



Interstate Access Justification Report (IAJR)

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Design Division



- **Why is Interstate Access Management important?**
- **Why is IAJR required?**
- **What is the IAJR Policy?**



Purpose

- Provide TxDOT Guidance based on FHWA Access Guide
- Provide consistent point of reference for Districts, DES, and FHWA (Tx Div)
- Improve probability and ease of acceptance by FHWA
- Clarify importance of Early coordination with DES and FHWA

Legal Background

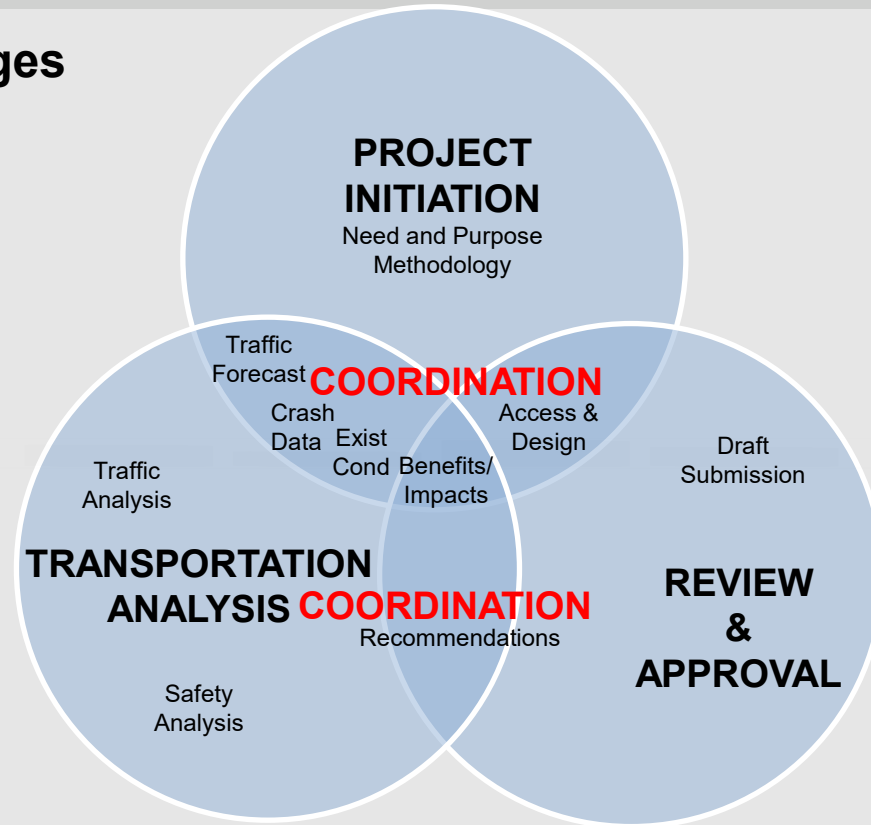
- Title 23, United States Code, Highway Section 111
 - State will not add any point of access w/o approval of Secretary USDOT
- Title 49, Code of Federal Regulation (CFR), Section 1.48
 - Secretary delegated the authority to FHWA

Policy Evolution

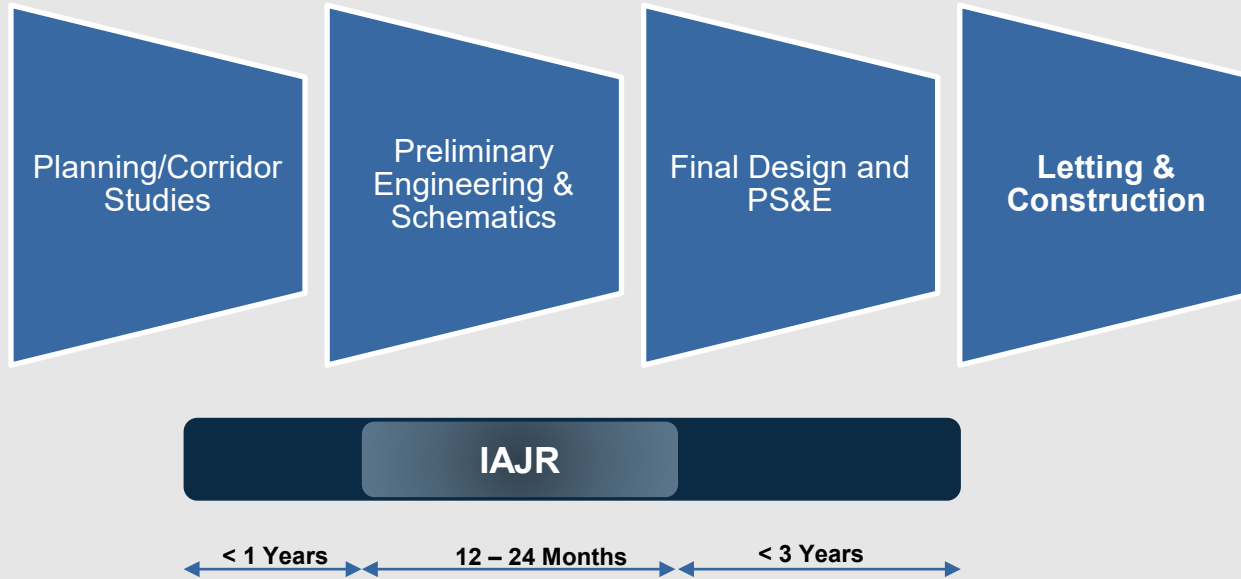
- | ➤ FHWA Policy | ➤ TxDOT Policy |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| ➤ October 22, 1990 | ➤ October 19, 2018 Memo |
| ➤ February 1998 | ➤ April 2020 IAJR SOP |
| ➤ August 2009 | |
| ➤ May 2017 | |



Key Stages

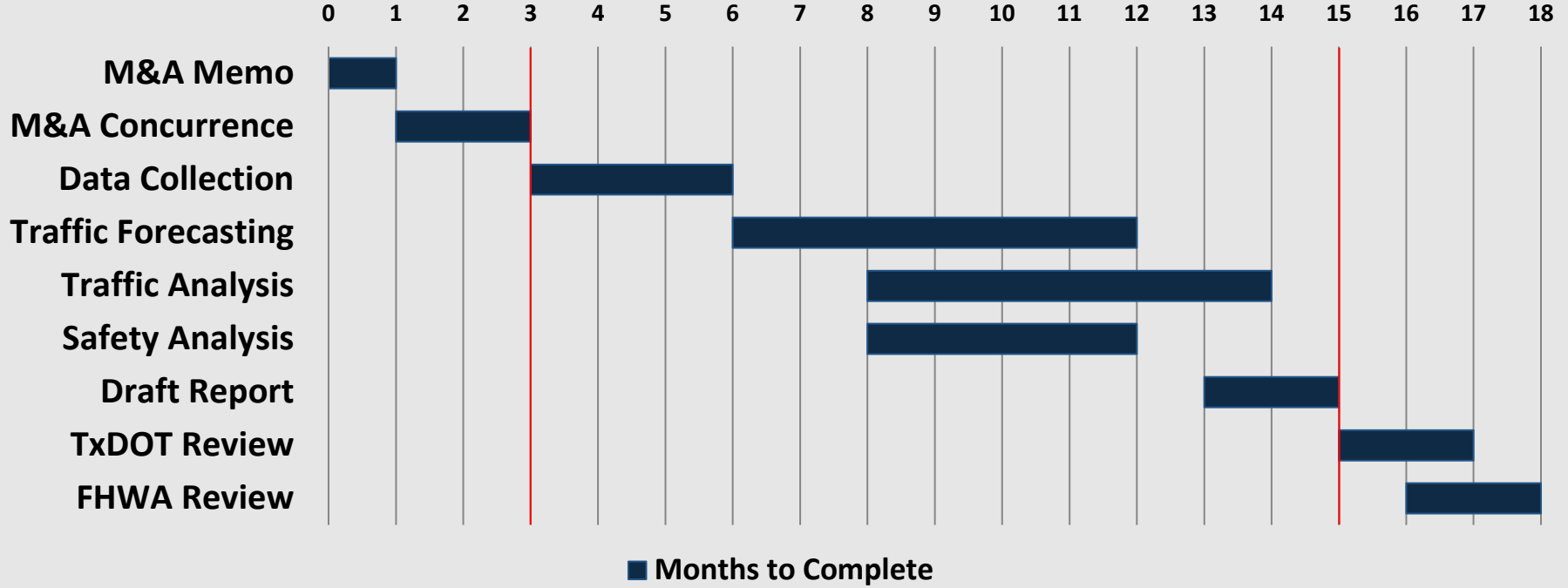


Project Development & IAJR Timeline





Typical Average Schedule





- Provides answers to commonly asked questions regarding IAJR and M&A
- Created in consultation with FHWA
- Is a ‘living document’ to be continuously updated
- FAQ can be found on DES Website (*will upload after the meeting*)



- **What is an Interstate Access Point?**
- **What is an Interstate System Access Change Request?**
- **What is an Interstate Access Justification Report (IAJR)?**
- **Why is Interstate System Access Management important?**
- **Is there a legal authority for Interstate Access Policy?**



■ What is an Interstate Access Point?

- *Each entrance or exit point on an interstate including access to collector-distributor and ramps is an access point. Access to the Interstate System is allowed only by interchange at selected public roads. Access to the Interstate System through rest areas from outside the Interstate Control access right of way is prohibited.*



- Who approves the IAJR?
- What are the requirements for an IAJR for TxDOT projects?
- Is this policy applicable to Toll Roads?
- What changes to the Interstate require FHWA review and action through an IAJR?
- What changes to the Interstate may not require FHWA review and action through an IAJR?



- **What changes to the Interstate require FHWA review and action through an IAJR?**
 - *Generally, any new or revised access to the Interstate System will require FHWA's review and action, including the following:*
 - *New interchange.*
 - *Modification of existing interchange configuration*
 - *Completion of basic movements at partial interchange, for example, completing a partial diamond interchange by adding a ramp.*
 - *Locked gate access, for example, access via locked gates for emergency response.*
 - *Access to special use lanes such as high occupancy vehicle (HOV), high-occupancy toll (HOT) or truck only lanes*



- What changes to the Interstate may not require FHWA review and action through an IAJR?
 - *Some projects may not require FHWA review and action but require coordination with DES and FHWA:*
 - *Shift of a ramp's location within the same interchange configuration, which results in ramp spacing that meets FHWA's design criteria.*
 - *Addition of lanes to an on-ramp.*
 - *Addition of a single auxiliary lane between two adjacent interchange ramps where the single auxiliary lane does not function as a mainline travel lane.*
 - *Changes in access between managed lanes and general-purpose lanes on the Interstate.*
 - *Construction of overpasses or grade separation structures without ramps along Interstate facilities.*



- **What changes to the Interstate may not require FHWA review and action through an IAJR?**
 - *For these projects neither FHWA review and action nor coordination with FHWA is needed:*
 - *Construction of new signing, striping, and/or resurfacing of an Interstate on-ramp or off-ramp, where geometric features are not changed.*
 - *Installation of roadside guardrail and concrete barriers.*
 - *Relocation of an on-ramp or off-ramp termini along the frontage road.*
 - *Addition of left-turn storage lanes, right-turn storage lanes, and through travel lanes at the terminus of existing ramps.*
 - *Improvement of traffic signals at ramp termini with local roads*



- Is this policy applicable for future Interstates?
- What is the ramp terminal intersection?
- What is the general development process for an IAJR?
- Can information developed during the NEPA process be referenced in the IAJR?
- When is an IAJR re-evaluation required?



■ When is an IAJR re-evaluation required?

If the following conditions occur an IAJR re-evaluation may be required:

a) Changes in approved IAJR design concepts

- Due to environmental impact or commitments*
- Due to final design adjustment*
- Due to design-build proposal*

b) Significant changes in the following conditions:

- Traffic volumes or traffic conditions*
- Land use*
- Environment*

c) Time lapse before construction

- If the project does not progress to construction within 3 years after FHWA approval*



- **Can the 2004 version of FHWA’s “Traffic Analysis Toolbox Volume III: Guidelines for Applying Traffic Microsimulations Modeling Software” still be used?**
- **What geometric or traffic conditions necessitate the use of microsimulation for traffic operations analysis?**
- **Why does the area of influence include the adjacent intersections and interchanges?**
- **Should data collection or traffic analysis for the IAJR proceed prior to receiving DES and FHWA concurrence on the Methodology & Assumptions Technical Memorandum (M&A Tech Memo)?**



- Can the 2004 version of FHWA’s “Traffic Analysis Toolbox Volume III: Guidelines for Applying Traffic Microsimulations Modeling Software” still be used?
 - *The recommendation is to use the latest 2019 FHWA TAT Volume III Guidelines.*
 - *However, the 2019 Guidelines require significantly more data than the 2004 Guidelines.*
 - *If sufficient data is not available or practical to collect, then coordination will be required with Design Division and FHWA to determine other options, which may include alternative methods/resources or the use of 2004 Guidelines.*



- **What geometric or traffic conditions necessitate the use of microsimulation for traffic operations analysis?**
 - *Microsimulation is generally required for projects in metropolitan areas.*
 - *The Highway Capacity Manual (HCM) is the primary tool for analysis of locations that:*
 - *are isolated,*
 - *do not require interaction between different users*
 - *do not have congestion*
 - *The HCM multi-period analysis can be used to analyze congested conditions to account for the effects of queuing in freeways.*
 - *Microsimulation tool should be considered if the following limitations to HCM exist:*
 - *Multiple bottlenecks, Systemwide oversaturation,*
 - *Complex geometry, Off-ramp queues extend to freeway*



- **Why does the Area of Influence include the adjacent intersections and interchanges?**
 - *The area of influence or AOI is defined as the area anticipated to experience significant change in operating conditions.*
 - *Typically, in urban area at least the first interchange at each end of the project is expected to be impacted.*
 - *In rural areas, the interchanges may be far enough apart from the project limits that they will not be affected by the proposed change.*
 - *The purpose is to ensure that the safety and operational impacts of the proposed change in access are adequately addressed.*



- Should data collection or traffic analysis for the IAJR proceed prior to receiving DES and FHWA concurrence on the Methodology & Assumptions Memorandum (M&A Tech Memo)?
 - *With preliminary feedback from DES and FHWA, data collection can be started concurrently with M&A development.*
 - *However, traffic analysis should start after concurrence from DES and FHWA on M&A*
 - *Note, there is some risk should there be no feedback from DES and FHWA on data collection.*



- **TxDOT IAJR SOP provide reference to Crash Recording Information System (CRIS). Can Districts or consultants download the crash data from public query?**
- **TxDOT IAJR SOP recommend Option A (Predictive Analysis) as the preferred option for safety analysis if applicable. How do we determine if Option A is applicable or not?**
- **Who should I contact if I have questions during IAJR process?**



- **TxDOT IAJR SOP provide reference to Crash Recording Information System (CRIS). Can Districts or consultants download the crash data from public query?**
 - *Crash data from the public query is available for downloading by districts and consultants and can be used for preliminary analysis and justification of the project.*
 - *However, for detailed safety analysis FHWA and TxDOT require that crash data be obtained using MicroStrategy. Data should be requested preferably from TxDOT Traffic Safety Division.*
 - *Design Division and several districts have staff authorized to use MicroStrategy who can help to extract the data.*



- **TxDOT IAJR SOP recommend Option A (Predictive Analysis) as the preferred option for safety analysis if applicable. How do we determine if Option A is applicable or not?**
 - *Option A is applicable unless limitations in HSM present weakness or flaws and can influence the outcome. Freeways with maximum number of lanes in urban areas, freeways with managed lanes, and maximum allowable AADT.*
 - *TxDOT with the help of TTI developed simple spreadsheet-based tools that addresses some of these limitations and expected to be released by February 2024.*
 - *Traffic and Safety Analysis Procedural (TSAP) Manual Chapter 6 provide guidance in determining the safety analysis approach best suited for projects.*

Questions? Feedback

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