



Local Programs Procedures

LPP 94-11

Revision to LPP 94-06 Revised Policy on Design Exceptions

Reference: Local Programs Manual, Volume I, Section 8

Effective Date: October 14, 1994

Approved: _____
Chief, Office of Local Programs

This procedure modifies who has approval authority for design exceptions. This revision will be incorporated into the Local Programs Manual (LPM) during the next update.

EXISTING PROCEDURES

LPP 94-06 states: "...approval authority is now delegated to city/county Public Works Director(s). ... Also, this delegation applies only if the Public Works Director is a registered civil engineer in the State of California. Public Works Director(s) cannot delegate this approval authority within their local agency. Approval of the design exception on Federal-aid projects shall be signed by the Public Works Director."

Since the issuance of LPP 94-06, we have learned that some Public Works Director(s) are not registered civil engineers. Instead some local agencies have a person with the title of Chief Engineer, or comparable, who has the overall responsibility for the engineering decisions made in that local agency. To rectify this situation, we have revised the NEW PROCEDURES in LPP 94-06 to read as follows:

NEW PROCEDURES

The geometric design standards used for roadway projects shall meet AASHTO standards contained in "A Policy on Geometric Design of Highway and Streets 1990" to the maximum extent feasible. For bikeway projects, Chapter 1000 of the Caltrans Highway Design Manual shall be used. For resurfacing, restoration, and rehabilitation (3R) projects, the "Minimum Standards for Geometric Design of Federal-aid Resurfacing, Restoration and Rehabilitation Projects on Local Streets and Roads" dated October 1988, as applicable or subsequent approved revisions, shall be used. The design standards must take into account the costs, traffic volumes, traffic and safety benefits, right of way, socioeconomic and environmental impacts, and etc. This philosophy provides the use of lower standards when such use best satisfies the concerns of a given situation.

Because Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) approval of design exceptions on exempt projects has now been delegated to Caltrans and since local agencies are in a better position to assess applicability to any given situation on local roads, certain design exception approval

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authority is now delegated to city/county Public Works Director(s). This delegation applies to local agency exempt projects in the following categories: Federal-aid funded projects not on the National Highway System (NHS), Federal-aid projects on the NHS less than \$1 million, and 3R projects on the NHS regardless of size. Public Works Director(s) can delegate this approval authority within their local agency if the Public Works Director is not a registered civil engineer in the State of California or if their local agency has a large engineering staff with multiple layers of responsibility. District Local Assistance Engineers will be responsible for reviewing and approving all delegations of design exception approval authority. Approval of design exceptions on Federal-aid projects shall be signed by the Public Works Director or the person to whom approval authority has been delegated. The person with approval authority must be a registered civil engineer in the State of California.

Approval authority cannot be delegated to a private consulting firm that is on retainer as the City/County Engineer. District Local Assistance Engineers will be responsible for final approval of design exceptions for those local agencies that do not have a registered City/County Engineer or Public Works Director.

This delegation of design exceptions is only for local agency projects not on the State highway system. Local agency projects on the State highway system shall use the design exception procedure outlined in W. P. Smith's, Chief - Office of Project Planning and Design, July 25, 1994 memo titled "Exceptions to Mandatory Design Standards." It is also outlined in Caltrans' "Highway Design Manual."

Delegation of design exceptions is limited to geometric design, safety, and drainage design of small culverts. This includes the 12 controlling criteria for geometric design as follows:

1. Design Speed
2. Lane Width
3. Shoulder Width
4. Bridge Width
5. Horizontal Alignment
6. Vertical Alignment
7. Grades
8. Stopping Sight Distance
9. Cross Slopes
10. Super Elevation
11. Horizontal Clearance
12. Vertical Clearance

Local agencies are required to submit design exception information forms, as described below, approved by the Public Works Director or person delegated with approval authority as part of the PS&E review. To facilitate the District Local Assistance Engineers' process reviews, local agencies are also required to keep copies of design exceptions in their project files. If any local agency fails to submit required design exception forms, their delegation to approve future design exceptions may be rescinded. In addition, failure to complete and file design exceptions can result in loss of design certification for those local agencies operating under design certification.

The standard design exception information form, contained in the LPM, Volume I - Section 8, should continue to be used. Design exception approvals should consist of the following required documentation as described in the LPM, Volume I - Section 8, Exhibit 08-1c, the Fact Sheet, FHWA Design Exception Instruction.

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1. Existing Conditions
2. Proposed Work and Nonstandard Features
3. Standard for Which Exception is Required
4. Accidents - if applicable
5. Design Year Traffic Volumes - if applicable
6. Added Cost to Make Standard
7. Description of Any Additional Work to Enhance Safety
8. Reason for Requesting Exception
9. Reviews
10. Signed, Stamped With Engineer's Seal, and Approved by Director of Public Works or the person to whom approval authority has been delegated.

A tracking system for design exceptions should be implemented by local agencies to retrieve project information quickly and accurately. The data base should include:

- Project Description
- Project Location
- Nonstandard Features Approved
- Indication if Future Commitments Have Been Made
- Brief Description of Commitments to Upgrade the Project to Design Standards at a Future Date.