

11.1 Purpose

The *Local Agency Guidelines* is intended to help Washington's public agencies plan, design, construct, and maintain transportation facilities. To assist agencies in accomplishing these goals, the manual describes the processes, documents, and approvals necessary to obtain Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funds to develop local transportation projects and defray their costs.

The manual is a compilation of information from many sources and is a reference source for administrative and field personnel in any governmental agency. To serve the needs of local agencies, the manual describes development requirements and outlines procedures for obtaining approval when local conditions warrant departures from adopted standards.

Local Programs is the division within the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) which serves local agencies. The Regional Local Programs Engineer, the local agency's contact person within WSDOT, is always available to assist local officials with answers to their questions about the manual.

11.2 Organization of the Manual

Using the glossary and the cross-references, readers should be able to find answers to most questions regarding procedural requirements for FHWA assisted transportation projects. The manual is organized to reflect the flow of a project through the major phases of development and to incorporate the differing developmental needs of different projects.

The manual is divided into six parts. Each part contains one or more chapters which describe the requirements for completing specific project development activities:

Chapters 11-14, Guidelines Overview, discuss:

- Describe the purpose and objective of this manual.
- Provide a list of acronyms and a list of FHWA funding programs for local projects.
- Explain the process for becoming certified to administer FHWA projects.
- Describe the procedure for coordinating local transportation programs with areawide planning agencies.
- Provide an overview of the project development process.

Chapters 11-14, Appendices, include:

- A flowchart summarizing major activities required to develop a transportation project.
- A checklist of required approvals.
- A checklist of tasks necessary to complete various project phases.

Chapters 21–28, General Project Development Processes, describe procedures which apply to all FHWA assisted transportation projects.

Chapters 31–34, Special Project Development, describe procedures essential to some types of projects but not needed on all projects.

Chapters 41–46, Design, describe design standards for obtaining design phase approvals which must be incorporated into local projects, preparation of contract documents, and contracting for construction. Some of the chapters will apply, depending on whether a project is to be administered by WSDOT or the local agency.

Chapters 51–53, Construction and Post-Construction, describe procedures for administering the project construction phase, describe procedures for closing out FHWA projects. Procedures for state and local construction administration are discussed in separate chapters.

Chapter 61, Local Agency Force Projects, describes procedures from project design approval through the closing of an FHWA project, using the agency's labor, equipment, and materials.

In each chapter, there is a general discussion section which gives background information, policy, and the rationale for the requirements. This is followed by a detailed description of requirements (procedures, documents, and approvals). In most cases, general discussion appears at the beginning of each chapter, while details of the process appear later in the chapters. Backup data, checklists, sample letters, and instructions for completing forms appear in appendices to each chapter.

11.3 Updating Process

Since FHWA funding programs and eligibility requirements frequently change, this manual is updated in April every year. If there are changes that need to be made immediately, the HQ Local Programs Office will issue a letter to all manual holders and CA Agencies. Agencies are encouraged visit the Local Programs website and sign up to receive emails notifications of updates.

Comments and suggestions for improvement of the manual are most welcome. They should be directed to the Region Local Programs Engineer, who will forward them to the WSDOT Local Programs Division where they will be considered in the next revision.