also include the mitigation proposed to compensate for the missing movements, including wayfinding signage, impacts on local intersections, mitigation of driver expectation leading to wrong-way movements on ramps, etc. The report should describe whether future provision of a full interchange is precluded by the proposed design.

Consideration of the social, economic, and environmental impacts and planning considerations will be addressed through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Therefore, The information collected for the NEPA review of the access request should include a discussion of the need for the action (for example, why the need is not satisfied by existing interchanges or by reasonable transportation system management, geometric design, or improvements to the Interstate System or local roads); evaluation of consistency with local and regional land use and transportation plans; a comprehensive corridor or network study if the potential for future multiple interchange additions exist; and demonstration of coordination with proposed transportation system improvements when the proposal is due to a new, expanded, or substantial change in current or planned future development or land use. The FHWA’s determination of acceptability (or concept approval), along with the supporting information, will be included as an appendix to the NEPA documentation. The FHWA Division Office will normally not provide Final Approval for the revised access before the environmental analysis and documentation process is complete.

This document is part of the Joint Stewardship and Oversight Agreement between the FHWA and the Department. References can be found in tables 2 & 4 of the latest Stewardship and Oversight Manual.

### 3. Applicability

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This manual is applicable to new or revised access points to existing Interstate facilities regardless of the funding source. This manual also applies to proposed developments when the Office of the State Traffic Administration (OSTA) requires a developer to make changes to an Interstate access point. For purposes of applying this manual each entrance or exit point, including “locked gate” access, to the main line is considered to be an access point. For example, a diamond interchange configuration has four access points. It is important to emphasize that this manual **does not** apply to non-Interstate freeways.

Generally, as will be discussed in greater detail within this report, revised access to an Interstate is considered to be a change in the existing interchange configuration, even though the number of actual points of access may not change. For example, replacing one of the direct ramps of a diamond interchange with a loop or changing a cloverleaf interchange into a fully directional interchange is considered to be a revised access for the purpose of applying this manual

FHWA approval constitutes a Federal action and, as such, requires that National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) procedures be followed. Therefore, NEPA procedures also apply when changes to an Interstate facility are being financed completely by the State of Connecticut, local municipally, or developer. The NEPA procedures will be completed as part of the normal project development process and as a condition of the Access Approval.

The Department’s request for FHWA approval will be a “stand-alone” document which will demonstrate that reasonable care has been taken to ensure that future safety and traffic operations along the Interstate corridor will not be adversely affected by the proposed new or revised Interstate access. The Department shall retain the approved revision in access submittal on file indefinitely.

## 4. FHWA Access Approval

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Based on guidance from the FHWA Regional Administrator's May, 2017 Memorandum (see Appendix B), and agreements between FHWA Division Office and the Department, revisions to Interstate facilities are separated into two categories as follows and as detailed below:

1. Revisions to Interstate Facilities Requiring FHWA Access Approval and
2. Revisions to Interstate Facilities Not Requiring FHWA Access Approval

### 4.1 Revisions to Interstate Facilities Requiring FHWA Access Approval

The following revisions require FHWA Access Approval:

- New freeway-to-freeway interchange.
- Major modification of freeway-to-freeway interchange; i.e., major revision to existing ramp radii, adding new ramp(s), abandoning/removing ramp(s), adding lanes to ramp gore areas, completing basic movements, realigning the main lines, adding a new loop ramp within an existing diamond interchange.
- New partial interchange or new ramps to/from continuous frontage road that create a partial interchange (partial interchange access is strongly discouraged).
- New freeway-to-crossroad interchange; i.e., addition of a combination of on-ramps and off-ramps.
- Modification of existing freeway-to-crossroad interchange; i.e., newly realigned ramp which relocates or shifts the location of an existing main line/on-ramp gore area or main line/off-ramp gore area.
- Completion of basic movements at partial interchange; i.e., completing a partial diamond interchange by adding a ramp, or the addition of any on-ramp or off-ramp to the Interstate.
- Locked gate access; i.e., access via locked gates by privately employed personnel.
- Abandonment of ramps or interchanges.
- Relocation of a terminal of a ramp to a different road.
- Access to special use lanes such as high occupancy vehicle (HOV), high-occupancy toll (HOT) or truck only lanes (from the street network) within the Interstate System should be treated similar to any other access.



- Increasing the length of an off-ramp deceleration lane, only if the adjacent upstream Interstate on-ramp exists at a distance equal to or less than 1.6 km (1.0 mile) away from this location (measured between physical gore areas). “A Policy on Design Standards - Interstate System” (January 2005) recommends as a general rule of thumb that the minimum distance between adjacent interchanges in urban areas should not be less than one mile. For purposes of these procedures Connecticut is considered to be an “urban” state.
- Increasing the length of an on-ramp acceleration lane, only if the adjacent downstream Interstate off-ramp exists at a distance equal to or less than 1.6 km (1.0 mile) from this location (measured between the physical gore areas). The “A Policy on Design Standards - Interstate System” (January 2005) recommends as a general rule of thumb that the minimum distance between adjacent interchanges in urban areas should not be less than one mile. For purposes of these procedures Connecticut is considered to be an “urban” state.
- Changes in operation of managed-lane access to general-purpose access to the Interstate.
- Addition of continuous travel lanes to an on-ramp; e.g., assign a continuous travel lane to a single lane on-ramp, resulting in a two-lane on-ramp.
- Any new or revised access point across an existing non-access line.

## 4.2 Revisions to Interstate Facilities Not Requiring FHWA Access Approval

The following revisions do not require FHWA Access Approval:

- The addition of left-turn storage lanes, right-turn storage lanes, and through travel lanes at the local road end of ramps.

For the proposed addition of new left-turn storage lanes, right-turn storage lanes, and through travel lanes at the local termini of existing ramps, the Department will be solely responsible for ensuring that adequate stopping sight distance, and decision sight distance, will be provided in accordance with the most current AASHTO Green Book.

FHWA and the Department jointly agree that the timely addition of new left-turn storage lanes, right-turn storage lanes, and though travel lanes, will not require individual “Revision in Access” approval. These additions will inherently and expeditiously increase ramp safety for ramps which chronically back-up onto the main line Interstate travel lanes, by shortening the queue lengths and minimizing the occurrence of high-speed, rear-end collisions.

- Relocation or shifting of the existing on-ramp or off-ramp termini (i.e., moving the ramp end which connects with the local road). Although an individual FHWA “Revision in

Access” approval is not required, the Department will be solely responsible for ensuring that adequate stopping sight distance and decision sight distance will be provided along the ramp in accordance with the most current AASHTO Green Book. The Department will also ensure that the non-access line and right-of-way limits associated with the ramp will continue to meet Interstate standards.

- Addition of a single auxiliary lane between two adjacent interchange ramps. The single auxiliary lane shall not function as a main line travel lane.
- Increasing the length of an off-ramp deceleration lane, only if the adjacent upstream Interstate on-ramp exists at a distance greater than 1.6 km (1.0 mile) away from the proposed ramp location (measured between physical gore areas). The spacing between Interstate ramp interchanges should safely accommodate weaving, diverging, and merging maneuvers, and have good directional signage. “A Policy on Design Standards - Interstate System” (January 2005) recommends as a general rule of thumb that the minimum distance between adjacent interchanges in urban areas should not be less than one mile. For these procedures Connecticut is considered to be an “urban” state.
- Increasing the length of an on-ramp acceleration lane, only if the adjacent downstream Interstate off-ramp exists at a distance greater than 1.6 km (1.0 mile) away from the proposed ramp location (measured between physical gore areas). The spacing between Interstate interchanges should safely accommodate weaving, diverging, and merging maneuvers, and have good directional signing. “A Policy on Design Standards - Interstate System” (January 2005) recommends as a general rule of thumb that the minimum distance between adjacent interchanges in urban areas should not be less than one mile. For these procedures Connecticut is considered to be an “urban” state.
- Decreasing the length of any deceleration lane or acceleration lane on any existing ramps.
- Traffic signalization improvements at ramp termini with local roads.
- New signing, striping, and/or resurfacing of an Interstate on-ramp or off-ramp, where geometric features are not changed (e.g., the number of ramp/travel lanes at the main line/ramp gore area of an exit ramp does not change).
- Installation of roadside guide rail and concrete barriers (e.g., for resurfacing and safety type projects).

## **5. Submission Requirements for Concept Approval**

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FHWA policy states that the FHWA Division Office must ensure that all new or revised Access Approval requests submitted to FHWA contain sufficient information to allow FHWA to independently evaluate the request, and ensure that all pertinent factors and alternatives have been appropriately considered. This is done through the concept approval process and verifies that the request complies with the two considerations and requirements of the policy (listed in section 2), and is also known as the “Determination of Engineering and Operational Acceptability” (E&O).

### **5.1 Concept Approval Request / Summary Letter**

The FHWA Division Office and the Department shall develop a consensus on proposed access concepts at informal meetings. When it is determined that sufficient information to allow FHWA to independently evaluate the request is available, the Department shall develop a written “Concept Approval Request/Summary Letter” (1-3 pages), with a signature line for the FHWA Division Office Engineering Team Leader. This letter shall be submitted, with the Technical Report, to the FHWA Division Office for approval and signature by the FHWA Engineering Team Leader. This signed letter will constitute FHWA’s determination of E&O acceptability, or Concept Approval. One signed Concept Approval Request/Summary Letter will be returned to the Department to be retained with the project documentation.

### **5.2 Technical Report**

The following sections describe what information must be contained in a Technical Report, prepared and submitted by the Department to the FHWA in support of any request for a new or revised access to an Interstate. In order to satisfy the two considerations and requirements of the FHWA policy described in section 2, the Department shall ensure that at a minimum all items identified below are contained in the Technical Report:

#### **5.2.1 General Information**

- A clear description of the proposed new or revised access.
- An accident analysis summary should always be included for all new or revised access requests. Identify all presently known Suggested List of Surveillance Study Sites within or adjacent to the project limits, and proposed mitigation measures to improve safety in the future. FHWA must be assured that either no impact or only minimal adverse impact on safety and operation of the Interstate facility itself will occur.
- Distances to and size of communities or activities directly served.
- Relationship and distance of the interchange to adjacent interchanges, adequacy of acceleration, deceleration and weaving lengths, and the ability to provide adequate signing.

- Clearly identify any necessary design exceptions from currently adopted AASHTO Interstate design standards.
- Additional proposed traffic signalization.
- A conceptual plan of the type and location of the signs proposed to support each design alternative.
- Ability of the interchange to provide lane balance and the basic number of lanes.

### **5.2.2 Operational and Safety Analysis**

For consistency, it is anticipated that the current Transportation Research Board (TRB) Highway Capacity Manual (HCM) analysis procedures will be used. At a minimum, the operational impact on the main line Interstate between the proposed new or revised access and the adjacent existing interchanges on either side should be analyzed. The analysis should be extended as far along the main line and include as many existing interchanges as is necessary to establish the extent and scope of the impacts. This could be critical in urban areas with many closely spaced interchanges (i.e., interchanges spaced at less than 1.6 km or one mile apart).

The operational analysis of the proposed change will need to be designed to a Design Year which is 20 years after the date when the construction of the project is scheduled to be complete, and open to the traveling public. In order to perform an operational analysis which is as accurate as possible, the traffic volume counts used should not be more than two years old.

The operational analysis should typically include some or all of the following information:

- **Interchange Location Map:** A dimensioned, detailed drawing of the design elements of the Existing and Proposed Change Conditions, including (as applicable): project limits, adjacent interchanges(s), ramp to be added, ramp to be removed, relocation of ramp gore, configuration, travel lanes and shoulder widths, ramp radii, ramp grades, acceleration lane lengths, taper or parallel type exit ramps, truck climbing lane(s), auxiliary/operational lane(s), and collector/distributor road(s).

The drawing (and/or report wording) should identify all presently known pertinent engineering design details of the proposed change. Design exceptions from the current AASHTO Green Book Design criteria shall be clearly identified, and compared with the AASHTO standard.

Another drawing should also be provided showing the traffic volumes for all turning movements, as well as main line, ramp, and local road traffic volumes. Identify current and design year Average Daily Traffic and Design Hourly Volume.

- **Highway Capacity Analysis:** The current TRB Highway Capacity Manual (HCM), or current version of the Highway Capacity Software (HCS) should be used to perform the needed engineering analyses. An acceptable engineering analysis for determining engineering acceptability and feasibility will need to be determined

jointly by FHWA and the Department. The engineering analysis shall include all of the following, unless otherwise jointly agreed to by the Department and FHWA:

**Note: The definition of “No-Build” and “Build” could be different for private development proposals. In some cases, the FHWA “No Build” will be the development occurring WITHOUT a change in the current access control. The FHWA “Build” will be the development occurring WITH a change in the current access control.**

- Existing Peak Hour Volumes: Plan view map, with ramps and Interstate through lanes labeled with existing AM Peak Hour and PM Peak Hour volumes.
- Design Year No-Build Peak Hour Volumes: Plan view map, with ramps and Interstate through lanes labeled with the Design Year No-Build AM Peak Hour and PM Peak Hour volumes.
- Design Year Build Peak Hour Volumes: Plan view map, with ramps and Interstate through lanes labeled with the Design Year Build Peak AM Peak Hour and PM Peak Hour volumes.
- Summary of Operational Analysis: Preferably, a table listing the Freeway Levels of Service (LOS), Ramp LOS, Weave LOS, and Non-Weave LOS for the corresponding Existing AM/PM, Design Year No-Build AM/PM, and Design Year Build AM/PM for various Interstate on-ramps, off-ramps and through lanes.
- Existing Peak Hour Levels of Service: Plan view map, with ramps, Interstate through lanes, and crossroads labeled with calculated Existing AM Peak Hour Level of Service values.
- Design Year No-Build Peak Hour Levels of Service: Plan view map, with ramps, Interstate through lanes, and crossroads labeled with calculated Design Year No-Build AM Peak Hour Level of Service values and PM Peak Hour Level of Service values.
- Design Year Build Peak Hour Levels of Service: Plan view map, with ramps, Interstate through lanes, and crossroads labeled with calculated Design Year Build AM Peak Hour Level of Service values and PM Peak Hour Level of Service values.
- Basic Freeway Segments Analyses of Existing Conditions: Preferably, computer program outputs from the latest update/release of the HCS, for all adjacent freeway sections.
- Basic Freeway Segments Analyses of the Design Year No-Build Conditions.
- Basic Freeway Segments Analyses of the Design Year Build Conditions.

- Ramp Junction Analyses of the Existing Conditions.
- Ramp Junction Analyses (including Queue Analysis) of the Design Year No-Build Conditions.
- Ramp Junction Analyses (including Queue Analysis) of the Design Year Build Conditions.
- Weave Area Analyses of the Existing Conditions.
- Weave Area Analyses of the Design Year No-Build Conditions.
- Weave Area Analyses of the Design Year Build Conditions.

## 6. FHWA Final Approval

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Final Approval from FHWA is the second step of the Access Approval process and shall be granted only upon completion of NEPA and after receipt of FHWA Concept Approval. The FHWA Division Office grants all Final Approvals for all types of Interstate access changes which require FHWA Access Approval and is made by the FHWA Engineering Team Leader. The FHWA's determination of E&O acceptability, along with the supporting technical report, will be included as an appendix to the NEPA documentation.

The earliest that Final Approval can be granted is after the general public has had an opportunity to comment on the proposed access modification. Typically, the Final Approval will be granted sometime after FHWA's approval of the final NEPA document, and before or concurrently with the project Design Approval. Likewise, the development of final plans and physical construction shall be performed only after approval of the environmental document. For "Project of Division Interest" (PODI) projects, FHWA's Design Approval is the Final Approval for change in Interstate access. For non-federally funded projects or State oversight federal-aid projects, the Final Approval could be granted at Design Approval or anytime thereafter (at plans, specifications and estimates, for instance). For private developments, the Final Approval is typically aligned with the approval of the Encroachment Permit, which therefore must be coordinated and approved by the FHWA Division Office.

## 7. Roles and Responsibilities

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The Project Manager in the Office of Engineering will be the responsible lead for Interstate Access Modification requests depending on the scope and characteristics of the project. For proposed developments when the Office of the State Traffic Administration (OSTA) requires a developer to make changes to an Interstate access point, the Office of Traffic Engineering will be considered the responsible lead. The Bureau of Policy & Planning will assist in the NEPA process, traffic analyses, and review for concurrence with existing and proposed policies and planning studies. **Division of Rights of Way should be consulted in the beginning of the process to determine if any property rights will be modified, acquired or disposed of. Some changes in property rights also need FHWA approval (see the Right-of-Way Table in the latest Stewardship and Oversight Implementation Manual and the latest CTDOT ROW Manuals)**

The following two tables are the key to identifying who is involved in various tasks throughout the approval process. They follow the basic format of a RACI matrix in Project Management. RACI is an acronym which stands for four types of task assignments: responsible, accountable, consulted, and informed.

Responsible – Those who actually perform the task. Also, those who recommend a task be approved by those accountable. In FHWA terms it means who performs the review, resolves comments from the consulted column, and makes the recommendation.

Approver - – The person ultimately in charge of ensuring the task is completed correctly. In FHWA terms, it means who is delegated the authority to sign.

Consulted – Those whose opinions will be solicited. These are people involved and consulted prior to a task being performed and with whom there is two-way communication.

Informed – Those stakeholders who need to be kept apprised of project developments and with whom there is one-way communication.



**Table 7.1 Interstate Access Modification Project Matrix for CTDOT Projects**

<b>Work Activity</b>	<b>Responsible [R]</b>	<b>Approver [A]</b>	<b>Consulted [C]</b>	<b>Informed [I]</b>
Determine if Interstate Access Modification is required (Refer to Section 4)	Project Manager		FHWA, ROW, Planning (Intermodal Planning)	
Prepare required plans and documentation for Engineering & Operational Acceptance [Concept Approval] (Refer to section 5)	Project Manager		FHWA, ROW, Traffic Engineering, Planning (Trip and Traffic Analysis), Various Support Units	
Request Engineering & Operational Acceptance (Concept Approval)	Division Chief of Assigned Office	FHWA Engineering Team Leader	Traffic/ ROW	All Bureau Chiefs
Obtain NEPA Concurrence	Project Manager	Refer to NEPA Documentation	Planning (Office of Environmental Planning)	FHWA
Request Final Approval	Division Chief of Assigned Office	FHWA Engineering Team Leader		All Bureau Chiefs
Re-evaluate project if not constructed within 3 years of affirmative confirmation of Engineering & Operational Acceptability	Project Manager	FHWA Engineering Team Leader	FHWA, ROW, Planning (Office of Environmental Planning, Trip and Traffic Analysis),	All Bureau Chiefs

**Table 7.2 Interstate Access Modification Project Matrix for Developer or Town Projects**

<b>Work Activity</b>	<b>Responsible [R]</b>	<b>Approver [A]</b>	<b>Consulted [C]</b>	<b>Informed [I]</b>
Request Traffic Engineering to be lead for Access Modification Request.	OSTA or Maintenance Special Services Office		Traffic Engineering, Town or Developer	Project Manager, Town or Developer
Determine if Interstate Access Modification is required (Refer to Section 4)	Project Manager		OSTA, FHWA, ROW, Planning (Intermodal Planning)	Town or Developer
Prepare required plans and documentation for Engineering & Operational Acceptance [Concept Approval] (Refer to section 5)	Project Manager, Town or Developer (Consultant)	Project Manager	FHWA, OSTA, ROW, Maintenance Special Services Office, Planning (Trip and Traffic Analysis), Various Support Units	
Request Engineering & Operational Acceptance (Concept Approval)	Division Chief (Traffic Engineering)	FHWA Engineering Team Leader	ROW, Consultant	Town or Developer
Obtain Encroachment Permit (If Required)	Town or Developer	Maintenance Special Services Office (District Maintenance Director)	Refer to Encroachment Permit process	
Obtain OSTA Certificate (If Required)	Town or Developer	OSTA	Refer to OSTA Process	
Obtain NEPA Concurrence	Project Manager, Town or Developer (Consultant)	Refer to NEPA Documentation	Planning (Office of Environmental Planning)	FHWA
Request Final Approval	Division Chief, Traffic Engineering	FHWA Engineering Team Leader		Chief Engineer, OSTA, Maintenance Special Services Office, Various Support Units, Town or Developer
Re-evaluate project if not constructed within 3 years of scope	Project Manager/Town or Developer	FHWA Engineering Team Leader	FHWA, ROW, Planning (Office of Environmental Planning, Trip and Traffic Analysis)	Chief Engineer, OSTA, Maintenance Special Services Office, Various Support Units, Town or Developer

# Appendix A

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## **United States Code**

Link to uscode.house.gov

<http://uscode.house.gov/browse.xhtml>

23 USC 109(d): United States Code, Title 23 entitled “Highways”, Chapter 1 entitled “Federal-Aid Highways”, Section 109 entitled, “Standards”, Subsection (d)

<http://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid:USC-prelim-title23-section109&num=0&edition=prelim>

23 USC 111(a): United States Code, Title 23 entitled “Highways”, Chapter 1 entitled “Federal-Aid Highways”, Section 111 entitled, “Agreements relating to use of and access to rights-of-way – Interstate System”, Subsection (a)

<http://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid:USC-prelim-title23-section111&num=0&edition=prelim>

## **Code of Federal Regulations:**

Link to e-CFR.gov (Electronic Code of Federal Regulations)

<https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/ECFR?page=browse>

23 CFR 625.2(a): Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23 entitled "Highways", Chapter 1 entitled "Federal Highway Administration, Department Of Transportation", Subchapter G entitled "Engineering And Traffic Operations", Part 625 entitled, "Design Standards for Highways", Section 625.2 entitled "Policy", Subsection (a)

[https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=7a0c66c3178d9878e00e6cd0fd24b748&mc=true&node=se23.1.625\\_12&rgn=div8](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=7a0c66c3178d9878e00e6cd0fd24b748&mc=true&node=se23.1.625_12&rgn=div8)

23 CFR 625.4(d)(2): Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23 entitled "Highways", Chapter 1 entitled "Federal Highway Administration, Department Of Transportation", Subchapter G entitled "Engineering And Traffic Operations", Part 625 entitled, "Design Standards for Highways", Section 625.4 entitled "Standards, policies, and standard specifications", Subsection (d), Paragraph (2)

[https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/retrieveECFR?gp=&SID=7a0c66c3178d9878e00e6cd0fd24b748&mc=true&n=pt23.1.625&r=PART&ty=HTML#se23.1.625\\_14](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/retrieveECFR?gp=&SID=7a0c66c3178d9878e00e6cd0fd24b748&mc=true&n=pt23.1.625&r=PART&ty=HTML#se23.1.625_14)

23 CFR 655.603(d): Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23 entitled "Highways", Chapter 1 entitled "Federal Highway Administration, Department Of Transportation", Subchapter G entitled "Engineering And Traffic Operations", Part 655 entitled "Traffic Operations", Subpart F entitled, "Traffic Control Devices on Federal-Aid and Other Streets and Highways", Section 655.603 entitled "Standards", Subsection (d)

[https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=7a0c66c3178d9878e00e6cd0fd24b748&mc=true&node=se23.1.655\\_1603&rgn=div8](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=7a0c66c3178d9878e00e6cd0fd24b748&mc=true&node=se23.1.655_1603&rgn=div8)

23 CFR 771.111(f): Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23 entitled "Highways", Chapter 1 entitled "Federal Highway Administration, Department Of Transportation", Subchapter H entitled "Right-Of-Way and Environment", Part 771 entitled, "Environmental Impact and Related Procedures", Section 771.111 entitled "Early coordination, public involvement, and project development", Subsection (f)

[https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=7a0c66c3178d9878e00e6cd0fd24b748&mc=true&node=se23.1.771\\_1111&rgn=div8](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=7a0c66c3178d9878e00e6cd0fd24b748&mc=true&node=se23.1.771_1111&rgn=div8)

## Appendix B

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# Memorandum

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Subject: **ACTION** Changes to FHWA's Policy on Access to the Interstate System  
/s/  
From: Thomas D. Everett  
Associate Administrator for Infrastructure  
/s/  
Hari Kalla  
Acting Associate Administrator for  
Planning, Environment, and Realty  
To: Directors of Field Services  
Division Administrators

Date: May 22, 2017  
In Reply Refer To:  
HIPA; HEPE

Section 111(a) of Title 23, United States Code, provides that State departments of transportation (State DOTs) may not add any points of access to, or exit from, the Interstate System without prior approval of the Secretary. The Secretary has delegated this authority to the Federal Highway Administrator pursuant to Title 23, Code of Federal Regulations, Paragraph 1.48(b)(10). To implement this authority, FHWA is issuing the attached new Policy on Access to the Interstate System (Policy). The Policy was initially published in October 1990 and subsequently updated in 1998 and 2009. The new Policy replaces the 2009 Policy.

The FHWA has identified several areas where the current Policy may be streamlined to eliminate duplication with other project reviews. The new Policy will now focus on the technical feasibility of any proposed change in access in support of FHWA's determination of safety, operational, and engineering acceptability. Consideration of the social, economic, and environmental impacts and planning considerations will be addressed through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review of the project. This change will eliminate the potential for duplicative analysis of those issues in the State DOT's Interstate Access report and the NEPA documentation. The change will allow State DOTs to submit only a single technical report describing the types and results of technical analyses conducted to show that the change in access will not have significant negative impact on the safety and operations of the Interstate System.<sup>1</sup>

The FHWA will be seeking public comment on this updated Policy. In the interim, division offices are directed to begin using the updated Policy for all new change-in-access requests

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<sup>1</sup> The changes discussed in this memorandum do not alter or restrict the option to delegate approval authority for Interstate access justification reports to State DOTs pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 111(e).

effective May 22, 2017 (this includes projects to be processed within the division office as well as those that are forwarded to Headquarters). The FHWA will evaluate Interstate Access requests under the updated Policy as follows:

- The FHWA will rely on the information developed for NEPA reviews to account for the social, economic, and environmental impacts of the change in access. The information collected for the NEPA review of the access request should include a discussion of the need for the action (for example, why the need is not satisfied by existing interchanges or by reasonable transportation system management, geometric design, or improvements to the Interstate System or local roads); evaluation of consistency with local and regional land use and transportation plans; a comprehensive corridor or network study if the potential for future multiple interchange additions exist; and demonstration of coordination with proposed transportation system improvements when the proposal is due to a new, expanded, or substantial change in current or planned future development or land use.
- The FHWA will consider and analyze information regarding the technical feasibility of the change in access as a separate review. The FHWA's determination of safety, operational, and engineering acceptability will be based on a detailed review of this technical report.
- The FHWA's determination of acceptability, along with the supporting information, will be included as an appendix to the NEPA documentation.

Regardless of the type of NEPA action selected for the project, a separate technical report will be required to be submitted to FHWA for determination of safety, operations, and engineering acceptability. This technical report can be submitted as an appendix to the NEPA documentation in the case of an EIS, EA, or D-List CE, or as a separate stand-alone document in the case of a C-List CE. This procedure will ensure that the technical information considered during the analysis of impacts under NEPA is readily available to the public and others.<sup>2</sup>

Note that a State DOT may choose to send a separate technical report prior to a State DOT proceeding with the full NEPA documentation so that FHWA may determine the safety, operational, and engineering acceptability of the alternatives prior to engaging in the environmental impacts analysis.

If you have questions, please contact Michael Matzke, HIPA-20, at [michael.matzke@dot.gov](mailto:michael.matzke@dot.gov) or (202) 366-4658.

Attachment

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<sup>2</sup> State departments of transportation (State DOTs) may assume FHWA environmental review responsibilities under 23 U.S.C. 326 (Categorical Exclusion assignment program) or 23 U.S.C. 327 (Surface Transportation Project Delivery Program). The FHWA retains final approval authority of the Interstate System Access change request once the project receives safety, operational, and engineering acceptability; and environmental review. The FHWA will develop specific guidance on how this memorandum and Policy update is addressed in NEPA Assignment States.

## **Policy on Access to the Interstate System**

May 22, 2017

### **Policy**

It is in the national interest to preserve and enhance the Interstate System to meet the needs of the 21st Century by assuring that it provides the highest level of service in terms of safety and mobility. Full control of access along the Interstate mainline and ramps, along with control of access on the crossroad at interchanges, is critical to providing such service. Therefore, the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) decision to approve new or revised access points to the Interstate System under Title 23, United States Code (U.S.C.), Section 111, must be supported by substantiated information justifying and documenting that decision. The FHWA's decision to approve a request is dependent on the proposal satisfying and documenting the following requirements:

### **Considerations and Requirements**

1. An operational and safety analysis has concluded that the proposed change in access does not have a significant adverse impact on the safety and operation of the Interstate facility (which includes mainline lanes, existing, new, or modified ramps, and ramp intersections with crossroad) or on the local street network based on both the current and the planned future traffic projections. The analysis should, particularly in urbanized areas, include at least the first adjacent existing or proposed interchange on either side of the proposed change in access (Title 23, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), paragraphs 625.2(a), 655.603(d) and 771.111(f)). The crossroads and the local street network, to at least the first major intersection on either side of the proposed change in access, should be included in this analysis to the extent necessary to fully evaluate the safety and operational impacts that the proposed change in access and other transportation improvements may have on the local street network (23 CFR 625.2(a) and 655.603(d)). Requests for a proposed change in access should include a description and assessment of the impacts and ability of the proposed changes to safely and efficiently collect, distribute, and accommodate traffic on the Interstate facility, ramps, intersection of ramps with crossroad, and local street network (23 CFR 625.2(a) and 655.603(d)). Each request should also include a conceptual plan of the type and location of the signs proposed to support each design alternative (23 U.S.C. 109(d) and 23 CFR 655.603(d)).
2. The proposed access connects to a public road only and will provide for all traffic movements. Less than "full interchanges" may be considered on a case-by-case basis for applications requiring special access, such as managed lanes (e.g., transit or high occupancy vehicle and high occupancy toll lanes) or park and ride lots. The proposed access will be designed to meet or exceed current standards (23 CFR 625.2(a), 625.4(a)(2), and 655.603(d)). In rare instances where all basic movements are not provided by the proposed design, the report should include a full-interchange option with a comparison of the operational and safety analyses to the partial-interchange option. The report should also include the mitigation proposed to compensate for the missing movements, including wayfinding signage, impacts on local intersections, mitigation of driver expectation leading to wrong-way movements on ramps, etc. The report should describe whether future provision of a full interchange is precluded by the proposed design.

## **Application**

This policy is applicable to new or revised access points to existing Interstate facilities regardless of the funding of the original construction or regardless of the funding for the new access points. This applicability includes routes incorporated into the Interstate System under the provisions of 23 U.S.C. 103(c)(4)(A) or other legislation.

Routes approved as a future part of the Interstate System under 23 U.S.C. 103(c)(4)(B) represent a special case because they are not yet a part of the Interstate System. Because the intention to add the route to the Interstate System has been formalized by agreement, any proposed new or significant changes in access beyond those covered in the agreement, regardless of funding, must be approved by FHWA.

This policy is not applicable to toll roads incorporated into the Interstate System, except for segments where Federal funds have been expended or these funds will be used for roadway improvements, or where the toll road section has been added to the Interstate System under the provisions of 23 U.S.C. 103(c)(4)(A). The term “segment” is defined as the project limits described in the Federal-aid project agreement.

Each break in the control of access to the Interstate System right-of-way is considered to be an access point. For the purpose of applying this policy, each entrance or exit point, including “locked gate” access, is considered to be an access point. For example, a diamond interchange configuration has four access points.

Ramps providing access to rest areas, information centers, and weigh stations within the Interstate controlled access are not considered access points for the purpose of applying this policy. These facilities must be accessible to vehicles only to and from the Interstate System. Access to or from these facilities and local roads and adjoining property is prohibited. The only allowed exception is for access to adjacent publicly owned conservation and recreation areas, if access to these areas is available only through the rest area, as allowed under 23 CFR 752.5(d).

Generally, any change in the design of an existing access point is considered a change to the interchange configuration, even though the number of actual points of access may not change. For example, replacing one of the direct ramps of a diamond interchange with a loop, or changing a cloverleaf interchange into a fully directional interchange would be considered revised access for the purpose of applying this policy.

All requests for new or revised access points on completed Interstate highways must closely adhere to the planning and environmental review processes as required in 23 CFR 450 and 771.

The FHWA approval constitutes a Federal action and, as such, requires that the transportation planning, conformity, congestion management process, and the National Environmental Policy Act procedures be followed and their requirements satisfied. The final FHWA approval of requests for new or revised access cannot precede the completion of these processes or necessary actions.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> State DOTs may assume FHWA environmental review responsibilities under 23 U.S.C. 326 (Categorical Exclusion assignment program) or 23 U.S.C. 327 (Surface Transportation Project Delivery Program). The FHWA retains final approval authority of the Interstate System access change request once the project receives safety, operational, and engineering acceptability and environmental review.



To offer maximum flexibility, however, any proposed change in access can be submitted by a State department of transportation (State DOT) to the FHWA division office for a determination of safety, operational, and engineering acceptability.<sup>2</sup> This flexibility allows agencies the option of obtaining this acceptability determination prior to making the required modifications to the transportation plan, performing any required conformity analysis, and completing the environmental review and approval process. In this manner, State DOTs can determine if a proposal is acceptable for inclusion as an alternative in the environmental process. This policy in no way alters the planning, conformity, or environmental review and approval procedures as contained in 23 CFR 450 and 771, and 40 CFR 51 and 93.

An affirmative determination by FHWA of safety, operational, and engineering acceptability for proposals for new or revised access points to the Interstate System should be reevaluated whenever a significant change in conditions occurs (e.g., land use, traffic volumes, roadway configuration or design, or environmental commitments). Proposals may be reevaluated if the project has not progressed to construction within 3 years of receiving an affirmative determination of engineering and operational acceptability (23 CFR 625.2(a); see also 23 CFR 771.129). If the project is not constructed within this time period, FHWA may evaluate whether an updated justification report based on current and projected future conditions is needed to receive either an affirmative determination of safety, operational, and engineering acceptability, or final approval if all other requirements have been satisfied (23 U.S.C. 111, 23 CFR 625.2(a), and 23 CFR 771.129).

## **Implementation**

State DOTs must submit requests for proposed changes in access to their FHWA Division Office for review and action under 23 U.S.C. 106 and 111(a), and 23 CFR 625.2(a). The FHWA Division Office will ensure that all requests for changes in access contain sufficient information, as required in this policy, to allow FHWA to independently evaluate and act on the request.

## **Effective Date**

This policy replaces the policy of August 27, 2009 on “Access to the Interstate System,” published at 74 *Federal Register* 43743. The changes in this policy are made to ensure this policy focuses on safety, operational, and engineering issues. The consideration of social, economic, and environmental impacts discussed in the 2009 policy are removed from this policy. However, the removal from this policy does not eliminate the need to consider those matters. Those issues will be addressed under the National Environmental Policy Act and other statutes and regulations applicable to the approval process.

This policy is effective as of May 22, 2017.

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<sup>2</sup> The FHWA may delegate approval authority for some Interstate access justification reports to State DOTs pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 111(e). See <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/design/interstate/160426.cfm>. The FHWA retains final approval authority of the Interstate System access change request once the project receives safety, operational, and engineering acceptability and environmental review.