

Reviewing Interstate Access Requests

Consultant Checklist

Policy Point 1: “The need being addressed by the request cannot be adequately satisfied by existing interchanges to the Interstate, and/or local roads and streets in the corridor can neither provide the desired access, nor can they be reasonably improved (such as access control along surface streets, improving traffic control, modifying ramp terminals and intersections, adding turn bays or lengthening storage) to satisfactorily accommodate the design-year demands (23 CFR 625.2(a)).”						
Addressed?			Question	Reference Location	Verified (per DOTD)	
Yes	No	N/A			Initial	Date
			Does the access request clearly describe the need and purpose of the proposal and identify project goals and objectives that are specific and measurable?			
			Is the proposal in the best interest of the travelling public, or does it serve a narrow interest?			
			Is the proposal serving a regional transportation need, or is it compensating for deficiencies in the local network of arterials and collectors?			
			In lieu of granting new access, is there any reasonable alternative consisting of improvements to the existing roadway(s) or adjacent access points that could serve the need and purpose?			
			Has the evaluation of existing interchanges and the local road network taken into account all proposed improvements currently identified in the State and/or Regional Long Range Plan?			
			Will the proposed change in access result in needed upgrades or improvements to the cross road for a significant distance away from the interchange?			

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Policy Point 2: "The need being addressed by the request cannot be adequately satisfied by reasonable transportation system management (such as ramp metering, mass transit, and HOV facilities), geometric design, and alternative improvements to the Interstate without the proposed change(s) in access (23 CFR 625.2(a))."						
Addressed?			Question	Reference Location	Verified (per DOTD)	
Yes	No	N/A			Initial	Date
			Was FHWA actively involved in preliminary studies and decisions? If not, then more detailed information may be required in support of proposed action.			
			Did the study area cover sufficient area to allow for an evaluation of all reasonable alternatives?			
			Was a No-Build Alternative evaluated?			
			Considering the context of the proposal, is this the best location for the proposed new interchange?			
			Were different interchange configurations (Tight diamond, SPDI, Parclo) considered?			
			Were pedestrians and bicyclists considered in the alternative evaluation?			
			Was there an evaluation of different intersection configurations (stop control, signal, roundabout, free right turns, etc.)			
			Have Transportation Systems Management (i.e. HOV, ITS, Ramp Metering, Transit etc.) options been evaluated as an alternative to a new or modification to an existing interchange?			
			Did the report discuss how TSM alternatives were evaluated and eliminated from consideration?			
			Does the proposal consider any future planned TSM strategies and is the design consistent with the ability to implement the future TSM strategies?			

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Policy Point 3: “An operational and safety analysis has concluded that the proposed change in access does not have a significant adverse impact on the safety and operation of the Interstate facility (which includes mainline lanes, existing new, or modified ramps, ramp intersections with crossroad) or on the local street network based on both the current and the planned future traffic projections. The analysis shall, particularly in urbanized areas, include at least the first adjacent existing or proposed interchange on either side of the proposed change in access (23 CFR 625.2(a), 655.603(d) and 771.111(f)). The crossroads and the local street network, to at least the first major intersection on either side of the proposed change in access, shall be included in this analysis to the extent necessary to fully evaluate the safety and operational impacts that the proposed change in access and other transportation improvements may have on the local street network (23 CFR 625.2(a) and 655.603(d)). Requests for a proposed change in access must include a description and assessment of the impacts and ability of the proposed changes to safely and efficiently collect, distribute and accommodate traffic on the Interstate facility, ramps, intersection of ramps with crossroad, and local street network (23 CFR 625.2(a) and 655.603(d)). Each request must also include a conceptual plan of the type and location of the signs proposed to support each design alternative (23 U.S.C. 109(d) and 23 CFR 655.603(d)).”

Addressed?			Question	Reference Location	Verified (per DOTD)	
Yes	No	N/A			Initial	Date
			Does the report demonstrate that a proper traffic operational analysis was conducted? The analysis should include the applicable basic freeway segments, freeway weaving segments, freeway ramp segments, ramp junctions and crossroad intersections related to the proposed access point and at least the two adjacent interchanges.			
			Does the report include a <i>safety</i> analysis of the mainline, ramps, intersections of the proposed access point, applicable portions of the local street network and the nearest adjacent interchange (provided they are near enough that is reasonable to assume there may be impacts)?			
			Has the design traffic volume been validated? Have all methods and assumptions to determine design traffic volume been provided?			
			Has a conceptual signing plan been provided?			
			Is guidance signing (i.e., way-finding or trail blazing signs) clear and simple?			
			Do the results of the operational analysis result in a significant adverse impact to existing or future conditions?			
			Will the proposed change in access result in needed upgrades or improvements to the cross road for a significant distance away from the interchange? If so, have impacts to the local network been disclosed and fully evaluated?			

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Addressed?			Question	Reference Location	Verified (per DOTD)	
Yes	No	N/A			Initial	Date
			Are the cross roads or adjacent surface level roads and intersections affected by the proposed access point analyzed to the extent (length) where impacts caused or affecting the new proposed access point are disclosed to the appropriate managing jurisdiction?			
			Are pedestrian and/or bicycle facilities included (as appropriate) and do these facilities provide for reasonable accommodation?			
			Does the proposed access secure sufficient Limits of Access adjacent to the Interchange ramps?	AASHTO's "A Policy on Design Standards Interstate System, 2005 Pg. 2; NCHRP Synthesis 332		
			Does the proximity of the nearest crossroad intersections to the ramps contribute to safety or operational problems? Can they be mitigated??			
			In addition to HCS, what analysis tools were employed and were they appropriate? Has the justification for use of each analysis tool been provided?			
			Has the proposal distinguished between nominal safety (i.e. adherence to design policies and standards) and substantive safety (actual and expected safety performance)?			
			Will any individual elements within the recommended alternative be degraded operationally as a result of this action? If yes, are reasons provided to accept them?			
			In evaluating whether the proposal has a "significant adverse impact" on safety, has the State Strategic Highway Safety Plan been used as a benchmark?			
			Have all changes in conflict points been documented and identified on conceptual plans? Has the impact and mitigation, if necessary, for applicable conflict points been identified.			
			Are the proposed interchange design configurations able to satisfactorily accommodate the design year traffic volumes?			
			Have all assumptions, application of engineering judgment, opinions and conclusions of analysis been clearly and separately identified?			

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Policy Point 4: “The proposed access connects to a public road only and will provide for all traffic movements. Less than “full interchanges” may be considered on a case-by-case basis for applications requiring special access for managed lanes (e.g., transit, HOVs, HOT lanes) or park and ride lots. The proposed access will be designed to meet or exceed current standards (23 CFR 625.2(a), 625.4(a)(2), and 655.603(d)).”						
Addressed?			Question	Reference Location	Verified (per DOTD)	
Yes	No	N/A			Initial	Date
			Does the proposed access connect to a public road?			
			Are all traffic movements of full interchange access provided?			
			If a partial interchange is proposed, is there sufficient justification for providing only a partial interchange?			
			If a partial interchange is proposed; was a full interchange evaluated as an alternative and is there sufficient justification to eliminate or discard it?			
			Is sufficient ROW available (or being acquired) to provide a full interchange at a future date (staged construction)?			
			Are you comfortable with how the missing movements will be accommodated on the surface streets and adjacent interchanges?			
			If not, is the proposed access for special purposes such as transit vehicles, HOV’s, and/or park and ride lot?			
			Does the proposed access meet or exceed current design standards for the Interstate System?	AASHTO’s Greenbook and A Policy on Design Standards Interstate System, 2005		
			If not, have anticipated design exceptions been identified and reviewed (at least conceptually)?			
			If expected design exceptions could have significant operational impacts on the Interstate and/or Crossroad system, are mitigation measures described?			
			If expected design exceptions could have significant safety impacts on the Interstate and/or Crossroad system, are mitigation measures described?			
			Will the length of access control along the crossroad provide for acceptable operations and safety? (100-300’ is a minimum. Additional access control is strongly encouraged when needed for safety and operational enhancement)	AASHTO “A Policy on Design Standards Interstate System” 2005		

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Addressed?			Question	Reference Location	Verified (per DOTD)	
Yes	No	N/A			Initial	Date
			Have all design criteria (including but not limited to the following) been adequately addressed?			
			a. Sight distance at ramp terminals (Do not overlook signal heads obscured by structures.)	AASHTO Greenbook 2004 Pg. 841		
			b. Sufficient storage on ramp to prevent queues from spilling on to the Interstate (based on current and/or future projected traffic demand)			
			c. Vertical clearance			
			d. Pedestrian access through the interchange			
			e. Length of accel/decel lanes			
			f. Length of tapers			
			g. Spacing between ramps			
			h. Lane continuity			
			i. Lane balance			
			j. Uniformity in interchange design and operational patterns (i.e. right-side ramps, exit design consistent w/ adjacent interchanges)			
			Has each movement of the proposal been "tested" for ease of operation?			

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Policy Point 5: "The proposal considers and is consistent with local and regional land use and transportation plans. Prior to receiving final approval, all requests for new or revised access must be included in an adopted Metropolitan Transportation Plan, in the adopted Statewide or Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (STIP or TIP), and the Congestion Management Process within transportation management areas, as appropriate, and as specified in 23 CFR part 450, and the transportation conformity requirements of 40 CFR parts 51 and 93."						
Addressed?			Question	Reference Location	Verified (per DOTD)	
Yes	No	N/A			Initial	Date
			Does the IJR discuss or include (as appropriate) other project(s), studies or planned actions that may have an effect on the report analysis results?			
			Does the project conform to the local planning, MPO and/or other related plans?			
			Is the access request located within a <i>Transportation Management Areas? (TMA's are metropolitan areas of 200,000 or more in population)</i>	http://hepgis.fhwa.dot.gov/hepgis_v2/UrbanBoundaries/Map.aspx		
			Is the access request located within a non-attainment area for air quality? (<i>requests for access in a non-attainment or maintenance areas for air quality must be a part of a conforming transportation plan</i>)			
			Is the project included in the TIP/STIP and LRTP?			
			Is the access point covered as a part of an Interstate corridor study or plan? (<i>especially important for areas where the potential exists for construction of future adjacent interchanges</i>)			
			If the project is to be built in stages, are follow – on stages included in the STIP? (<i>may demonstrate a commitment on the part of the requestor</i>)			
			If the project is to be built in stages, are the funding commitments consistent with state and local government transportation plans?			

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Policy Point 6: "In corridors where the potential exists for future multiple interchange additions, a comprehensive corridor or network study must accompany all requests for new or revised access with recommendations that address all of the proposed and desired access changes within the context of a longer-range system or network plan (23 U.S.C. 109(d), 23 CFR 625.2(a), 655.603(d), and 771.111)."						
Addressed?			Question	Reference Location	Verified (per DOTD)	
Yes	No	N/A			Initial	Date
			Does the report include a corridor or network study? If not, provide justification.			
			Is it possible that new interchange(s) not addressed in the IJR could be added within an area of influence to the proposed access point? (If so, could the proposal preclude or otherwise be affected by any future access points?)			
			Does the IJR report include the traffic volumes generated by any future additional interchanges within a vicinity of influence that are proposed?			
			Does the IJR report fail to include any other proposed interstate access points within a vicinity of influence that are being proposed or are in the current long range construction program?			

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<p>Policy Point 7: “When a new or revised access point is due to a new, expanded, or substantial change in current or planned future development or land use, requests must demonstrate appropriate coordination has occurred between the development and any proposed transportation system improvements (23 CFR 625.2(a) and 655.603(d)). The request must describe the commitments agreed upon to assure adequate collection and dispersion of the traffic resulting from the development with the adjoining local street network and Interstate access point (23 CFR 625.2(a) and 655.603(d)).”</p>						
Addressed?			Question	Reference Location	Verified (per DOTD)	
Yes	No	N/A			Initial	Date
			Does the access request adequately demonstrate that an appropriate effort of coordination has been made with appropriate proposed developments?			
			Are the proposed improvements compatible with the existing street network or are other improvements needed?			
			Are there any pre-condition contingencies required in regards to the timing of other improvements?			
			If pre-condition contingencies are required, are pertinent parties in agreement with these contingencies and is this documented?			
			If the proposed improvements are founded on the need for providing access to new development, are appropriate commitments in place to ensure that the development with likely occur as planned?			
			If project is privately funded, are appropriate measures in place to ensure improvements will be completed if the developer is unable to meet financial obligations?			
			If the purpose and need to accommodate new development/traffic demands that aren’t fully known, is a worst case scenario used for future traffic?			
			Does the project require financial or infrastructure commitments from other agencies, organizations or private entities? Have these commitments been included in the report?			

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Policy Point 8: "The proposal can be expected to be included as an alternative in the required environmental evaluation, review and processing. The proposal should include supporting information and current status of the environmental processing (23 CFR 771.111)."						
Addressed?			Question	Reference Location	Verified (per DOTD)	
Yes	No	N/A			Initial	Date
			Are there any known social or environmental issues that could affect the proposal?			
			Is the project consistent with the current TIP/STIP and LRTP and/or proposed amendments to the plan?			
			Although the NEPA is a separate action, is an environmental overview for the proposed improvements included?			