

ENGINEERING DIRECTIVES AND STANDARDS

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SUBJECT: ACCESS MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

1. **PURPOSE:** This directive sets forth the Department of Transportation and Development's (DOTD) policy for public involvement where traffic control or access is proposed to be altered for which public meetings/hearings for environmental compliance are not required.
2. **SCOPE:** This policy applies to all construction and permitted projects on state highways where permanent traffic control or access will be altered.
3. **DEFINITIONS:**
 - A. **Median** — a raised or depressed area separating opposing directions of the traveled way. (For purposes of this policy, a center turn lane will not be considered a median.)
 - B. **Median Barrier** — a curb or raised device such as a bollard that is installed to deter traffic from crossing.
 - C. **Median Opening** — any opening in the median. This may include, but is not limited to, signalized intersections, un-signalized intersections, directional U-turns, or partial median openings.
 - D. **Full Access Median Opening** — a median opening that allows all directions of movement, including all turning movements (left turns, right turns, and through movements). It may also allow u-turns when they are needed and can be safely provided. This median opening may be signalized or un-signalized.
 - E. **Partial Median Opening** — a median opening that allows some movements and restricts others such as allowing for left turns from the mainline and right-in/right-out from the minor roadway (or access connection). This type of opening prohibits left turns or through movements from the minor roadway (or access connection). The Median U-Turn Intersection and the Restricted Crossing U-Turn Intersection are examples of uses of partial median openings.
 - F. **Medium U-Turn (MUT) Intersection** — the use of two or four directional U-turn openings, placed on each side of an intersection, combined with the prohibition of all left turns at the intersection. This type of intersection is typically the crossing of two major arterials where the through move is heavier than the left turns. All through movements and right turns at the intersection are permitted. The openings must be appropriately spaced with one directional median opening on each side of the partial median opening. The distance between two of these treatments is also critical. The main intersection is typically signalized and the U-turns may be signalized or un-signalized, depending on volumes.
 - G. **Restricted Crossing U-Turn (RCUT) Intersection** — a non-traditional intersection system that utilizes a combination of one partial median opening and two directional median openings. This type of intersection is typically the crossing of major and minor arterials where the left turn moves are relatively high. The openings must be appropriately spaced with one directional U-turn opening or one partial median opening on each side of the partial median opening. The distance between two of these systems is also critical. The intersection and U-turns may be signalized or un-signalized, depending on volumes.
 - H. **Roundabout** — a type of circular intersection or junction in which road traffic flows almost continuously in one direction around a central island
 - I. **Traffic Signals** — signaling devices positioned at road intersections to control competing flows of traffic.
 - J. **Connection** — any driveway, street, turnout, or other means of providing for the movement of vehicles to and/or from the public roadway system.

- K. **Stage 0 Sponsor** — the DOTD person responsible for initiating the Stage 0 study.
- L. **Attendance Sheets** — the sign-in sheets at the entrance table which include a place to provide mailing and email addresses.
- M. **Public Meeting** — a meeting held at convenient and accessible locations to provide reasonable opportunities for the general public to provide input on proposed DOTD construction projects. The notices are:
 - 1) Published two times as display ads, preferably in a prominent section of the newspaper, with substantial circulation in the project area;
 - 2) Mailed or emailed to the state and applicable parish/city officials;
 - 3) Emailed to radio or television stations in the project area via posting on MyDOTD website, and;
 - 4) Posted on DOTD's internet website.

These notices contain the purpose of the meeting, a brief project description and the location, date, time and place of meeting and statement that should assistance be required to participate due to a disability, and the meeting organizer should be notified at least 5 days in advance so accommodations can be arranged. Handouts that include preliminary information about the proposed project are distributed at meetings. Written comment forms with return mailing address are provided in the handout. A transcript of the meeting will be kept as record of meeting. The transcript includes, at a minimum, copies of the meeting notice (information on the date, time and place of the meeting), handouts, attendance sheets, and copies of written comments with responses. The handouts usually include project information (description, location, alternatives, purpose, and need, etc.), exhibits, survey forms, if applicable, verbatim transcript of moderated presentation and/or print-out of the continuous multimedia presentation, verbatim transcript of verbal comments and responses and contact information for submitting written comments. Additional items that way be included in the transcript are: high quality copies of exhibits, photographs taken during the event, scripts of videos shown, description of the meeting format, information on how meeting was advertised and to whom notices were distributed, and copies of the advertisements/public notices/announcements that appeared in publications, internet and social media.

- N. **Elected & Public Officials Meeting** — a meeting held prior to the public or stakeholder meetings with the elected officials who represent the area where the project is proposed. The meeting notice will be sent to the state legislators, parish president, mayors, parish and/or town council members and Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), if applicable. The meeting notice may be sent out as an email request at least 2 weeks in advance of scheduled meeting. A record shall be kept of this meeting and at a minimum shall include copies of the meeting notice (information on the date, time and place of the meeting), agenda, presentation, handouts, attendance sheets, and summary of comments,
- O. **Property Owner and/or Business Owner Meeting** — a meeting held with the affected property/business owners to discuss the project and proposed access changes/restrictions on their property/business.

- 4. **POLICY:** Informational meetings held for the general public, elected officials and property/business owners are required to provide those impacted by proposed changes an opportunity to be informed about proposed improvements. The DOTD Stage 0 Sponsor is responsible for ensuring meetings are conducted in accordance with this policy when access or traffic control changes are known at the time of Stage 0. If the changes occur at a later stage, then the project manager is responsible for ensuring compliance. It is their responsibility to coordinate the meeting to ensure appropriate DOTD staff are included. For purpose of this policy, the District Administrator is assumed the DOTD Stage 0 Sponsor for permits. Prior to any meeting, the DOTD Stage 0 Sponsor shall submit the traffic study and layouts for concurrence to the Traffic Engineering Management Section.
 - A. A meeting with affected property owners and/or business managers/owners is required for the following changes in access and traffic control:
 - 1) A project that will close less than 4 existing median openings.
 - 2) A project that installs a median barrier that restricts access to less than 4 connections.
 - 3) Restricting/prohibiting turning movements from existing connections at 4 or less isolated locations.
 - 4) Removing 4 or less connections to a state highway.

- B. A public meeting is required for the following changes in access and traffic control:
 - 1) A project that will close at least 4 existing median openings.
 - 2) Reducing number of through lanes.
 - 3) A project that installs a median barrier that restricts access to at least 4 connections.
 - 4) A project that will change at least 4 full access median openings to a restricted opening such as a RCUT, MUT or a partial median opening.
 - 5) Restricting/prohibiting any turning movements from existing connections from more than 4 locations.
 - 6) Removing a traffic signal.
 - 7) Restricting movements at a traffic signal such as no left turn from the side street or no left turn.
 - 8) Constructing a roundabout.
 - 9) Removing more than 4 connections to a state highway.
- C. An elected and public officials meeting in addition to a public meeting is required for the following changes in access and traffic control:
 - 1) A project that will add a median to a roadway where no median exists. This may include, but is not limited to, a 2 lane roadway to 4 lane divided roadway or 5 lane roadway to 4 lane divided roadway.
 - 2) A project that installs a median barrier that restricts access to 10 or more connections.
 - 3) A project that will close 10 or more existing median openings.
- D. Meetings with public officials and the public should be held as soon as practical once a decision has been made to pursue changes to access or traffic control as described elsewhere in this policy. The meeting should be held as soon as the impacts can be identified to avoid wasted effort. Typically, the impacts can be identified and exhibits developed during scoping for Stage 0's or early in preliminary plan development. The public involvement shall be scheduled and held prior to beginning final plans. For projects already in final plans, public meetings shall be held prior to advertising the project for letting.

- 5. **APPLICATION OF STANDARDS:** This policy shall apply immediately to all construction projects that have not been advertised for letting and to all permits not approved. This policy shall not apply where public involvement is required to complete the NEPA process when the proposed access or traffic control changes are presented in that process.
- 6. **WAIVER:** The Stage 0 sponsor or project manager may apply for a waiver to the Chief Engineer with proper justification.
- 7. **OTHER ISSUANCES AFFECTED:** All standards, directives, memoranda or instructions issued heretofore in conflict with this directive are hereby rescinded.
- 8. **IMPLEMENTATION:** This directive will become effective immediately upon issue.

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