

# Timeframes for Review of Functional Classification and Boundary Changes

Version: *June 2016*

## **Background:**

The Bureau of Planning and Economic Development (BPED) conducted a Lean/Six Sigma project to study the process for proposing and reviewing changes to functional classifications of urban and rural roadways. As a result of this project, BPED reached a key conclusion to develop timeframes for reviewing proposed functional classification changes, and to identify specific dates by which progress will be tracked on the reviews. Further, because proposed changes to urban(ized) areas boundaries historically accompany functional classification changes, this proposal also addresses reviews of boundary changes.

## **Purpose:**

BPED hereby proposes to incorporate procedural timelines into the process for proposing functional classification and boundary changes (referred to hereafter as function/boundary changes), in order to emphasize the importance of the process and to maintain a sense of urgency and priority for completing this work among the parties concerned. This includes, BPED, Division of Transportation Systems Development (DTSD) Regions, Local Stakeholders, and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Review of proposed function/boundary changes is an iterative process and prone to delays while one party is waiting for another party to complete its phase of the review. Whereas Accountability is one of the five strategic department MAPSS goal areas, this policy incorporates accountability into the process of completing these reviews.

## **Review Timeframes:**

First and foremost, BPED will hold itself accountable for timely review, response, and submittal of function/boundary changes. In order to coordinate function/boundary changes in a timely manner, WisDOT is instituting a 60-day review timeframe for completion of the local review for proposed changes in urban(ized) and rural areas.

BPED initiates the review process by submitting proposed changes to Region staff. This may involve some initial discussion between BPED and the Region. The review timeframe begins on the date the Region first submits proposed changes to the local entity. The review timeframe ends on the date the Region receives a completed response from the local entity.

The response from the local entity may reflect its rejection of one or more of the proposed changes. The Region and BPED staff will conduct a subsequent review and discussion in a timely manner and resubmit the proposed changes to the local entity. The 60-day timeframe begins anew with the Region's subsequent submittal to the local entity.

This iterative process will be repeated until all parties have reached concurrence on the proposed changes. On the date concurrence has been reached, BPED will record the date and initiate the approval process with FHWA.

The 60-day timeframe includes local review as described above, but not the local approval process. Local approval may commence after concurrence by the local entity, Region planning and BPED planning staff. WisDOT recognizes that each urban(ized) and rural area has its own processes for review of proposed functional/boundary changes. Local review and approval of functional classification and urban(ized) area boundary changes are discussed in a separate policy.

**Communication between Region and Local Entity:**

Consistent with current practice, the Region will communicate with the local entity/MPO regularly and as often as needed throughout the review timeframe to reach concurrence on final function/boundary changes. Region staff will submit bi-weekly inquiries to the local entity to request information as to the status of the local review, except if the local entity specifies a certain date to review the proposed changes (e.g., board or committee meeting). Further inquiries by the region staff will continue after the planned review date.

**Communication between BPED and Region:**

BPED staff and Region staff will communicate regularly, as often as necessary, throughout the review timeframe to reach concurrence on final function/boundary changes. Region staff will contact the local entity/MPO by email, and will copy BPED on any such email.

**Communication between BPED and Local Entity:**

Unless requested by DTSD Region planning staff, BPED planning staff will not communicate directly with the local entity. Region staff may request that BPED staff contact the local entity directly, to the extent that such contact might enhance local understanding of the basis for the proposed change or of the process itself.

**Concurrence**

There are two situations, although very unlikely, which can result in an inability to reach concurrence on proposed function/boundary changes by the local entity. One is a lack of response to the initial communication by Region staff, as well as subsequent repeated attempts, to engage the local entity in discussion about the proposed function/boundary changes through the end of the 60-day review timeframe. The second is the inability by WisDOT and the local entity to agree on one or more function/boundary changes, even after continued discussion between the Region and the local entity.

In either situation, BPED will forward the unresolved issue to WisDOT's DTIM and DTSD management and to FHWA for a decision on the proposed changes. Upon concurrence by DTIM and DTSD management and FHWA, WisDOT will issue a final notice to the local entity stating that the decision on the changes in question will be effective in 30 days, unless the local entity contacts WisDOT to initiate or resume discussion of the proposed changes.

WisDOT recognizes that these situations are unique and have varied impacts at the local level. Decisions on function/boundary changes will be made on a case-by-case basis, and WisDOT will make every effort to reach concurrence with the local entity on all changes before final decisions are approved.

**Annual Policy Review:**

BPED planning staff and Region planning staff will, at least once a year, review this policy at regularly scheduled meetings. BPED and Region staff will discuss the policy, and decide whether to make any changes. BPED staff will present any proposed changes to WisDOT management for approval. Once approved, changes will be reflected in the revised policy. BPED will notify local entities and FHWA that the policy has been revised and send them a copy.

*NOTE: To see how the review timeframe fits into the overall process, the functional classification and boundary update process flowchart can be found at the following location:*

[Link to Functional Classification Review Flow Chart](#)