

# INSTRUCTIONAL MEMORANDUMS

## To Local Public Agencies



To: Counties and Cities	Date: June 12, 2024
From: Local Systems Bureau	I.M. No. 3.700
Subject: Check and Final Plans	

**Contents:** This Instructional Memorandum (I.M.) includes guidelines and procedures for preparation, submittal, and review of Local Public Agency (LPA) check and final plans for letting by the Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT). This I.M. also includes the following attachments:

- [Attachment A](#) – Check and Final Plan Guidelines
- [Attachment B](#) – Check and Final Plan Checklist ([Word](#))
- [Attachment C](#) – Check and Final Plan Process Flowchart

**Note:** If the project involves a bridge or culvert, refer also to [I.M. 3.500](#), Bridge or Culvert Plans.

### Preparation

#### Content and Format

Check and final plans should be 100% complete and shall address all comments from the Preliminary Plan review. Plans shall be prepared in accordance with [Attachment A](#) to this I.M. Attachment A provides general guidelines and instructions applicable for all types of projects. Check and final plans shall also be prepared in accordance with [Attachment B](#) to this I.M. Attachment B provides a checklist of specific items that will be reviewed by the Iowa DOT Administering Team. The Iowa DOT strongly recommends that the LPA or its consultant use both these attachments to perform an internal plan review prior to submitting the project plans to the Iowa DOT.

#### Design Guidelines

For new or complete reconstruction projects, refer to either the Iowa Statewide Urban Design and Specifications (SUDAS) [Design Manual](#), Chapter 5, for urban design guidance, [I.M. 3.215](#), Urban Design Guidelines, or [I.M. 3.210](#), Rural Design Guidelines. For Resurfacing, Restoration, or Rehabilitation (3R) projects, refer to [I.M. 3.220](#), 3R Guidelines.

Federal-aid projects that do not meet these guidelines will require a design exception or justification. The project design criteria should have already been reviewed and approved by the Administering Team, during the Preliminary Plan review. However, if the need for a design exception has arisen after the preliminary plans were submitted for review, a design exception request shall be submitted with the check plans. For more information, refer to [I.M. 3.260](#), Design Exception Process.

Even though the Iowa DOT does not review design criteria for projects funded with only Federal-aid Swap, Farm-to-Market, or Local funds; the Iowa DOT strongly recommends that LPAs properly document any design features that do not meet the current applicable AASHTO design guidelines.

### Submittals

The timely submission of check and final plans often becomes a critical point in the project development process. All submittals shall be made to the Administering Team in accordance with [I.M. 3.010](#), Project Development Submittal Dates and Information. LPAs are strongly encouraged to use the Transportation Program Management System (TPMS), Development module, for all project submittals and correspondence. When making submittals in TPMS, please upload them to the associated schedule item, mark them as submitted, and then send the Administering Team a TPMS message that a submittal has been made. Submittals shall include the following items, as applicable:

#### Check Plans

1. A transmittal letter, memo, or e-mail, including the following information (this should be sent in TPMS if being used for project):\*

- a. The project number, location, and proposed letting date.
  - b. Specific contract requirements, if requested (e.g., start date, number of working days, combined projects, etc.), including the reasons for the request.
  - c. The specific funding source(s) that will be used to pay for the project. If the project includes plan divisions, identify the funds to be used for each division. If more than one type of fund will be used for a division, specify the order in which the funding sources should be used. For more information, refer to plan division guidance included in [Attachment A](#) to this I.M.
  - d. Indication if a hydraulic or structural review is required or being requested, as per [I.M. 3.500](#), Bridge or Culvert Plans. Structural calculations shall be provided for any structural review.
  - e. Identification of any changes in the physical limits or impacts of the project from the previously approved Concept Statement, if any. This includes changes to the project termini, depth of ground disturbance, and additional impacts to adjacent properties that were not reflected in the approved Concept Statement. **Note:** The LPA is responsible to communicate these changes to the Location and Environment Bureau so that the pending or previously granted FHWA Environmental Concurrence can be re-evaluated.
  - f. If a project will be combined with another project(s) into one contract for letting, specify the other project(s).
  - g. If a bridge, culvert, or grading project does not require a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 404 permit, a statement that explains why the permit is not required.
  - h. If a bridge, culvert, or grading project does not require an Iowa Department of Natural Resources Floodplain Construction permit, a statement that explains why the permit is not required.
  - i. If the project does not disturb 1 or more acres of land, a statement that the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits is not required.
  - j. If a Federal-aid bridge or culvert project will not use epoxy-coated reinforcing steel, a waiver request as per I.M. 3.500, [Attachment A](#), Bridge or Culvert Plan Supplementary Checklist, is required.
  - k. If the project includes alternate bids for pavement types, include a copy of the life cycle cost analysis. For more information, refer to alternate bids guidance included in [I.M. 3.730](#), Innovative Contracting Procedures.
  - l. If the project will use any Developmental Specifications (DS) or Supplemental Specifications (SS), identify the specifications by number and title.
  - m. If the DS for Added Options Bidding ([DS-23002](#)) will be used, specify the contract award limit to be used.
  - n. If the DS for Best Value Alternative (A-D) Bidding ([DS-23003](#)) will be used, specify the alternative differential (D) to be used.
- \* Information that is already available in TPMS Development does not need to be repeated in the transmittal e-mail.
2. A complete set of Check Plans. These should be 100% complete and incorporate all preliminary plan review comments provided by the Administering Team and any other offices that were involved in the preliminary plan review.
  3. A detailed project cost estimate. This is accomplished by entering unit prices in TPMS for each bid item.
  4. A completed Check and Final Plan Checklist, as per [Attachment B](#) to this I.M.
  5. Special Provisions, if applicable.
  6. Design exception documentation, if a design exception is required but has not been previously requested, per [I.M. 3.260](#), Design Exception Process.
  7. A Public Interest Finding request, if required as per [I.M. 3.720](#), Public Interest Findings.

#### Final Plans

1. A transmittal letter, memo, or e-mail, including the following information (this should be sent in TPMS if being used for project):

- a. The project number, location, and proposed letting date.
  - b. Identification of any changes to the project submittal, other than those requested by the Check Plan review, that have been made to the plans since the Check Plan submittal. Please be specific. It is especially important to note any plan changes that affect bid items or the estimate reference information. Providing a separate set of plans that show all changes with highlighter or mark-up is recommended.
2. A complete set of Final Plans. These should incorporate all Check Plan comments made by the Administering Team and any other offices involved in the Check Plan review.
  3. An updated detailed project cost estimate. This is accomplished by entering unit prices in TPMS for each bid item. That information is transferred with the project to the Contracts and Specifications Bureau for preparing the bid proposal.
  4. Revised Special Provisions, if applicable.
  5. A completed Project Development Certification (PDC) ([Form 730002](#)). For more information, refer to [I.M. 3.710](#), Project Development Certification Instructions.
  6. A copy of the executed railroad agreement if work will occur on railroad right-of-way or within 25 feet of the centerline of the outermost railroad track. For more information, refer to [I.M. 3.670](#), Work on Railroad Right-of-Way.
  7. A copy of the 404 permit, if required.
  8. A copy of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Individual Permit, if required. Note: If the project is permitted under General Permit No. 2, a copy of the permit is not required. For more information, refer to [I.M. 4.140](#), Storm Water Permits.
  9. A Public Interest Finding request, if required as per [I.M. 3.720](#), Public Interest Findings.

#### Electronic Submittals

Electronic submittals are required. For more information, refer to [I.M. 3.010](#), Project Development Submittal Dates and Information.

#### Utility Coordination

In addition to submitting final plans to the Iowa DOT, final plans should also be submitted to all utilities within the project limits or corridor. For more information, refer to [I.M. 3.640](#), Utility Accommodation and Coordination.

#### Review

Plans submitted in conformance with this I.M. should be returned by the Administering Team in a timely manner with relatively few comments. If the plans do not conform to these guidelines, the review process will require more time and effort by the LPA and the Iowa DOT, which could delay the project letting.

The process for submittal, distribution, and review of project plans is illustrated in [Attachment C](#) to this I.M. As the flowchart shows, if the project involves bridge or culvert that requires a structural review, or the project requires work on an Interstate or Primary highway, the plans will need additional reviews by other Iowa DOT offices. Because these reviews may require additional time, early submittal of such plans is strongly encouraged.