

**Forest Service Handbook
National Headquarters - Washington Office
Washington, DC**

**Forest Service Handbook 7709.56 – Road Preconstruction Handbook
Chapter 10 - Preconstruction Decisions**

Amendment: 7709.56-2010-1

Effective date: March 24, 2010

Duration: This amendment is effective until superseded or removed.

Superseded Directive: 7709.56, 1 thru 1.1--2, WO May 1987 Amendment 1

Approved by: Gloria Manning, Associate Deputy Chief, NFS

Date approved: March 19, 2010

Responsible Staff:

Explanation of changes: Following is an explanation of the changes throughout the directive by section.

10: Updates coding from 1-digit to recommended 2-digit coding. Makes minor technical and editorial changes throughout chapter. Adds references to road management objectives, travel analysis, and designations for motor vehicle use.

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Guidance documents lack the force and effect of law, unless expressly authorized by statute or incorporated into a contract. USDA may not cite, use, or rely on any guidance that is not available through their guidance portal, except to establish historical facts.

10.03 - Policy

This chapter provides guidance for planning activities necessary for making transportation system preconstruction decisions. Regardless of the project being proposed; whether the road construction is part of another resource project, a change in the transportation plan, or a standalone roads proposal recommended by unit engineers, the appropriate level of NEPA must be chosen and applied by the line officer before proceeding with implementation. Pre-proposal analysis, design work, and data collection may occur outside the NEPA process, but when and/or if a proposed action is developed, using this information, appropriate NEPA procedures must be followed, per FSH 1909.15.

11 - Documents

Obtain land management plans along with implementing and supporting documents. Examine the documents for relevant information that is needed to advise technical and professional engineering judgments regarding the location, survey, design, and construction of roads. Supporting documents include environmental analyses and assessments, watershed or landscape scale analyses, biological assessments and consultations, landownership status, travel analysis reports, road management objectives (RMOs) land management plans, logging system analysis reports, and motor vehicle use maps (MVUMs) showing routes designated for motor vehicle use. These documents contain resource prescriptions and requirements that encompass vegetation, range, wildlife, fisheries, threatened and endangered species, soil and water, fire and fuels, scenery, recreation, minerals, heritage resources, and special areas (wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, and so forth. See FSH 1909.12, sec. 11.15). Use the most current documents and consider the interrelationship of all resources

Direction on RMOs is found in FSM 7714 and FSH 7709.59, chapter 10. The RMOs should complement the resource management objectives contained in the documentation. The resource prescriptions and RMOs are key items used to determine road design criteria, elements, and standards. Extract the design criteria to determine the design elements and standards (FSH 7709.59, sec. 40.2) that govern subsequent location, survey, and design. Exhibit 01 illustrates the flow and relationship of decisions from land management plans to design standards.

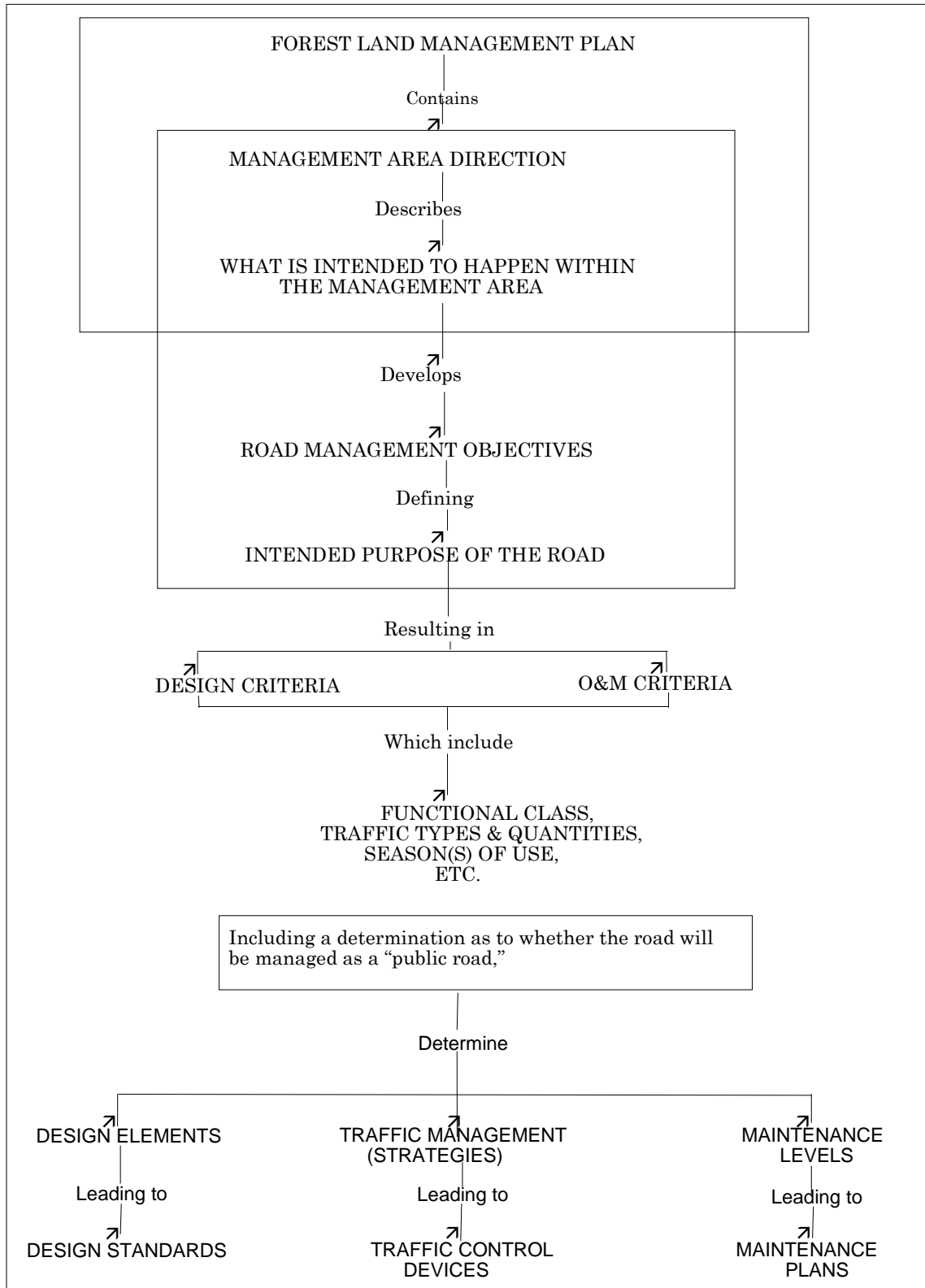
Be alert for changes in RMOs that may be specified during the life of the facility. For example, a road initially built as a low standard, local timber harvest road may be identified for other uses. Such changes can affect some location and design decisions. In the case of recreation use, consider the type and "quality" of the experience desired.

If not previously documented, prepare a summary of the relationship between the resource prescriptions and the proposed corridor that includes items such as the resource management objectives, public issues, management concerns, best management practices, permits, permit requirements, and mitigating measures.

Determine and document the anticipated survey methods and accuracy standards, design methods, and construction tolerances. Make selections that are compatible with the complexity

of the project and that consider the cost and efficiency of accomplishing the work. Follow any applicable National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements as per FSH 1909.15, if new travel management adjustments are made, and changes have not been previously analyzed in a NEPA document.

11 - Exhibit 01
Decisionmaking Flowchart



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