

# Design Standards Letter

Letter Number: **G-1960-12**

Letter Date: **05/20/1960**

Effective Date: **05/20/1960**

Section/Plan No.: **None**

Subject: **Meeting May 19, 1960 at Jefferson City**

Body

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**TO ALL DISTRICT AND URBAN ENGINEERS:**

**You were told at the above mentioned meeting that you would immediately be informed of any changes in the outline that was handed you, and of any items not covered by the outline. It will require a few days to prepare a new five-year outline of "Work Procedure on a Project" - and we want to make sure all Divisions and the Bureau of Public Roads are in agreement on the extensiveness of the "right-of-way acquisition date" before you are finally advised. Otherwise the outline you now have applies, with the following additional explanations.**

**You may consider item (4) under Topic VII to mean that design plans should be submitted as soon as practical rather than possible as we realize you might not be able to complete them until some right-of-way situations clear. We still would like to have them as soon as your good judgment will permit releasing them as our records are so prepared that this date is the one that indicates plans are ready for right-of-way acquisition.**

**We do not anticipate any difficulty in the change that is now effective whereby the checking, consulting and correction at all locations and designs will be done in the District office so that routine approval can be made by this office. We will adjust our part to make your part more effective as we realize it is now the District's responsibility to prepare proper plans at the programmed time. We recognize, however, that it will require considerable effort on the part of all of us for the Bureau of Public Roads to also function at the District level because of certain regulations they are required to follow. You have been instructed to work out a system with the Bureau of Public Roads Area Engineer in your District, and the following remarks made by Mr. O'Brien should help you in this effort:**

**:"Federal-aid, as we have come to know it, began in 1916 when Congress enacted the Federal-aid Road Act, which laid the foundation for the cooperative Federal**

State highway program in existence today. This time tested pattern strengthened and improved over the years, has become an outstanding example of sound Federal-State relations. Under this Act, the States have retained the initiative and prerogative in selecting roads to be improved and the type of improvement. They are responsible for surveys, plans and specifications, for letting contracts, and for supervision of construction subject to the approval of B.P.R.

"The 1921 Federal-aid Act contains this provision 'only such durable types of surface and kinds of materials shall be adopted for the construction and reconstruction of any highway which is a part of the Federal-aid System as will adequately meet the existing and probably future traffic needs and conditions thereon'.

"While the early acts did not emphasize geometric requirements other than widths of surface, bridges and right-of-way, they were later covered by subsequent acts or by Rules and Regulations which, when approved by the Secretary of the Department under which we are operating at the time, become a part of the law.

"From this brief sketch of the Federal-aid Highway law, it is evident that it is based on the democratic concepts of division of authority between the Federal Government and the States, the initiative in determining what roads were to be built and the character of their improvement. It gave the Federal officers authority to approve or reject the State's proposals if such were not in consonance with established policies or the intent of the act.

"Our relationship with the State is founded on full cooperation, mutual confidence, and professional integrity.

"Now let us review the actual functions which our field engineers are required to perform according to directives from our Washington office.

### LOCATION AND ROUTE REPORTS

"The first step requiring review and inspection by our field engineers is in connection with the location of the highway. This is involved only when there has been no previous route report and sketch map approved for the particular section of highway involved or where the highway is being relocated and the approved sketch map will be obsolete. PPM 21-2 dated May 13, 1957 prescribes the procedures for the preparation and submission of route reports. Paragraph No. 5 describes the procedure to be followed by our field engineers and reads as follows: 'A field inspection of the route section will be made by an engineer from the Division office accompanied by a representative of the State. During the inspection and reconnaissance, studies are to be made of the existing proposed and alternate locations, giving consideration to the maps and data furnished by the State. The United States Geological Survey Maps and aerial maps are

particularly useful for this purpose.'

"If our field men have properly followed through this step, there is no occasion for any delay in the approval of the strip map when submitted to the Division with request for authorization to proceed with the actual surveys or preliminary right-of-way activities.

### "PLANS, SPECIFICATIONS AND ESTIMATE

The second step in the preliminary stages of developing a project in which we are interested is the preparation of the P.S.&E. To indicate what is expected of our field engineers at this stage, we quote Section 10, Par. a. of PPM 21-5 dated 10-12-59 as follows: 'The review of Plans by Public Roads Engineers in cooperation with the State should begin early in the design stage and should include a plan-in-hand inspection at the appropriate time in order to reduce the work of design to the practical minimum and to be made to the Division Office sufficiently in advance of the date the State desires authorization to proceed with the work to allow a reasonable time for adequate review.'

"21-4.1 4J. A right-of-way representative from the State and from Public Roads should make inspections in company with the location and design engineers at both the preliminary and final stages of location of highway.'

"These excerpts from the PPM's are given so that you may better understand the directives under which our field engineers are operating.

"Insofar as the design of highways is concerned, we are reading out of the same book, the AASHO Standards on Geometrics which has been accepted by the Bureau, who holds membership in this organization. These standards are a compilation of guide values derived from basic engineering knowledge, experience, research and judgment that are adopted by highway engineers for control in design of highways.

"I want you to know that our field engineers in this Division have been instructed to leave the designing of highways to the State employees in accordance with the laws, and policies under which we operate. We certainly don't want any quibbling over some rather unimportant details which in the first place are probably based on personal opinions. Our area engineers have been instructed to promptly refer any unresolved problems which may develop to their District Engineer, and if they are unable to get in agreement with the proper authority in your Department, to bring the matter to my attention without delay.

"I know there have been occasional delays in the past in getting decisions which would permit development of some projects to move along expeditiously, and in all probability both our organizations were involved to some extent."

**A letter had already advised you of the elimination of the weekly survey report and the reduction in the monthly survey report.**

**You will be advised on the step-by-step procedure on our five-year program within a few days, and will also be supplied a sample copy of our ledger sheets with space provided for dates each step was realized.**

**Kindly acknowledge receipt of this letter and include any comments you desire on the worth-whileness of such a meeting.**

**C. C. Tevis  
Engineer of Surveys and Plans**