



Federal Lands Highway
**Project Development
and Design Manual**



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Highway
Administration**

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PREFACE

The Federal Lands Highway (FLH) *Project Development and Design Manual (PDDM)* serves as the authoritative source for the current policies, standards, and guidance governing the cross-functional project development and design related activities performed by FLH Divisions and their consultants. The PDDM is also an essential guide for administrators, public officials, and other partners – both within and outside FLH – who are responsible for moving projects through the project development process.

The *core purpose* of the PDDM is to clarify the expectations for all FLH projects, ensuring the delivery of high-quality final products. It is designed to be an accessible resource that achieves the following goals:

- Provide current policies, standards, criteria and guidance for development and design of FLH projects;
- Serve as an easily accessible resource for all internal and external project participants;
- Offer a user-friendly experience with effective search and navigation tools;
- Provide immediate and direct access to approved external references; and
- Maintain credibility through frequent and systematic updates.

The PDDM focuses on policy and best practices rather than detailed procedural steps. This manual is not intended to be a technical “how to” instructional guide. Most detailed theory-specific procedures, recommended methods, and information on specific computer software are included by reference only. The *PDDM* defines FLH policies, standards and standard practices, criteria, guidance, and discretionary expectations for project development.

The FLH Discipline Champions and their respective teams prepared the *PDDM*, with assistance from engineering consultants. The FLH Discipline Champions gratefully acknowledge the contributions of all reviewers and participants who assisted in the development of this manual, including:

- FLH Division Engineers and Directors,
- FLH Branch Chiefs,
- Other FLH and FHWA Staff,
- Materials furnished by other State and Federal agencies,
- Research publications and materials furnished by the private sector,
- Consultants who contributed to the preparation, and
- Federal land management agency partners and other reviewers.

REVISIONS

See the [Revision Log](#) for PDDM transmittal notices. The following revisions have been made to the PDDM:

- [October 2025](#) – rewrote Chapter 3 *Environmental Stewardship* to become Chapter 4, *Environmental Compliance and Permitting*. Renumbered Chapter 2A *Project Management* as the new Chapter 3. Temporarily renamed Old Chapter 4 *Conceptual Studies and Preliminary Design* to “Archive 4” until the chapter content is moved elsewhere. Included the Chapter 5 Appendix with Chapter 5 as Section 5.7. Updated all Inter-chapter and outside links.
- [September 2025](#) – updated Chapter 1, *Introduction*.
- [August 2025](#) – update to Chapter 2 to reflect changes to Programs
- [January 2025](#) – general update to Chapter 10
- [March 2024](#) – new Chapter for *Project Management* (temporarily assigned to Chapter 2A pending an upcoming chapter reorganization).
- [July 2018](#) – added new Section 5.4.6 describing use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems on FLH projects.
- [March 2018](#) – update to Chapter 12
- [March 2018](#) – update to Sections 1.1.3 (Risk), 1.1.5 (Revisions and Updates), and other corrections throughout Chapter 1.
- [December 2014](#) – added new Section 10.3.8 and minor updates to Chapter 10.
- [January 2014](#) – updates to Chapter 9 and to sections of Chapter 1, 4, and 7. Links were updated in Chapters 3, 5, 6, and 12.
- [February 2008](#) – revised all chapters of the PDDM.