

Design Standards Letter

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Section/Plan No.: **None**

Subject: **Project Scheduling**

Body

We wish to take this opportunity to thank the districts for their response to our survey of July 22, 1994 on project scheduling. In general, the districts agreed to accept responsibility and accountability for project scheduling. Concerns were expressed, however, about extra work which may be required and ability of district people to influence other divisions or the central office to pursue projects at any pace but their own. We have had somewhat the same concerns with central office design personnel dealing with others involved but generally found that cooperation and teamwork will get the job done successfully. We will certainly assist the districts in project scheduling and feel confident all parties involved in getting projects ready for letting will provide complete cooperation. The following changes in policy for the scheduling of projects are effective immediately.

(1) The districts will assume responsibility for scheduling of their own projects including meeting deadlines and coordination with other divisions and sections of the department as necessary. The central office will retain responsibility for processing 404 permits with the Corps of Engineers, after the necessary information has been submitted by the districts. It is suggested that district highway design engineers be assigned responsibility for this coordination for projects under their supervision.

(2) As soon as the annual program is approved, an initial 24-Month Letting Schedule will be developed by each district and submitted to the Design Division in the central office. For this year the annual program is anticipated to be approved at the September meeting of the Commission. The 24 month schedules submitted by the districts will be reviewed in the Design Division central office to insure reasonably balanced lettings and compliance with available funding. After congress has finalized the budget and the FHWA has advised the depart-

ment of the exact amount of funds that will be distributed, it may be necessary for the districts to revise the letting schedule to match available funding. Any required adjustments to the districts' recommendations will be discussed and changes will be reviewed with district personnel. It is our intent not to revise any schedules without consultation with the affected district. We understand the Planning Division is in the process of revising programming procedures to more closely match available funding. This change will basically allocate funds to the district which will be closely monitored to minimize changes and insure equitable allocation of funding between districts and equitable expenditure of those funds during a fiscal year.

(3) The Nine-Month Letting Schedule will be replaced by a rolling 12-Month Schedule which will be reviewed for compliance with each district's funding allocations and circulated monthly to the districts, divisions, and other interested parties. Changes to the 12-Month Schedule will be made as recommended by the districts.

(4) Beginning with the February 1995 letting (plans due in the Design Division central office December 16, 1994), the established cutoff date of ten weeks prior to the letting will be adhered to. Plans and proposals received after that date or projects which do not have necessary clearances will be rescheduled to the next available letting date.

(5) Projects on which all right of way has not been cleared at the time of publication of the notice of letting (5 weeks prior to the letting date) will not be included in the Notice of Letting. This will take effect with the January 1995 letting. These projects will be rescheduled for the next available letting.

(6) In addition to the right of way requirement, plans submitted to the Design Division central office should be ready for processing and letting, including clearance of utilities, permits, agreements, bridge design, archaeological and environmental matters or any other documents necessary to let the project. Clearance of utilities means the actual utility moves must be accomplished or in progress and written assurance submitted by the district that completion of utility adjustments will in no way affect the progress of the project. In some select cases, a one month delay of notice to proceed may satisfy this request.

We believe that these changes will help reduce some of the turbulence that we have been experiencing in scheduling and should make project scheduling easier and more responsive to district priorities. The central office is available

for consultation and assistance with the necessary coordination that is required to prepare a project for letting.

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