Nebraska Department of Transportation
Roadway Design Division – Policy Letter

Policy Number: DES 20–01

Approval Date: 9/22/2020
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FHWA – Nebraska

This policy affects Roadway Design Manual: Chapter Five: Interstates, Grade Separations, and Interchanges, Section 1.D, Exhibits 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3

Minimum Shoulder Width for Interstate and Expressway (Access Only At Interchanges)

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to harmonize the shoulder widths given in the Roadway Design Manual: Chapter Five: Interstates, Grade Separations, and Interchanges, with the guidance given in the 2018 edition of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) publication A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets and the 2016 edition of the AASHTO publication A Policy on Design Standards – Interstate System.

Objectives

The primary objective is to align NDOT design policy with the Federal policy outlined in AASHTO publications noted above. This alignment of policy gives NDOT more flexibility in specifying shoulder widths for Interstates and Expressways (Access only at Interchanges) that experience a high volume of truck traffic (>250 trucks/hour). Consideration of narrower shoulders for these roadways, when appropriate, allows for narrower bridge widths, with an attendant reduction in project costs while still maintaining national standards. Bridge width is not a FHWA design criterion.

Policy

Minimum shoulder widths for New and Reconstructed projects on Interstates and for Expressways with Access only at Interchanges (Other Freeways and Expressways) shall be 4 feet left and 10 feet right (both paved) for 4-lane roadways. For the projects with a Directional Design Hourly Volume (DDHV) of greater than 250 trucks per hour, widening the shoulder width to 12 feet (paved) on the right side should be considered. Shoulder widths for 6-lane or greater roadways shall be 10 feet left and 10 feet right (both paved),

unless the DDHV is greater than 250 trucks per hour, then widening both of the shoulders to 12 feet (paved) should be considered.

**Implementation**

This policy is effective on the date it is executed by NDOT and FHWA. NDOT will approach the Board to get MDS updated, Tables 001.02C, D, I, and J.

**Attachments:**

Exhibit 5.1 Typical Section – Rural Four-Lane Divided Interstate with Depressed Median (Crowned Roadway)

Exhibit 5.2 Typical Section – Rural Four-Lane Divided Interstate with Depressed Median (Tangent Roadway)

Exhibit 5.3 Typical Section – Rural Six-Lane Divided Interstate with Depressed Median (Crowned Roadway)
Exhibit 5.1  Typical Section – Rural Four-Lane Divided Interstate with Depressed Median (Crowned Roadway)
Exhibit 5.2  Typical Section – Rural Four-Lane Divided Interstate with Depressed Median (Tangent Roadway)
