



Illinois Department of Transportation

2300 South Dirksen Parkway / Springfield, Illinois / 62764

March 25, 2019

CIRCULAR LETTER 2019-03

ENVIRONMENTAL SURVEY REQUEST INSTRUCTIONS

COUNTY ENGINEERS / SUPERINTENDENTS OF HIGHWAYS
MUNICIPAL ENGINEERS / DIRECTORS OF PUBLIC WORKS / MAYORS
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS – DIRECTORS
TOWNSHIP HIGHWAY COMMISSIONERS and CONSULTING ENGINEERS

The purpose of this Circular Letter is to inform stakeholders of an update to the instructions for submitting Environmental Survey Requests (ESRs) to the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). Local public agencies (LPAs) and consulting engineers preparing to submit ESR requests should review the instructions found on the IDOT website located at:

<http://idot.illinois.gov/doing-business/procurements/engineering-architectural-professional-services/Consultants-Resources/index>.

Conformance to the instructions and guidance will help standardize the submittal process, reduce errors, and minimize review time. Recent changes to the ESR submission process include definition of GIS shapefiles, acceptance of Google Street View images instead of photographs for buildings, and the requirement to use 40 years of age as the threshold for consideration of historic buildings and bridges.

Questions regarding submission of ESR's should be directed to your respective IDOT district Bureau of Local Roads and Streets office or [Kate Gleason](#) at 217-782-9129.

LPAs and consulting engineers should be aware that budgetary conditions have impacted IDOT's funding for ESRs. An IDOT memo on this subject is attached. It is important to allow extra time for processing ESRs at this time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S. Seck-Birhame'.

Stephane B. Seck-Birhame, P.E., PTOE
Acting Engineer of Local Roads and Streets

Attachment

cc: Jack Elston
Mike Pedigo
Jeff Scott
Arlene Kocher



Illinois Department of Transportation

Memorandum

To: Regional Engineers' and Central Office Bureau Chiefs'

From: Paul A. Loete *Paul*

Subject: Environmental Surveys

Date: March 11, 2019

The department is required by state and federal laws, rules and regulations to conduct analyses of the environmental impacts of state and local transportation projects. These studies are based on the results of environmental surveys conducted by the Bureau of Design and Environment (BDE) through the Prairie Research Institute (PRI) of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) under an intergovernmental agreement.

The department's budgetary condition has necessitated the statewide line items which fund these surveys to be reduced by 25%. The reduced funding, in and of itself, will allow less survey work to be completed, and in a less timely manner, simply due to less money being available.

Further, the funding reductions have necessitated and caused staff reductions at the PRI. UIUC's personnel policies make it difficult and time consuming to onboard replacements, if they can be hired at all. This will also further reduce the number and timeliness of required surveys which can be completed.

The natural and inevitable consequence of the foregoing will be that BDE will likely soon be unable to provide the environmental clearances and associated actions and documents required for all projects to meet established schedules in the fashion to which project proponents have become accustomed. Detailed and career project planning is required to minimize impacts.

Project proponents can help to mitigate this situation by carefully scrutinizing project schedules to determine which projects need to be surveyed, and in what timeframes. Requesting surveys for only those projects on which they are truly needed should help to limit the turnaround time on these actions.

BDE will continue to provide the environmental clearances and associated actions and documents for projects as effectively and efficiently as possible. Your cooperation in this joint effort is greatly appreciated.

cc: Paul A. Loete; Central Bureau of Local Roads; Jack Elston; OIPI
HST-70980