

126 Lane Elimination Projects

Modification for Non-Conventional Projects:

Delete **FDM 126**.

126.1 General

Lane elimination projects (a.k.a., “road diets” or “lane reductions”) are intended to reduce the number of travel lanes and effective width of the road to achieve systemic improvements. Generally, the purpose of these projects is to reconfigure the existing cross section to allow other uses and travel modes. Lane elimination projects typically provide more livable environments, and contribute to economic development and vitality to a community. The recovered travel way can be used to accommodate other purposes, such as bicycle lanes, wider sidewalks, landscaping, on-street parking, bulb-outs, traffic calming, and refuge islands.

A local government entity (e.g., municipality, county, MPO, TPO) or the Department can submit a request for the elimination of travel lanes on the State Highway System (SHS). A private entity may only submit a request through a local government entity.

If the project has a PD&E phase, the requirements of this chapter are followed during the PD&E study prior to the selection of a preferred alternative. See **Part 1, Chapter 2** of the [PD&E Manual](#) for additional information.

126.2 Requirements

Four-lane undivided roadways with AADT \leq 20,000 are typically good candidates for a lane reduction (e.g., converting to a two-lane, two-way road with a center-left-turn-lane). However, projects are evaluated for lane elimination feasibility on a case-by-case basis.

Lane elimination projects must comply with AASHTO and Department design criteria. A Design Exception or Design Variation is required when a proposed design element is below the governing criteria. See **FDM 122** for information on Design Exceptions and Design Variations.

Lane elimination projects should be consistent with the Long Range Transportation Plans (LRTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and Transit Development Plan (TDP).

Analyze the impacts that a lane elimination project may have in different areas, such as:

- utilities
- access management
- businesses
- traffic operation and safety
- traffic impacts to parallel routes
- pedestrian and bicyclist activity
- transit and freight routes
- environmental impacts
- evacuation routes
- emergency responders
- functional classification

Since a lane elimination project may redistribute traffic to other transportation facilities, impacts to those corridors must also be evaluated. Conduct public involvement activities in accordance with the [Public Involvement Handbook](#).

Guidance on the development and review processes for eliminating lanes on the SHS is provided in the Department's *Statewide Lane Elimination Guidance* ([Phase 1](#) and [Phase 2](#)).

126.2.1 Federal-Aid Projects

Follow the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for lane elimination projects that use federal funding.

126.2.2 Roadway Reclassification

A lane elimination project can potentially change the functional classification of a roadway, which could affect planning, funding eligibility, traffic analyses, project prioritization, and state and federal reporting requirements.

A request for a change in functional classification requires review and approval by the Department and FHWA. Approval is typically requested during the preliminary review process as detailed in *FDM 126.3*.

A proposed change in functional classification of a roadway on the National Highway System (NHS) requires coordination between the Department, local officials, and FHWA.

126.3 Application Process

There are three steps in the application process:

- Applicant contacts District Lane Elimination Coordinator
- Preliminary Review by District
- Final Review and Approval by Central Office

126.3.1 Applicant Contacts District Lane Elimination Coordinator

- (1) The applicant submits the lane elimination request to the District Lane Elimination Coordinator.
 - (a) The applicant must consult with the applicable District to determine the specific analysis requirements and review process that applies to their request.
- (2) The applicant completes and submits the Initial Meeting Checklist (see **FDM 103, Form 126-A.**)

126.3.2 Preliminary Review

The District Lane Elimination Coordinator schedules the initial meeting to discuss the proposed lane elimination project with the District Review Team, which includes the following offices:

- Planning
- Environmental Management
- Modal Development
- Design
- Traffic Operations

The applicant attends this initial meeting to discuss the process and requirements of the lane elimination request. The District Lane Elimination Coordinator submits the initial notification to Central Office Systems Implementation Office. This will include:

- (a) Initial Checklist (**Form 126-A**)
- (b) Methodology Checklist (**Form 126-B**)
- (c) Meeting Minutes

- (d) Initial Notice to Central Office (**Form 126-C**), with concurrence from the District Design Engineer and District Traffic Operations Engineer.

The District Lane Elimination Coordinator will work closely with Central Office staff during this review phase, especially if the application is challenging or controversial.

126.3.3 Final Review and Approval

The Final Review and Approval process is as follows:

- (1) The District Lane Elimination Coordinator submits the Final Review and Approval Notice to Central Office (**FDM 103, Form 126-D**), signed by the District Design Engineer and District Traffic Operations Engineer, to the Central Office Systems Implementation Office.
- (2) The Systems Implementation Office coordinates the review of the lane elimination request with the different offices in Central Office (e.g., Design, Traffic Operations) and obtains concurrence from the Chief Planner.
- (3) The Systems Implementation Office submits the lane elimination request for obtaining the final approval or denial to the Chief Engineer. The Chief Engineer has the final authority to approve, deny or object (with comments) to the lane elimination request.
- (4) The Systems Implementation Office submits notification to the District Lane Elimination Coordinator of the Chief Engineer's decision.
 - (a) Approved: application process is complete.
 - (b) Denied lane elimination request: includes an explanation for the denial.
 - (c) Objection with comments: the applicant may resubmit the lane elimination proposal to the District, once the comments have been addressed. The resubmittal must include an updated and signed **Form 126-D** (included in **FDM 103**).