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# FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION CHANGE PROCESS

## ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) works through the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and Regional Development Commissions (RDCs) across the state to assign functional classification to roadways and to maintain the classifications within the ranges allowed under federal guidelines. Comprehensive revisions to the statewide system of functional classification for Minnesota roads and highways are undertaken infrequently. However, new roads are added to the system every year, and for various reasons, changes in the classification of a particular roadway segment may be appropriate. This document describes the process for initiating and approving such modest revisions. For these infrequent, segment-based changes, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has delegated authority for final functional classification approval to MnDOT<sup>1</sup>.

## APPROVAL OF CHANGES TO FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION FOR LOCAL ROADS

Modification to the functional classification of a road segment is considered officially accepted and final upon receipt of the required MnDOT District Planner/District State Aid Engineer's signature on the change request form. The exception to this is a change of classification to Principal Arterial, which requires approval from FHWA before it is considered officially accepted.

- Changes to local non-state-aid-eligible roadways require the District Planner's signature
- Changes to state-aid-eligible roads require the District State Aid Engineer's signature.

It is the responsibility of the submitting RDC and/or MPO staff to assure that the change conforms to [FHWA's adopted Functional Classification Guidelines](#) (see Addendum 2 for more resources) and that conformance is reflected in the change request form. The RDC and/or MPO is responsible for maintaining its region's functional classification system so that it is consistent with guidelines for the classification assigned to each road segment and for the percentage range for each classification. In signing the requests, District Planners/State Aid Engineers are concurring that the change is in conformance with the FHWA Guidelines.

Should the FHWA Guidelines require further clarification, MnDOT's Office of Transportation System Management (OTSM) will serve as a technical liaison to District Planners/State Aid Engineers. Anna Pierce ([Anna.M.Pierce@state.mn.us](mailto:Anna.M.Pierce@state.mn.us)) is the current person within OTSM to contact with questions. She will notify

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<sup>1</sup> FHWA & Mn/DOT Stewardship Agreement, Planning, 2015

OTSM managers of questions or issues. Questions related to the interpretation of the Guidelines or how they were applied during the most recent comprehensive statewide functional classification update (approved in 2015) will be referred to Philip Schaffner.

OTSM will review the classification percentages by planning area (MPO or RDC) on at least an annual basis to assure that the overall system percentages remain consistent with FHWA Functional Classification Guidelines. If percentages are not within the guidelines, OTSM will work with the District Planners/State Aid Engineers and the MPO or RDC to make necessary corrections if it is determined that it is needed. This review will occur in February-March. Should an RDC or MPO report more than incidental changes, spot checks will be used to gauge need for additional review.

OTSM will also serve as the liaison with FHWA on issues related to Functional Classification reporting. The accumulated changes received during the previous 12 months will be conveyed to FHWA in March of each year, along with updated mileage tables and a brief analysis of compliance with Guideline percentages.

## **APPROVAL OF CHANGES TO FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION FOR STATE HIGHWAYS**

State Highways refer to all Interstate, US and State Highways in Minnesota. State Highway functional classification changes initiated by MnDOT will be processed and approved by the District in cooperation with the RDC and/or MPO. MnDOT will notify staff of the appropriate regional planning organization well in advance of the proposed change. In order to ensure that all data can be properly maintained, District Planners must complete a “Functional Classification Change Request” form as described below. In signing the request, District Planners are concurring that the change is in conformance with the FHWA Guidelines and that the classification percentages for the area are maintained.

- Changes to State Highways initiated by MnDOT
  1. Send the drafted “Functional Classification Change Request” form to the OTSM liaison, currently Anna Pierce ([Anna.M.Pierce@state.mn.us](mailto:Anna.M.Pierce@state.mn.us)), for review and concurrence with current guidelines.
  2. OTSM liaison return form to District Planner for signature.
  3. District Planner signs form and sends the completed “Functional Classification Change Request” form back to the OTSM liaison.
- Changes to State Highways initiated by local authorities
  - Follow the [procedures below for local roads](#).

## **CORRECTIONS TO FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION CODING IN THE MNDOT DATABASE**

MnDOT’s Linear Referencing System (LRS) is the source for all functional classification reporting and mapping from MnDOT. While every effort is made to keep data current, data errors may occur. When a district or a local

authority finds that their functional classification for a route is different than that reported in the MnDOT data, the following actions should be taken.

1. If the data error is on a non-state-aid-eligible roadway, notify the District Planner. If the data error is on a state-aid-eligible roadway, notify the District State Aid Engineer.
2. The District Planner/State Aid Engineer will contact the [OTSM liaison](#), currently Anna Pierce, about all functional classification data errors, whether on local roads or state highways.
3. OTSM liaison will determine the extent of documentation necessary to perform the data correction.
4. OTSM liaison will contact the HPMS Coordinator about the correction and forward any documentation

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## ONLINE INFORMATION ON STATUS

While a signed Functional Classification change request form represents acceptance of the change, additional information is available on the MnDOT's [Functional Classification website](#). (See Addendum 2 for more resources). This website includes:

- A link to the [MnDOT Interactive Basemap](#) (updated weekly)
- Links to reports showing the functional class mileage percentages by county and functional classification type (updated annually, links to previous years' reports will remain available)

The functional classification mileage reports coincide with the current Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) data year. Each HPMS data year is a snapshot of the LRS as of December 31<sup>st</sup>. The related functional classification mileage reporting to FHWA is completed by March of each year.

This Functional Classification website is maintained by the Transportation Data and Analysis (TDA) section within OTSM.

Scott Patnode, HPMS Coordinator ([Scott.Patnode@state.mn.us](mailto:Scott.Patnode@state.mn.us)) is the primary contact in the TDA section.

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## FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION GUIDANCE

Guidance for appropriate classifications shall come from the [FHWA Functional Classification Guidelines](#). A link to the documentation is included in Addendum 2 below.

The minimum classifications for inclusion in the Transportation Improvement Program, Area Transportation Improvement Program and State Transportation Improvement Program or in the State Aid system are Rural Major Collector and Urban Minor Collector.

## **CHANGE PROCESS FOR EXISTING LOCAL ROADS**

### **STEP 1: COUNTY OR CITY AGENCY SUBMITS A WRITTEN REQUEST TO THE MPO, RDC OR AGENCY DESIGNATED TO REPRESENT THE RDC AREA IN CASE OF AN INACTIVE RDC. THE REQUEST IS TO INCLUDE:**

1. A completed “Functional Classification Change Request” form which includes:
  - a. Road name, beginning point and ending point of request
  - b. Total mileage of the road segment
  - c. Current and proposed functional classification
  - d. Written description of the road segment
  - e. Reason for the change in classification. This is to include the conditions that have changed (traffic patterns, etc.)
    - i. Comments on the impact the change will have on the classification percentages in the jurisdiction and a plan for maintaining the required balance.
    - ii. Documentation of the initiating agency’s approval for the submittal (Council or Board action, or confirmation of delegated authority)
2. A map identifying the proposed segment change and showing the functional class of surrounding or connecting roads.

The Met Council has their own [process](#) and [form](#), which includes an area for MnDOT review.

### **STEP 2: RDC/MPO REVIEWS PROPOSED CHANGES FOR CONFORMANCE TO THE FHWA FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION GUIDELINES WITHIN THEIR JURISDICTION. IF THE REQUESTED CHANGE ABUTS AN RDC/MPO BOUNDARY, THE RDC/MPO WILL COORDINATE WITH THE ADJACENT PLANNING AUTHORITY AND LOCAL JURISDICTIONS (COUNTY/CITY) TO INSURE URBAN/RURAL CONTINUITY.**

- If approved, the representatives of the RDC/MPO board will sign and date the Functional Classification Change form.
- Metropolitan Council changes: MnDOT Metro District and OTSM liaison will review and comment on changes before they go through the committee approval process.

### **STEP 3: RDC/MPO SENDS THE FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION CHANGE FORM AND THE MAP PROVIDED BY THE REQUESTING AGENCY TO MNDOT OTSM LIAISON AND DISTRICT PLANNER/DISTRICT STATE AID ENGINEER. CONSULTATION AND REVIEW WITH THE DISTRICT STAFF AND OTSM LIAISON ABOUT THE CHANGE SHOULD OCCUR.**

- State Aid routes: send to the District State Aid Engineer.
- Non-state-aid-eligible routes: send to the District Planner.

**STEP 4: AFTER DISCUSSING THE REQUEST THE DISTRICT PLANNER/ DISTRICT STATE AID ENGINEER SIGNS THE FORM AND COMMUNICATES THE CHANGE:**

1. Scan the signed document to PDF format
2. Email the PDF file of the signed change request with the map to the following simultaneously:
  - a. City/County who initiated the request
  - b. RDC and/or MPO, as applicable
  - c. MnDOT County State Aid Needs Manager, the Functional Classification Change contact in the Office of State Aid (currently Kim DeLaRosa, [Kimberlie.delarosa@state.mn.us](mailto:Kimberlie.delarosa@state.mn.us))
  - d. OTSM Liaison: Anna Pierce, [anna.m.pierce@state.mn.us](mailto:anna.m.pierce@state.mn.us)

For changes within the Metropolitan Council's planning area: Metropolitan Council staff will send the approved change request forms and a GIS shapefile of the changes to the State Program Administrator Coordinator at Metro District, currently Michael Corbett at [michael.j.corbett@state.mn.us](mailto:michael.j.corbett@state.mn.us). The Metro District State Program Administrator Coordinator will route the changes to the MnDOT State Aid Needs Manager and OTSM Liaison.

**STEP 5: OTSM LIAISON, ANNA PIERCE, NOTIFIES THE HPMS COORDINATOR, SCOTT PATNODE, OF THE APPROVED FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION CHANGE AND LOCATION OF RECORDS. THE HPMS COORDINATOR UPDATES THE FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION RECORDS ACCORDINGLY:**

1. LRS Functional Classification field
2. Rural/Urban code if appropriate

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## **ADDENDUM**

### **ADDENDUM 1**

The Commissioner reserves the right to coordinate a future statewide Functional Classification revision periodically or in the event of a federal mandate requiring such action.

### **ADDENDUM 2**

FHWA Functional Classification Guidelines:

[https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/processes/statewide/related/highway\\_functional\\_classifications/](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/processes/statewide/related/highway_functional_classifications/)

VMT and Mileage Guidelines by Functional Classifications:

[https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/processes/statewide/related/highway\\_functional\\_classifications/section03.cfm#Toc352661308](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/processes/statewide/related/highway_functional_classifications/section03.cfm#Toc352661308)

MnDOT Functional Classification website:

[http://www.dot.state.mn.us/roadway/data/html/functional\\_class.html](http://www.dot.state.mn.us/roadway/data/html/functional_class.html)