Chapter 24

Federal Aid Project Certification

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Chapter 24

Federal Aid Project Certification

24.1 General

The Florida Department of Transportation has a formal agreement with the Federal Highway Administration setting forth the respective roles, responsibilities, and accountability of FDOT and FHWA in the administration and oversight of Federal Aid highway funds. See Florida Federal-Aid Partnership Agreement, Topic No. 700-000-005 and Title 23 United States Code (U.S.C.) 106. Under this agreement FHWA grants to FDOT general oversight responsibilities and approvals for design, plans, specifications, estimates, contract awards, contract administration and project inspections on Federal Aid highway projects except for selected projects as discussed in Section 24.2 where FHWA retains full oversight. For those projects that FDOT has oversight responsibility, FDOT will follow all applicable FHWA policies, regulations, Title 23 U.S.C., and non-Title 23 U.S.C. requirements as if FHWA were involved. Notwithstanding this, FHWA may become involved with any Federal-aid project and retains overall responsibility for all aspects of Federal-aid programs. As such, FHWA has full access to and the legal authority to review any aspect or record of any Federal-aid project at any time. In accordance with 49 CFR Part 18, records will be retained for a minimum of three years or until litigation, claims or audit findings initiated before the three-year period have been resolved.

Modification for Non-Conventional Projects:

Delete the second sentence of the above paragraph and replace with the following:

24.2 Selection of FHWA Oversight Projects

In accordance with the Partnership Agreement, annually in July, FHWA and FDOT will negotiate which new projects will be selected for “full oversight” by FHWA. FHWA Transportation Engineer will coordinate the project selection with their assigned FDOT District Office. Ideally, the projects will be selected from projects listed in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) to be approved by FHWA the following October 1st, and will include projects selected from all four years of the STIP. The projects selected should be on the Federal-aid system to primarily include the Interstate and National Highway System (NHS) routes, but non-NHS projects can be selected. The projects should be selected considering the factors below:

1. All major projects as defined by FHWA’s major project criteria (cost ≥ $500 million)
2. Controversial and Congressional interest Projects
3. Demonstration (demo) and pilot projects
4. Interstate projects:
   a. With Design Exceptions to the 13 controlling criteria
   b. For new or modified access points
   c. For major reconstruction and widening
5. Projects utilizing innovative contracting methods, such as design build
6. Special Experimental Projects (SEP):
   a. Projects requiring SEP-14 approval for alternative contracting methods
   b. Projects requiring SEP-15 approval for public-private partnerships
7. Projects with an EIS
8. Unusually complex or controversial projects
9. Major unique and/or unusual structures
10. A priority focus for projects on the NHS
11. A desire to have a mix in project size and scope

All federally funded projects must comply with applicable non-Title 23 U.S.C. requirements which include, but are not limited to:

1. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 pursuant to 40 C.F.R. Parts 1500 - 1508, 23 C.F.R. Section 771 and Section 6002 of SAFETEA-LU
2. Section 4 (f) of the DOT Act of 1966
3. **Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990**

4. **Civil Rights Act of 1964**

5. Civil Rights approvals

6. Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program (DBE)

7. **Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Properties Acquisition Policies Act of 1970**

8. Hardship acquisition and protecting buying

9. **Americans with Disabilities Act/Section 504 Rehabilitation Act of 1973**

10. Davis-Bacon wage rates

11. Waiver for Buy America requirements

12. SEP-14/SEP15 contracting methods

13. Executive Orders

14. FHWA Guidance and technical advisories

15. Addition/modification of access points to the Interstate (Interchange, locked gate access points, median crossovers for construction)

16. Project by project obligation of federal funds

17. Modifications to Federal-aid project agreements

18. Final Vouchers
24.3 FDOT Responsibilities

The final design documents, reports and plans for projects not selected for FHWA oversight will be developed in accordance with all applicable Department manuals, guidelines and procedures, and in compliance with all applicable Federal Statutes, Regulations, Executive Orders, and FHWA Directives and Standards. The Department is responsible for assuring that all appropriate criteria has been adhered to, and for documenting its findings in lieu of FHWA reviews. Several of the major areas and the method to be used by the Department to document the acceptability of various final design activities in place of an FHWA review and approval are:

1. Typical Section Package
   The typical section package should be prepared as described in Chapter 16, Sections 16.2.3 and 16.3.2 of this volume. Concurrence by the District Design Engineer documents the acceptability of the package. Concurrence from the District Structures Design Engineer may also be required on unusual bridge typical sections.

2. Pavement Design Package
   The pavement design is developed and approved by the responsible professional engineer in accordance with Department pavement design procedures. Concurrence from the District Design Engineer is required to document the acceptability of the package in lieu of FHWA review and concurrence.

3. Bridge Hydraulics Report
   The hydraulics report is developed and approved by the responsible professional engineer in accordance with appropriate design standards. Concurrence from the District Drainage Engineer is required to document the acceptability of the package in lieu of FHWA review and concurrence.

4. Bridge Development Report
   The bridge development report is developed and approved by the responsible professional engineer in accordance with appropriate design standards. Concurrence from the District Design, Structures Design, or Project Management Engineer is required to document the acceptability of the report in lieu of FHWA review and concurrence.

Modification for Non-Conventional Projects:
Delete item 4.
5. **Design Plans Phase Reviews**

Plan reviews should be conducted as described in *Chapter 16* of this volume. Concurrence in the resolution of phase review comments from the District Design, Structures Design, or Project Management Engineer is required to document the acceptability of the reviews in lieu of FHWA review and concurrence. (See *Exhibit 24-B*.)

**Modification for Non-Conventional Projects:**

Delete the above paragraph and replace with the following:

Plan reviews will be conducted as described in *PPM Volume 2, Chapter 2*.

6. **Design Exceptions**

Design Exceptions on projects not under full FHWA oversight require approval and concurrence as described in *Chapter 23* of this volume.

7. **Special Provisions**

Special provisions, which include project specific and technical special provisions, will be developed and approved by the responsible professional engineer. Concurrence from the District Specifications Engineer is required to document the acceptability of the special provisions in lieu of FHWA review and concurrence. (See *Exhibit 24-C*.)

8. **Plans, Specifications and Estimate**

The Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (PS&E) Package and contract file will be transmitted to Tallahassee as described in *Chapter 20* of this volume. The District Director of Transportation Development (Production) will certify that the design and PS&E Package has been prepared according to the appropriate certification procedures. The date of this certification will be noted on the Transmittal of PS&E Package. The Transmittal will also identify the individuals that reviewed the Plans Package, Specification Package, and Authorization Estimate, and the dates of their respective reviews. The Department's official estimate will be approved by the District Estimates Engineer.

**Modification for Non-Conventional Projects:**

Delete Item 8.

9. **Authorization to Advertise**

The PS&E Package must be approved by the Specifications and Estimates Office prior to requesting FHWA authorization for construction to advertise. The Contract
File Package (consisting of the documents listed on the Contract File Index completed by the district), FHWA Summary Sheet, Cost Estimate, Right of Way Certification, Utility Certification, Environmental Certification and Railroad Certification Agreement (if applicable), along with confirmation of the PS&E approval will be reviewed by the appropriate district and central offices and by the Federal Aid Management Office prior to submittal of the federal authorization request.

### Modification for Non-Conventional Projects:

Delete Item 9 and replace with the following:

9. **Use of Federal Funds on Design Build Projects**

Design build projects must be authorized **before** the release of the *Final Request for Proposal* and *Design Criteria Package* to the Design-Build Firms. For Delegated or Exempt projects, the District Design-Build firm approves the package. The Design-Build authorization request should be processed immediately upon notice of receipt of package approval. Upon receipt of the approved FHWA authorization, District Federal Aid Coordinators should notify the District Design-Build firm so that the RFPs and Design Criteria packages can be distributed. See *Chapter 7.1* of the *Design Build Procurement and Administration* procedure.

### 10. Revisions

Revisions to the PS&E will be processed as described in *Chapter 20* of this volume. Concurrence from the District Design, Structures Design, or Project Management Engineer is required to document the acceptability of the revision in lieu of FHWA review and concurrence.

**Modification for Non-Conventional Projects:**

Delete Item 10.

In special cases where programs or projects are developed in the Central Office, an appropriate Central Office Manager will provide any necessary concurrences in lieu of a District Manager. *Exhibit 24-A* outlines the approval and concurrence process.

**Modification for Non-Conventional Projects:**

Delete the above paragraph.
24.4 Certification Documentation and Reviews

FHWA will perform periodic reviews of projects developed under the Partnership Agreement and may have access to review project phases and records at any time. To support the exemption program, adequate documentation throughout the design phase is critical. All approvals and concurrences outlined in the previous section must be sufficiently documented. A complete, well-organized design project file should be able to support a compliance review. All correspondence and documents must include the Federal Aid project number. The Quality Assurance procedures described in Chapter 18 of this volume will be used by the Central Office to monitor district compliance with the certification requirements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modification for Non-Conventional Projects:</th>
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<td>Delete the last sentence in the above paragraph.</td>
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24.5 Certification Statement

A Federal Aid project certification statement by the District Director of Transportation Development (Production) for each project is no longer required. However, Districts are responsible for insuring that all Federal Aid requirements are met as described in this chapter.
## Exhibit 24-A Approval and Concurrence Process

<table>
<thead>
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<td>(<em>Pavement Design Manual</em>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concurrence: 3 4 5 or 7</td>
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<td>Requested: 3 or 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concurrence: 8, and 7</td>
<td>(<em>Drainage Manual, Chap. 4</em>)</td>
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<td>when needed. Approved:</td>
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<td>FHWA or 11</td>
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<td>FHWA AUTHORIZATION ESTIMATE</td>
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<td>(<em>PPM Vol. 1, Section 20.3</em>)</td>
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| Responsibility: FA Manager          |

| 1 District Secretary                |
| 2 District Director of Transportation Development (Production) |
| 3 District Design Engineer          |
| 4 District Structures Design Engineer |
| 5 District Project Management Engineer |
| 6 Responsible Professional Engineer |
| 7 State Structures Design Engineer |
| 8 State Roadway Design Engineer     |
| 9 District Specifications Engineer  |
| 10 District Estimates Engineer      |
| 11 State Director of Design (for exempt projects) |

**NOTE:**
In special cases where programs or projects are developed in the Central Office, an appropriate Central Office Manager will provide concurrence in lieu of the District Manager.
Modification for Non-Conventional Projects:

Delete *Exhibit 24-A* and replace with the following:

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<td><em>(PPM Vol. 1, Section 20.3)</em></td>
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1. District Secretary
2. District Director of Transportation Development (Production)
3. District Design Engineer
4. District Structures Design Engineer
5. District Project Management Engineer
6. Responsible Professional Engineer
7. State Structures Design Engineer
8. State Roadway Design Engineer
9. District Specifications Engineer
10. District Estimates Engineer
11. State Director of Design (for exempt projects)

NOTE:
In special cases where programs or projects are developed in the Central Office, an appropriate Central Office Manager will provide concurrence in lieu of the District Manager.
Exhibit 24-B  Design Plans Phase Review

DATE:

TO:  (See Below)*

FROM:

COPIES:

SUBJECT:  Response to ____________ Phase Review

REF:  Financial Project ID
      FA Project Number
      County

In content of letter include a statement confirming that all review comments have been responded to or satisfactorily resolved.

Include appropriate copies of review comments, responses and other pertinent data.

APPROVED:  

CONCURRENCE:

________________________ ________________________
Responsible Professional Eng.  * District Design Engineer
(Name of Consultant Firm)  * District Structures Design Engineer

* As appropriate

* District Project Management Engineer
Modification for Non-Conventional Projects:

Delete *Exhibit 24-B* and replace with the following:

**Exhibit 24-B Design Plans Component Review**

DATE:

TO: (See Below)*

FROM:

COPIES:

SUBJECT: Response to _____________ Component Review

REF: Financial Project ID
    FA Project Number
    County

In content of letter include a statement confirming that all review comments have been responded to or satisfactorily resolved.

Include appropriate copies of review comments, responses and other pertinent data.

APPROVED: CONCURRENCE:

Responsible Professional Eng. * District Design Engineer
(Name of Consultant Firm) * District Structures Design Engineer
* As appropriate

* District Project Management Engineer

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Federal Aid Project Certification 24-12
Exhibit 24-C  Special Provisions

DATE:

TO:  District Design, Structures Design or Project Management Engineer

FROM:

COPIES:  State Specifications Engineer

SUBJECT:  Special Provisions

REF:  Financial Project ID
      FA Project Number
      County

Include detailed information concerning special provisions required.

Appropriate section(s) of FDOT Standard Specifications should be referenced.

Questions concerning format and content should be directed to the Specifications Office of FDOT

APPROVED:  CONCURRENCE:

Responsible Professional Eng.
(Name of Consultant Firm)

* District Design Engineer
* District Structures Design Engineer
* District Project Management Engineer

* As appropriate