



Florida Department of Transportation

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ROADWAY DESIGN BULLETIN 23-02

FHWA Approved: TBD

DATE: April XX, 2023

TO: District Directors of Transportation Operations, District Directors of Transportation Development, District Design Engineers, District Construction Engineers, District Pavement Design Engineers, District Consultant Project Management Engineers, District Structures Design Engineers, District Maintenance Engineers, District Roadway Design Engineers, District Traffic Operations Engineers, District Program Management Engineers, District Drainage Engineers, District Materials Engineers, District Safety Engineers, District Safety Administrators

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SUBJECT: **Revised FDM 122.1.1 Design Variations and Design Exceptions for Safety Projects**

This bulletin updates the **2023 FDOT Design Manual (FDM)** criteria for Design Variations and Design Exceptions on projects developed solely to address documented safety problems.

REQUIREMENTS

Delete **FDM 122.1.1** and replace with the following:

122.1.1 Safety Projects

For projects developed to solely address documented safety problems, only the elements identified under the scope of work for the safety improvement project are subject to these approval processes. Existing non-compliant features within the limits of a safety improvement project do not require approval to remain if the project does not create a non-compliant condition. For these projects, all Design Variations and Design Exceptions applicable to the project scope must be approved prior to the beginning of the design phase.

BACKGROUND

The revision makes the following changes:

- 1) Removes the requirement for projects to be programmed using “safety funds” in order to receive an exemption from Design Exceptions or Variations for existing non-compliant features.
- 2) Provides that projects developed solely to address documented safety problems do not require a Design Exception or Variation for existing non-compliant features.

Over the last several years, FDOT has evolved the understanding of what constitutes a “safety project” beyond a narrow definition by project funding type (i.e. “safety funds”,) to a focus on purpose and need of the project. FDOT practice for many years has been to exempt “safety funded” projects from requirements for Design Variations and Exceptions for non-compliant features, when those features are not created by the project itself. For example, the installation of a midblock crossing on a roadway with sub-standard travel lane widths would not require a Design Variation or Exception for lane widths, if the midblock crossing itself did not create the substandard lane width condition.

The change to FDM 122.1.1 brings the FDM criteria into alignment with current departmental practice for programming and development of safety projects, by recognizing “safety projects” are now determined by purpose and need as well as by funding category.

Note that safety improvements conducted as part of a larger project, such as a RRR project, will still have to meet the Design Variation or Design Exception criteria. The changes to FDM 122.1.1 only apply to projects with the sole purpose of addressing an identified safety problem.

IMPLEMENTATION

The requirements of this bulletin are effective immediately.

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