

Highway Design Manual Vision and Goals

The Guiding Principles of the new Highway Design Manual are:

1. To ensure that the safety and mobility of all users of the transportation system (vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians) are considered equally through all phases of a project, such that even the most vulnerable (e.g., children and the elderly) can feel safe within the public right of way.
2. To ensure that the overarching principles of Context Sensitive Design (a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach that involves all stakeholders to develop a transportation facility that fits its physical setting and preserves scenic, aesthetic, historic and environmental resources, while maintaining safety and mobility for all users) are incorporated throughout project development, design and construction.
3. To present a clear project development and design process that is transparent in its intent, and can be administered consistently throughout the state. The intended result is a streamlined process for which there is project consensus among all stakeholders, that can be expeditiously accomplished within a reasonable project cost.

Additionally, the Highway Design Manual seeks to:

- reflect current best practices which can be used as a national model;
- be consistent with the desired intent of reducing of sprawl;
- provide better balance among municipal, state and consultant participants in terms of responsibilities and benefits;
- provide guidance for the development of stronger definitions of purpose and need;
- provide a more transparent process and an improved project development process;
- provide technically sound, documented decisions;
- provide more clarity and guidance on where and when certain standards apply;
- take into consideration maintenance issues;
- streamline the review process resulting in quicker review times;
- provides a process that facilitates coordination with utility providers;
- provide a process that results in less costly projects;
- ensure a consistent approach statewide;
- result in projects that have an environmental net benefit (“green design”);
- clearly define when exception requests are required, and the process for obtaining, if necessary;
- result in the request of design exceptions as being “exceptional,” recognizing that context sensitive principals are already incorporated into standard design preparation and review;
- measure the success to which the goals of the Highway Design Manual are met;
- become a universally used tool of choice because of its inherent value (regardless of the project funding source, or reviewing authority).

The new Highway Design Manual will also reflect the fact that from this point forward, all projects will be developed using English Units, and incorporate elements of the 2001 AASHTO Green Book “A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets”, as applicable.