

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
BUREAU OF PUBLIC ROADS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20591

May 19, 1967

INSTRUCTIONAL MEMORANDUM 21-11-67
30-01

SUBJECT: Safety Provisions for Roadside Features and Appurtenances

The February 1967 Report of the Special AASHO Traffic Safety Committee -- HIGHWAY DESIGN AND OPERATIONAL PRACTICES RELATED TO HIGHWAY SAFETY -- is approved by the Bureau of Public Roads for use on Federal-aid highways.

Enclosed is a copy of a letter I have sent to the top administrative officials of each State highway department offering our full cooperation and assistance in applying the findings of the report to the existing Federal-aid systems beginning as soon as possible in 1967 and continuing on a large scale for as long as is necessary to provide the highest possible level of roadway safety.

The February 1967 Report confirms the provisions of IM 21-6-66, and the policy therein established is reaffirmed concerning PS&E approvals for new projects and change orders on projects now under construction. It is expected that the plans for all projects on high-speed highways yet to be advanced to contract will incorporate the features of added safety as are presented in the February 1967 Report. Where a check of the plans for projects underway reveals that features of added safety were not incorporated in the approved plans, contractual change orders to modify the applicable features in a manner which will incorporate the safer design features or extra work orders to add the safer design features are to be issued by the State highway department whenever practicable. For application of the cited safety features, high-speed highways include all projects on the Interstate System and all projects on the remaining Federal-aid Primary and the Secondary Systems where the design speed is 50 mph or more. To the extent practicable and feasible, an approved order of safety design should be utilized on Primary and Secondary projects with a lesser design speed.

On completed Federal-aid highways each State highway department is asked to establish an active corrective program to apply the findings of the February 1967 Report. Public Roads requests that all features of geometric, structure dimension and roadside element design that can effect safety of the motorist who strays from the roadway be given

careful consideration by the State. Each State should evaluate the seriousness of the existing condition as measured by the more safe conditions recommended by AASHO in the new Report and prepare its program for corrective work on previously constructed highways on the several Federal-aid systems. The most serious existing conditions should be assigned highest priority for correction. Corrections should provide the safer condition to the degree as outlined by the AASHO Report, with careful attention to not overcorrect the situation, especially when large costs would be occasioned. Attention is to be given the details of all proposed corrective work to insure that the new work does not retain a latent hazard to the motorist. Public Roads Division Engineers are to take a broad and liberal viewpoint with regard to approving programs proposed by the State highway department for work of the types described in the February 1967 Report.

As pointed out in my letter to the State highway departments, many items of the corrective work are of a nature that can be readily and economically performed by State forces. To assist in the expeditious handling and completion of this undertaking, the following procedures are established for corrective projects:

Where proposed by the State, Public Roads hereby finds it to be in the public interest to accomplish this work by use of State forces.

Projects can cover sizable lengths of highway and may cover several or all types of roadside features. For example, a project might include relocation or adjustment of signs, installation or modification of guardrail, removal of and/or protection from the varied hazardous roadside elements, etc., on as long a section of highway as may be proposed by the State.

Projects are to be programmed and authorized in the usual manner.

Project plans can be minimal, sufficient to identify the work to be accomplished and the method of its accomplishment. Prior construction plans marked to identify the work to be performed would be adequate for this purpose.

The project cost can be established on the basis of an approved State's estimate made up from agreed unit prices for the elements involved. Final payment on the basis of actual costs also is satisfactory if such a method is preferred by the State.

Projects may be constructed under the contract method administered in the usual way.

Federal-aid participation will be the usual pro-rata amount applicable for the system involved.

In carrying out the work it is of paramount importance that all of the safety provisions for performing construction under traffic be rigidly observed lest more hazard is created than is being eliminated.



F. C. Turner
Director of Public Roads

Enclosure



Lowell K. Bridwell
Federal Highway Administrator

MAY 8 - 1967

Dear :

By means of this letter, I call to your attention the recently issued American Association of State Highway Officials report entitled "Highway Design and Operational Practices Related to Highway Safety". The Bureau of Public Roads concurs fully in the report's recommendations and conclusions and considers it to be one of the most important documents ever developed by the joint efforts of the Bureau of Public Roads and AASHO. We wish to assist every State highway department in applying its findings beginning as soon as possible in 1967 and continuing on a large scale for as long as is necessary to provide the highest possible level of roadway safety on the Federal-aid highway systems. We pledge to you such assistance as is necessary to allow the State highway departments to plan and program the use of Federal-aid funds to expedite the accomplishment of this objective.

The report makes particular recommendations dealing with roadside hazards, which constitute a major contribution to the annual traffic toll. Work items such as are discussed in Chapter III of the AASHO document under "Roadside Design and Appurtenances" may be minor at individual spots but large when viewed on the basis of a full route. The required corrective work is of a nature that it can generally be readily and economically performed by State forces. Therefore if so proposed by a State highway department, Public Roads will find that the corresponding Federal-aid projects for use of State forces to accomplish this work are in the public interest. In accordance with statutory controls you of course know that Federal-aid funds cannot participate in costs of work classified as maintenance. But there can be participation with Federal-aid primary, secondary and urban funds in work that classifies as reconstruction, or construction; and Federal-aid Interstate funds for additional construction on previously constructed projects on Interstate System highways, and it will therefore be our purpose to permit full regular Federal-aid participation in this program, which will accelerate achievement of work of the kinds outlined in Public Roads Instructional Memorandum 21-6-66, August 1, 1966, subject "Safety Provisions for Roadside Features and Appurtenances".

There should also be continuation and acceleration of a program for the types of improvements that are described in Public Roads Policy and Procedure Memorandum 21-16, January 18, 1966, subject "Highway Safety Improvement Projects", and extensively discussed in the cited AASHO document.

A conference on this subject was held on April 25-27 with the design engineers of Public Roads. They and the division engineers are being advised that they are to assist in all possible ways toward the development and implementation of Federal-aid projects to achieve in the shortest possible time increased safety for the users of the Federal-aid highways.

The Bureau is placing its full support and resources behind a concentrated major effort to implement the recommendations of the AASHO report and I earnestly solicit your own support in this joint effort. I therefore urge you as the Chief Administrative Officer of your State highway department to examine fully the recommendations of the AASHO report to determine from a safety viewpoint those features of existing highways which constitute hazards to highway users; and to establish an active corrective program along the lines which the report suggests.

I know of course that each of you has a staggering list of needed work, both with and without Federal-aid funds. However, I consider that available Federal-aid highway funds can be put to no better or more urgent use today than in the very prompt initiation of a broad program to increase the safety of public highways. Conscientious and special personal attention to such a program is not only our responsibility; but at the same time it is an opportunity to perform a humane public service, and to demonstrate once again that we as highway officials are concerned with objectives that transcend the mere movement of people and goods.

This is the first communication to you under my new title in the infant Department of Transportation. I know how busy you are and how many urgent priority items there are to claim your attention; I shall not be imposing on your time very often in this manner; but the overwhelming importance of this subject impels me to do so in this instance. We shall be sending through the normal channels such memoranda as appear necessary to aid in implementing this program; but I want you to know that our purpose will be to remove every possible hindrance to your being able to cooperate effectively in this important endeavor. We expect to provide you with the most liberalized procedural tools that we can devise under the law. I solicit your own personal support and I know that you have the same dedicated interest in this matter that we have.

Sincerely yours,

F. C. Turner
Director of Public Roads