

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION STATE OF GEORGIA

INTERDEPARTMENT CORRESPONDENCE

DATE 9/10/2013
FROM Russell R. McMurry, P.E., Chief Engineer 
TO GDOT Divisions/Offices/Districts, FHWA, Consultant Relations Committee
SUBJECT Plan Development Process Revision (PDP) – Preliminary Field Plan Review

The last major change to the PDP came in 1999 when the North Highland Company, through a study on business process re-engineering, recommended holding the preliminary field plan review (PFPR) after the environmental document was approved. At that time, this change was made to make the process more streamlined and in an attempt to accelerate project delivery.

The current process states “a PFPR should not be requested until the environmental document has been approved for the project,” unless an approved waiver is obtained as per the PDP, Chapter 6, Preliminary Field Plan Review section. During FY 2012, GDOT had 240 field plan reviews of which 96 were PFPR’s and 144 were FFPR’s. During this same time period, 40+ waivers were signed to hold a PFPR prior to environmental document approval. History also shows that changes occurring after the NEPA document is approved resulted in a significant number of re-evaluations and schedule delays for ROW authorization.

In February 2012, GDOT issued a policy (4060-1) in support of Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) executive order 6640.1A, which clarifies permissible project-related activities that may be advanced prior to the conclusion of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. Under the guidance of this policy, GDOT, with support of FHWA is issuing a process change that will allow a PFPR to be held prior to an approved** NEPA Document. This change effective September 1, 2013 will follow the process outlined below relating to the PFPR:

- Concept Phase: No change
- Preliminary Design Phase:
 - **For projects with PCE documents within existing ROW, PFPR may be requested at any time at the discretion of the Project Team. For projects with required ROW, it is recommended that draft special studies including completed surveys and initial assessments of effect for ecology, history, and archaeology are completed prior to the PFPR request.**
 - **For projects with CE documents, draft environmental special studies including completed surveys and initial assessments of effect for ecology, history, and archaeology must be completed prior to the PFPR being requested.**
 - **For projects with an EA, the draft environmental assessment (DEA) must be approved prior to PFPR being requested.**
 - **For projects with an EIS, the GDOT Analyst will coordinate with FHWA prior to PFPR begin requested.**

Procedures:

- The NEPA Analyst shall notify the GDOT Project Manager (PM) upon completion of any condition above.
 - GDOT PM may request a PFPR upon completion of any condition above and the preliminary engineering activities as determined through coordination with the NEPA Analyst and Design Phase Leader.
 - PFPR should be requested using the attached revised checklist.
 - After the PFPR, the Design Phase Leader shall make all necessary revisions/corrections to the PFPR plans as indicated in the PFPR report. The GDOT PM shall return responses to the PFPR report to Engineering Services for validation.
 - After corrections are made, GDOT PM shall return corrected PFPR plans to the NEPA Analyst and FHWA (FOS only).
 - After PFPR changes are made, the Design Phase Leader shall not make any changes to the plans until the final design phase has begun.
 - The NEPA Analyst shall ensure that all special studies and the environmental document are finalized and submitted for approval using the complete PFPR plans.
 - Design Phase Leader shall develop the draft Location and Design (L&D) Notice and submit to the Office of Design Policy and Support via the GDOT PM for review and comment. The L&D shall not be signed and processed until written certification is received from the State Environmental Administrator stating the environmental document has been approved.
 - Design Phase Leader shall develop draft ROW plans and submit to the Right of Way office via the GDOT PM for review and comment. The Right of Way office shall not approve the ROW plans until written certification is received from the State Environmental Administrator stating the environmental document has been approved.
 - **Once the FHWA (or GDOT staff for PCEs) approves the final environmental document, the State Environmental Administrator will submit a letter to Engineering Services, Right of Way, Roadway Design, Design Policy and Support, Project Manager, and FHWA (FOS only) certifying that the document is approved, ROW authorization can occur (if required), and final design activities can begin.**
- Final Design Phase to include:
 - Design Policy and Support obtains approval of the L&D Notice from the Chief Engineer and processes with District Planning and Programming Engineer for advertisement. Design Policy shall notify the ROW office of the L&D approval date (if required).
 - The Right of Way office shall insert the L&D date on the cover sheet, approve the ROW plans and distribute electronically (if required).
 - The Right of Way office shall submit for ROW authorization (if required).

This policy change supports FHWA's "Every Day Counts" initiative and should result in an overall time savings in the schedule once fully implemented. Other benefits include elimination of the PFPR waiver and improved overall resource management throughout the process. The next full PDP revision will reflect this policy change. Please provide your full support and cooperation regarding this major PDP change.

If there are any questions please contact Tim Matthews at (404) 631-1568.

RRM:TWM
Attachments

Cc: Keith Golden
Rodney Barry, FHWA

Form Word: 2440-1c - PRELIMINARY FIELD PLAN REVIEW INSPECTION REQUEST CHECKLIST

Section: Plan Review

Office/Department: Office of Engineering Services

Reports To: Chief Engineer

Contact: 404-631-1000

The following Checklist **shall** be completed by the Design Phase Leader and submitted when a Preliminary Field Plan Review is requested. **All** necessary items are required in order to schedule a Preliminary Field Plan Review Inspection. Failure to do so will delay the PFPR. **Note:** In unusual circumstances, the Project Review Engineer may grant exceptions to these requirements.

The request **shall** include:

- Transmittal letter including description of project
- Project Manager has requested an update to the electronic Cost Estimates and Updates Mailbox
- Project Data Sheet (sample Project Data Sheet)**
- Written certification from the Project Manager stating that a Public Interest Determination Procedure is applicable / not applicable for this project
- Copy of email correspondence from Environmental Services stating that it is acceptable to proceed to PFPR
- Or** **N/A** Draft Environmental "Green Sheet" if commitments are known when PFPR requested
- For projects in the non-attainment areas for air quality, a letter from the State Transportation Planning Administrator certifying that the current design is consistent with the approved RTP/TIP/STIP. For other projects, written certification from the Design Phase Leader that the current design is consistent with the approved concept report/RTP/TIP/STIP.
- Or** **N/A** Letter from the State Design Policy Engineer stating that the consultant's GPS/Control Package and Property/Survey Database meet the Department's accuracy standards (applicable when field survey is provided by consultant for GDOT project or for locally administered project where GDOT is acquiring right-of-way and/or Letting the projects to construction).
- The plans, two (2) half size sets, shall include the following information:
 - Cover Sheet
 - Typical Sections
 - Plan and Profile sheets (including horizontal/vertical alignments, pavement limits, construction limits)
 - Cross Sections
 - Preliminary Right of Way and Easements (including stations and off-sets where ROW changes direction).
 - Existing utilities (Note: Include SUE Conflicts Matrix, if applicable)
 - Or** **N/A** Drainage profiles/drainage cross sections for outfalls and areas that require ROW/Easements (culverts, pipes, ditches and channels)
 - Or** **N/A** Staging Plans (including Staging Cross Sections)
 - Or** **N/A** Approved Preliminary Bridge Layouts
 - Or** **N/A** Retaining Wall locations and Wall Envelopes
 - Or** **N/A** Preliminary Traffic Signal Plans (including Strain poles, Wheel Chair Ramps, Concrete Islands)
 - Or** **N/A** Driveway locations and Driveway Profiles
 - Or** **N/A** Sediment Basins (location size calculations and footprint)
 - Or** **N/A** Detention Basins (location, size calculations and footprint)
 - Or** **N/A** Preliminary Erosion, Sedimentation and Pollution Plan for areas outside of C/F limits.

Additionally, the following information **shall** be submitted along with the PFPR Request:

- Or** **N/A** Draft Project Specific Special Provisions
- Or** **N/A** Accepted Hydraulic Studies
- Or** **N/A** Capacity Analysis of major intersections

- Or N/A Approved Soil Survey Reports
- Or N/A Summary of Preliminary Earthwork Calculations (Mainline, Side Streets and Staging)
- Or N/A Constructability Review Report
- Or N/A Letter or email correspondence from Traffic Operations stating that a signal permit has been approved for each new traffic signal shown in the plans
- Or N/A Letter or email correspondence from Design Policy & Support stating that a peer review of the roundabout feasibility study report has been completed for each roundabout shown in the plans
- Q/A Certification (GDOT Plans - Q/A Checklist, Consultant Plans – QC/QA Certification Letter)

I certify that all of the requested items have been submitted along with this Request for a Preliminary Field Plan Review Inspection.

GDOT Project Manager

Office Phone Number

Design Phase Leader

Company/Office Phone Number

Project Number

County

P.I. Number

Date Submitted

References:

None.

History:

updated according to PFPR PDP policy revision: 08/28/13;
 GDOT PM signature line added: 03/15/13;
 corrected on 12/3/12;
 copied to GDOT Publications v.02.00.00: 03/15/12