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Issue Number 66, December 2013

State Aid E-Scene

Pedestrian/Bicycle Safety Best Practices Guidance

By: Sulmaan Khan, Assistant Project Development Engineer

A resource intended to help agencies further understand the best practices available to more safely accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists on the road system has been developed. This handbook is titled "Minnesota's Best Practices for Pedestrian/Bicycle Safety." Hard copies of this handbook were printed and mailed to all counties and State Aid cities. Additionally, an electronic version of the handbook can be found on the Traffic Safety webpage under Reference Materials.

Each safety strategy covered in the handbook provides information on the best practices, which include:

- Description and definition
- Safety characteristics
- Classification of proven, tried, or experimental
- Typical characteristics of candidate locations
- Typical costs

The best practices are all based on studies and research done. All information on the best practices are also consistent with guidance prepared by FHWA, AASHTO and NCHRP.

The best practices that are given are meant to help reduce the number of severe motor vehicle crashes with pedestrians and bicyclists. This in turn will help bring us closer to our ultimate goal of Toward Zero Deaths in Minnesota. There is no expectation or requirement that agencies implement any specific safety strategy. All implementation decisions will be made by agency staff based on consideration of safety, economic, social and political issues, and location specific considerations.

State Aid does have a limited number of hard copies of the handbook available. If you are looking for an extra copy please contact Sulmaan Khan at sulmaan.khan@state.mn.us or 651-366-3829.

PM Writer Tool

By: Gary Reihl,
Federal Aid Project Development

The PM Writer tool was taken down in June to make necessary updates and improvements to the application. Gary Reihl and Lynnette Roshell are working with IT to make the required changes and upgrades. The updated version of PM Writer is expected to be finished and available by June 2014.

In the interim, it is recommended to utilize the "Project Memo Template" located on the Environmental Forms webpage. This template has been working well, and the updated version of PM Writer will be similar to this once it is completed.

If you have any comments or ideas about the PM Writer tool, contact Gary Reihl at gary.reihl@state.mn.us or 651-366-3819.

Cost Participation Policy Update

By: Mark Gieseke, MnDOT Office of Transportation Director

The last time MnDOT's cost participation policy was revised was in 2004. Since then a lot has changed. New technologies have emerged, Complete Streets has increased the emphasis on multi-modal transportation corridors, and innovative intersection and interchange designs have rendered parts of the old policy obsolete.

The policy, now to be called the "Policy on Cost Participation for Cooperative Construction Projects and Maintenance Responsibilities between MnDOT and Local Governments," will address those major changes and many smaller ones to bring the policy up-to-date.

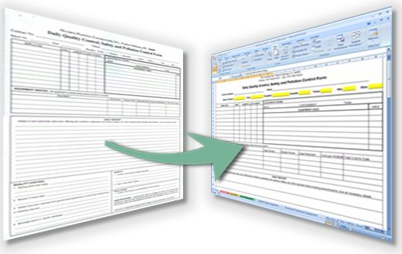
The goal of the update was just that, to be an update and not a complete rewrite of the policy. MnDOT's Office of Transportation System Management reached out to both internal and external users of the policy to find out what was not working, what was missing, and what had become out-of-date. City and county issues were discussed at each of the fall pre-screening board meetings.

Some of the key issue identified are:

- Federal and state funding sources and programs have changed
- The policy did not address the Complete Streets philosophy
- Responsibilities for sharing infrastructure were not always clear
- New technologies were not covered, especially in signals and lighting maintenance
- Innovative intersection designs such as roundabouts and diverging diamonds did not fit current cost splitting methods
- Special funding programs, such as the Transportation Economic Development Program had broader goals than the old policy recognized and required numerous policy exceptions

A first draft of the policy will be available in late December for review. The plan is to approve the updated policy for use in February 2014. Thereafter, the policy will be reviewed every four years, on the same cycle as the State Highway Investment Plan.

If you have any questions contact Mark Gieseke at mark.gieseke@state.mn.us or 651-366-3770.



One Office Forms

By: Kelvin Howieson,
District 3 District State Aid Engineer

SALT and RT Vision have had recent inquiries regarding the differences between some of the forms currently used in One Office in comparison to documents to the newer versions on the State Aid website. Although some differences exist in the formats, the integrity and intended function of the document remains the same. One of the most important forms for many of you, the State Aid Payment Request is being supported and will be updated as changes are made.

Lastly, at this time SALT will continue to accept all documents produced in One Office.

Payment Request Completion

By: John Fox, Accounting Office, Senior

It has been brought to our attention that many counties and cities are not using the most recent State Aid Payment Request form, and that the forms are being completed incorrectly. In an effort to help elevate confusion we've created a document (PDF, 380 KB) that includes further information and tips for completing. The document also contains a link to the Forms & Resolutions webpage. It's important that you use this link when completing this form because has been updated 2-3 times this year alone and it is anticipated that there will be a couple more in 2014.

Additionally, below are some important points to remember:

- Every funding source on a project should be reported each time a payment request is submitted, as a result the first column "Total Obligated Costs" should subtotal and balance to the TOTAL of the awarded bid on the initial request, the TOTAL of work certified to date on interim requests and the TOTAL final contract value on the final request.
- All costs in the "Other Costs" section must have supporting documentation in the format requested by the DSAE that **equal** the amount of funds being requested.
- When bond eligible items are 100 percent completed and the final value is known the box should be checked stating this. You may still have funds coming and they will be paid upon final. You **will not** have your original grant reduced if there is a change in costs. This box allows leftover bond funds to be re-allocated so they are not lost.

If you have any questions contact John Fox at 651-366-4854 or john.fox@state.mn.us.

Advertising Construction Projects Online, Revised Process

By: Merry Daher, State Aid Program Engineer

Recent county audits performed by state auditors resulted in findings regarding electronic advertising of construction projects. It turns out that the terminology referring to counties in the 2003 legislation allowing electronic advertising became inaccurate. The reference was revised in 2004 to change the definition.

331A.03 "WHERE NOTICE PUBLISHED" establishing web advertising in lieu of print publication was passed in 2003 in the first special session. The statute refers to a county as a "local public corporation" – the same terminology that existed in 331A.01 at the time the language was authored.

In 2004, **331A.01 DEFINITIONS** and **331A.03 WHERE NOTICE PUBLISHED** were revised to change the terminology for a county to a "political subdivision." They were passed into law during the 2004 regular session and presented to the governor May 7, 2004 and signed by the governor May 10, 2004 at 9:00 pm.

The later changes were unknown to SALT until very recently when audits at some counties resulted in findings regarding advertising for bids. One auditor wrote:

"I know we've talked about this numerous times but I think I have some better answers for you regarding advertising for bids. I believe the practice that you have been following is to advertise in the official newspaper at the beginning of the year to inform readers that the website will be used to advertise for all highway bids. After talking to the attorney's in our office who have been in touch with MnDOT, it seems that there was some incorrect guidance given in the past. Minn. Stat. 331A.12 which is the statute you have referenced in the past, doesn't apply to counties for various reasons. The first being that a county is a local unit of government, not a public corporation. MnDOT should not have been advising County's to follow this statute which they now realize. Our attorneys have indicated that MnDOT may try getting the statute changed to include local units of governments which would include county's however, this may or may not be passed, and if it is it wouldn't be until sometime in 2014. In the meantime, you should be following Minn. Stat. 331A.03 subd. 3 if you choose not to advertise for bids in the paper. What this means in that every time you go out for bids you need to publish in the paper that you are advertising for bids on a specific project and direct the readers to the website.

What we expect all future bidding to be advertised in the paper or direct the reader to the website."

The terminology in the three referenced statutes is inconsistent. This renders 331A.12 language allowing counties to annually designate and advertise projects on their website in lieu of printed newspapers, technically not legal.

Although the guidance given by SALT up until now followed the spirit of the legislation passed in the 2003 special session, it was technically incorrect due to the 2004 revisions. We apologize for this error. MCEA hopes to correct this situation in the coming legislative session, but in the meantime, we recommend all counties follow the auditor's advice above.

Employee News

Mobility: Kim Kildal from finance has accepted a one year mobility as the Assistant Budget Director of MnDOT. In her absence there will be two experienced State Aid finance staff alternating her duties. Cindy Degener will step in from 12/4/13 - 6/3/14, and after that Candy Harding will take over from 6/4/14 - 12/4/14. Contact information for Cindy and Candy can be found on Finance's Contact Us webpage.

Promotions: Since June, Shannon Geshick Bullen has been working on temporary assignment serving as our program support. We are happy to announce that her position has now become permanent. Shannon's contact information can be found on the SALT Staff webpage.

Shannon Geshick Bullen, Program Support

Redesigned SALT website launched

By: Alyssa Klossner, Website & Application Support

On October 25th we launched our newly redesigned SALT website. We redesigned the site to enhance web accessibility, viewing for smartphones and tablets, and reorganized to increase ease of navigation.

In addition to the fresh new look and feel, below includes some of the other improvements we've made.

- The homepage features a new "What's New" section. This space is used to communicate any new updates, changes or any other hot items
- Created a site map. This provides an overview (and direct links) to all the pages within the website. You can access the site map here, or find the link on our homepage under "popular links"
- Added headers and subheads, making it easier and quicker to find information
- Removed any old, out-of-date documents
- Combined a few smaller pages into a single page and added headers and subheads
- Improved the internal site search. More comprehensive searches (overall MnDOT or all State of Minnesota websites) can be accessed from the MnDOT banner (located at the very top of the page) via "Advanced Searches" or "Simple Search" links.

Questions, comments or suggestions can be sent to Alyssa Klossner at alyssa.klossner@state.mn.us.

Federal Threatened and Endangered Species Update

By: Lynnette Roshell, Federal Aid Agreement & Special Programs Engineer

On October 2nd the official "County Distribution of Minnesota's Federally-Listed Threatened, Endangered, Proposed & Candidate Species list" (PDF, 80 KB) maintained by **the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, has proposed to list ALL Minnesota counties as within the distribution range of the northern long-eared bat *(Myotis septentrionalis).*** This means that **until further notice, EVERY federal project must be cleared by either the FWS or by Jason Alcott, MnDOT's Wildlife Biologist.**

Section 7(a)(4) requires Federal agencies to confer with the FWS on any agency action that is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any species proposed for listing or result in the adverse modification of critical habitat proposed to be designated. A conference may involve informal discussions between the FWS, the action agency, and the applicant. Following informal conference, the FWS issue a conference report containing recommendations for reducing adverse effects. These recommendations are discretionary because an agency is not prohibited from jeopardizing the continued existence of a proposed species or from adversely modifying proposed critical habitat. However, as soon as a listing action is finalized, the prohibition against jeopardy or adverse modification applies regardless of the stage of the action.

The FWS is currently working on developing consultation guidance for lead federal agencies to use in making determinations of effect for this species. Until this guidance is distributed and the species officially listed, the lead federal agency must assess the potential for jeopardy. After this guidance is developed we may be able to exempt some projects from review, depending on the language of the guidance. Projects in the following counties which could recently avoid sending clearance requests to Jason now must do so again: Anoka, Benton, Blue Earth, Carver, Crow Wing, Faribault, Freeborn, Grant, Hubbard, Isanti, Kanabec, LeSueur, Mille Lacs, Morrision, Nicollet, Otter Tail, Scott,

Northern long-eared bat (Myotis septentrionalis)

Sherburne, Sibley, Stevens, Todd, Wadena, Waseca, Watonwan and Wright.

The review request is available on Environmental Forms webpage under Informational Reports.

If your project memo is already approved, Jason is not going back and reevaluate for this creature, however, if your project memo was not approved by 12/1/13, you will need to have a clearance letter from the FWS or Jason Alcott in your project Memo before SALT or FHWA . If you have any questions, contact Gary Reihl at gary.reihl@state.mn.us or 651-366-3819.

Upcoming MnCMAT Training

By: Sulmaan Khan, Assistant Project Development Engineer

SALT office will be offering another round of face-to-face training for the Minnesota Crash Mapping Analysis Tool in both St. Cloud and Shoreview. The instructors for this class will be Sulmaan Khan and Mark Vizecky.

The training sessions will cover use of the MnCMAT application, as well as discussion on the source and uses of crash data. Every attendee of the training will have a computer provided to them so you'll be able to login to the application and follow along while demonstrations are shown.

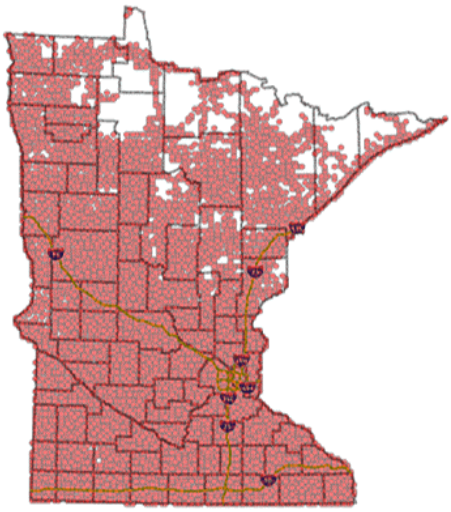
Eight training sessions will be offered, dates and times below.

To register, email Sulmaan Khan at sulmaan.khan@state.mn.us with the session date and time you wish to attend. **Registrations must be submitted by 2/4/14 for the St. Cloud session, and 3/4/14 for the Shoreview session.**

Class size is limited to 20 attendees per session. Please note, sessions may be cancelled if we have a lack of registration.

Preferences will be given to county and city traffic staff, so please submit the names of the registrations in order of registration importance. Session confirmations will be provided at a later date.

If you have any additional questions



about the class or application, email mncmat.dot@state.mn.us, or contact Sulmaan Khan at 651-366-3829 or Mark Vizecky at 651-366-3839.

Date	Location	Time
Tuesday, February 11th	MnDOT St. Cloud Training Center 3725 12th St. N. St. Cloud, MN 55303	8:30 am - 11:30 am
Tuesday, February 11th		12:30 pm - 3:30 pm
Wednesday, February 12th		8:30 am - 11:30 am
Tuesday, February 12th		12:30 pm - 3:30 pm
Tuesday, March 11th	MnDOT Shoreview Training Center 1900 County Road I West Shoreview, MN 55126	8:30 am - 11:30 am
Tuesday, March 11th		12:30 pm - 3:30 pm
Wednesday, March 12th		8:30 am - 11:30 am
Wednesday, March 12th		12:30 pm - 3:30 pm

Concrete Flatwork Specs Update

By: Ron Dahlquist, Federal Plans Specialist

The "Minnesota Concrete Flatwork Specifications for Local Agencies" (PDF, 0.5 MB) was released this last winter. Since the release some minor revisions have been proposed.

There has been some confusion on how to determine who is responsible for testing and/or who bears the cost for testing. Members of the TAP committee have reconvened and are currently working on minor revisions to provide clarity on these issues. Please note that if these specifications are carefully followed as currently written, these issues could be ironed out at the pre-pour meeting, if not before then. In any event, the TAP committee is making an effort to clarify those certain responsibilities. There will be an announcement when revisions are complete. In the meantime, you may use these specifications as is, but please try to follow the process within it. Remember that these specifications have not been approved for use on local federal aid projects or projects within the trunk highway right-of-way.

If you have any questions or concerns, contact Ron Dahlquist at 651-366-3823 or ron.dahlquist@state.mn.us.

DCP Payment Process Guidance

By: Candy Harding, State Program Administrative Principal

We are looking for your assistance and cooperation in helping improving the DCP Payment process. Our goal is to reduce processing times and get payments to you faster. As such, we've created a list to help solve problems that may hold up processing time.

Guidance for these problems include:

1) The payment voucher number on the DCP Payment Request is NOT your contract voucher number. On the DCP Payment Request input screen, if the number to the right of the Voucher Field is 2, the number you should enter is 3 regardless of the contract voucher number. **Always add one, this includes finals** and you do NOT enter the word final when you check the final box on the input screen this will put the word final on the payment request and print the final document list.

2) If you have a multiple category/group project, you MUST include a category/group breakdown (similar to the engineer's estimate) if the contract voucher is NOT setup by group. This is for each payment request, partials and finals. Keep the bid items in the same order on your vouchers and breakdowns as on the original bid estimate.

View two excellent examples (PDF, 0.5 MB) of cost breakdowns similar to the bid estimate. Use these examples as a guide. One is from One Office and the other is in a spreadsheet form. First item is the bid estimate, second item is the cost breakdown provided.

3) If the contract voucher is setup by group, but extra work items (ex. back sheet items, work orders, change orders, supplemental agreements) are not certified by group, you will need to provide a breakdown showing which groups these extra items are certified in.

4) If you have back sheet items that are lump sum items, such as Profile Summary and/or Ride Incentives, you MUST provide the backup for these items, and they must total the amounts you are certifying. If several of the sheets make up one total, you need to have these grouped (stapled/clipped) together or in a spreadsheet showing the amounts that make up the total.

5) Lump sum amounts (ex. Mobilization, Traffic Control, Erosion Control Supervisor) are commonly split percentages on a project in which the original bid estimate goes to FHWA. On your final, **these MUST be certified exactly as they were on the bid estimate.** These items rarely over run, if they do, it should be documented and certified according to the documentation.

6) On **finals and partials ALL bid items are verified against the original bid.** ALL items should be certified as they were setup on the original bid, if they are not you should have documentation explaining why an item was moved to a different group. On several projects recently engineers indicated, items were in the wrong group on the original bid estimate, if this is the case you will still need to do a change order. We expect original bids are reviewed and all items are in the correct groups at the time the project is setup.

7) Material Certification Summary on finals – if you have a deduct on this form, it should be clearly shown either in the form of a work order or change order. If it is in the line item then we need a copy of the IRA showing how the material deduction was applied.

8) The amount of your Final Acceptance Certificate should match your Total Work Certified. If it does not, it will be returned to be corrected.

8) Finally, if you have a State Aid final tied to a DCP Project, and the final does not show all the federal funds that will be paid because documentation has been submitted with the final to increase the Federal Encumbrance, you must still calculate the total federal funds being paid before completing the final SAPR. The SAPR is compared to the DCP Final and will be returned if the amounts do not match.

SRTS Solicitation

By: Mao Yang, Assistant Project Development Engineer

MnDOT is currently accepting applications for the 2015-2016 Safe Routes to School Program. Applications are due 1/31/14, and are available on the SRTS Grants webpage.

Schools may apply for two types of grants, infrastructure implementation grants or planning assistant grants.

MnDOT has $4.7 million available, $4 million in infrastructure grants and $700,000 in planning grants.

All SRTS grants are federally funded. Planning assistant grants are 100 percent funded, however, this year a 20 percent match for infrastructure implantation grant will be required.

Additionally, high schools are now eligible for infrastructure grants.

Further details about the 2015-2016 SRTS solicitation and be found in MnDOT's news release, or on the SRTS website.

Local Bridge Replacement Program Status

By: Patti Loken, State Aid Programs Engineer

The 2012 legislative session appropriated $30 million in bond proceeds from the state transportation fund for local bridge replacement and rehabilitation. This bond account is depleted and all funds are accounted for. Bridge projects submitted to the District State Aid Offices for final approval will be put on a bridge fund waiting list. If additional bridge bond funds become available through the passage of a bonding bill during the upcoming legislative session, the 2014 federal bridge projects and those on the waiting list with approved plans will have first priority for the funds.

Summary of bond funds:

- In 2012, 267 local bridges were replaced, rehabilitated or removed at a cost of $97,490,777. This included $7.1 million in federal, $23.8 million in state aid, $14.4 million in township, $7.4 million in local and $44.8 million in bond funds. Township bridges accounted for 82 of the 267 bridges. The average cost of a township bridge project was $195,374 and the average cost of a bond project was $265,876.
- In 2013, 162 local bridges were replaced, rehabilitated or removed at a total cost of $77,965,189. This included $13.8 million in federal, $13.7 million in state aid, $12.6 million in township, $6.3 million in local and $31.5 million in bond funds. Township bridges accounted for 56 of the 162 bridges. The average cost of a township bridge project was $224,665, and the average cost of a bond project was $308,430.

Town Bridge Funds in the "special" or unallocated town bridge account are also depleted. Counties do have the option of advancing regular town bridge funds or waiting until January when the apportionment from the Highway User Tax Distribution Fund is distributed to the counties and replenishes the special town bridge account.

The Bridge fund waiting list (as of 12/1/13) has 15 projects requesting $2.3 million of bond funds and $800,000 of town bridge funds.

At this time, the number of local bridges identified for replacement on the master bridge replacement priority list utilizing all funding sources for the 2013/2014 totals 737 bridges with an estimated total replacement cost of $247 million.

Agencies should update their bridge priority list annually by submitting a county board or city council resolution following the guidance and resolution format on the Local Bridge Replacement Program webpage. This information helps demonstrate the need and justification for funding the local bridge replacement program in the upcoming legislative session.

If you have any questions, please contact Patti Loken at 651-366-3803 or patti.loken@state.mn.us.

State Aid for Local Transportation
395 John Ireland Blvd MS500
St. Paul, MN 55155
http://www.dot.state.mn.us/stateaid/