



# ACEC-NH/NHDOT Highway Design Sub-Committee



NHDOT  
Virtual  
November 10, 2020  
8:00 am – 9:30 am

## Meeting Minutes

### Attendees:

Jim Marshall, NHDOT (Chair)	Brian Colburn, MJ (Vice Chair)
Tobey Reynolds, NHDOT	Ben Martin, VHB
Leah Savage, NHDOT	Jen Mercer, GM2
Corey Spetelunas, NHDOT (absent)	Travis Wolfel, Kleinfelder
Maggie Baldwin, NHDOT (scribe)	Clinton Mercer, Jacobs (absent)
Ron Grandmaison, NHDOT	Linda Greer, Fuss & O'Neill

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These meeting minutes are from the November 10, 2020 ACEC-NH/NHDOT Highway Design Sub-Committee Meeting.

### 1. Introductory Remarks

Maggie volunteered to be the scribe for the meeting.

### 2. Review and approve minutes – for October 13, 2020 meeting

The meeting minutes from the October 13, 2020 meeting were formally accepted as final, with incorporation of the following changes:

- a. Remove Item 5C, which inaccurately states that checklist meetings are ongoing.
- b. Revise Item 5D to read November 10, 2020, rather than December 8, 2020.

### 3. Review Highway Design Website

- a. A NHDOT/ACEC Highway Design Subcommittee link has been added to the Highway Design external webpage under “Quick Links” (<https://www.nh.gov/dot/org/projectdevelopment/highwaydesign/index.htm>). The Subcommittee webpage has been updated to include links to sub-committee meeting minutes, developed project development documents, including: the Post-Hearing Design Review Checklist (formerly the Pre-Preliminary Submission Checklist) and the Line and Grade Design Checklist (formerly the Preliminary Submission Checklist). It was agreed that documents under development, such as the Slope and Drain Checklist, Design Report template and Design Criteria Form, will be listed, but will not include a link until they are ready for dissemination. Additional discussion needs to occur on the final location of the documents as they transition from “working” drafts to final documents. Jim will work with Bill Oldenburg on creating a webpage structure that will support both the working and final drafts.
- b. It was noted that NHDOT Highway Design has not started using the checklists internally.
- c. Discussion included whether a brief description should be provided to indicate what phase the checklists should be used, and how they aligned with the old submission schedule (for

instance, the Post-Hearing Design Review Checklist is an updated version of the Pre-Preliminary Submission Checklist, which, despite its name, was a final design phase checklist). Jim noted that a description of the “end game”, what we as a Subcommittee are trying to accomplish with revision of the checklists, would be added to the webpage. Jim followed up with the development of this description after the meeting. This description is currently being modified by Subcommittee members and will be added to the website shortly.

- d. The Subcommittee agreed that the checklists should be placed in sequential order, as used during the project development process.

#### **4. Design Report Group Update**

Revisions to the Design Report template have been made through the existing conditions/data, most of which was reviewed at the previous Subcommittee meeting. The focus of today’s discussion was to solicit specific feedback on a few more significant items. Leah reminded the Subcommittee to continue reviewing the draft sections that were sent out previously and to email any comments to her. Specific discussion items included the following:

- a. Horizontal and Vertical Alignment Tables – the Maine template included tables within the body of the Design Report to capture proposed horizontal and vertical alignment data. Slight revisions were made to Maine’s tables to adjust for NHDOT design processes, with an underlining principle that these tables would not get populated until a final alternative is selected. Discussion within the Design Report Group centered around this level of design detail being more suited as part of the checklist, considering some of the information/checks overlapped with line items in the checklist already. It was noted that the body of the Design Report would only capture deficiencies or constraints of the alignments, referencing the tables and the Design Criteria Form. The Subcommittee felt that there was risk in not having the table be part of the Design Report document, specifically that it may not get archived. The intent of the Design Report is to be used as a template for ALL projects, and that if a section, such as this table, is not appropriate, it would simply not get completed. After much discussion, it was decided that this table should remain within the Design Report as an appendix, and that, similar to current protocol, the deficiencies, variances or constraints would get captured in the body of the document.
- b. Traffic Report – Discussion on the Traffic Report occurred during a previous Subcommittee meeting, during which the Design Report group noted it should be reviewed and potentially developed as a template as a separate task from the Design Report. Linda indicated there were some changes occurring within ITE (Institute of Transportation Engineers), specifically the by-laws, that may affect the collaboration between NHDOT (primarily the Bureau of Traffic) and Consultants. It will be important to support long term “brainstorming” among traffic engineers (NHDOT and Consultants). When asked about other state Traffic Report templates, the response was that it’s a more universal approach, and that not much is state specific. NHDOT does have some internal documentation, which was referenced when the outline for the Traffic Report was generated by the Design Report group. If and how traffic analysis is referenced in the body of the Design Report needs to be vetted. Since traffic analysis is usually reviewed by John Butler (Highway Design Geometrics Expert, NHDOT) and Bureau of Traffic, it would make sense to engage them to see if the outline is reasonable. Maggie and Leah will follow up with John and BOT for insight and usefulness of the developed Traffic Report outline.
- c. Leah noted that the intent was to complete the Design Report template by January.

#### **5. Design Criteria Form Update**

- a. Maggie stated that she was incorporating comments from internal use and through Jen's previous review, and committed to having an update by the next Subcommittee meeting.
- b. Brian noted that he would refocus efforts on the Intersection Sight Distance part of the Design Criteria Form, and also circulate by the next Subcommittee meeting.

## **6. Line and Grade Checklist Update**

The Line and Grade Checklist was sent to the Subcommittee for review, and is ready for use as a working document. Discussion included accessibility of other internal tools, such as the guardrail spreadsheet calculation and the PowerPoint presentation template. Copies of these should be placed on the external website for access by the Consultant community, but should not be on the Subcommittee page since they were not developed by the Subcommittee. NHDOT will have further internal discussion on how to develop a comprehensive location for tools and templates, including where the final location of the checklists will reside, as previously noted.

## **7. Other Issues/Concerns/Roundtable**

- a. Design Exceptions – Tobey stated that the Design Report should steer away from suggesting that all design exceptions or variances, regardless of whether the facility is on the NHS or high speed, be approved in the same way. Currently, formal design exceptions are not typically approved in a timely manner. He indicated that the draft Chapter 3 of the Highway Design Manual lays out a reasonable process for design exceptions, which is close to how they are obtained currently. Maggie clarified that it was not the intent of the Design Report to require any design variance (informal design exception) to go through the same process as a formal design exception, rather, to look for a way to simplify the process between the various levels of approval. Linda noted that in Maine, all design exceptions are presented at a meeting, with the total process taking approximately 6-8 weeks. She stated that they meet monthly and approve exception for the 10 controlling criteria. Brian suggested approval through the design section for “low priority roads”. Tobey suggested considering a quarterly meeting schedule, if that avenue is pursued.
- b. ORD/Connect – Jim stated that Bentley training would be coming. Workspaces should be completed soon. The current task is verifying survey data process continuity.
- c. Highway Design Staff – Highway Design is still down 18 positions, and likely will continue as such until spring. Once the freeze is ended, there will still be the on-ramp in getting new hires up to speed and productive. If a stimulus plan is proposed, it would likely mitigate the hiring freeze.

## **8. Next Steps:**

- a. Follow up on underlined tasks/discussion.
- b. Next Meeting – December 8, 2020