



Local Agency Process Reevaluation Meetings

May 25, 2010

Lamar, Colorado Community Center

Meeting Notes

Meeting Purpose

The purpose of the meeting is to solicit input from local governments to improve the administration of the Local Agency Program.

Meeting Agenda

- Opening Remarks and Introductions
- Meeting Guidelines, Existing Roles, and Agenda Review, Process overview
- Solicitation of issues, ideas and concerns regarding Local Agency Process
 - **Project Initiation Process**
 - **Project Design/Advertisement**
 - **Award of Project/Construction**
- Next Steps

Opening Remarks and Introductions

Neil Lacey, Project Development Branch, CDOT Headquarters, opened the meeting and gave an overview of expectations of the meeting and described elements that relate to the local agency processes. Neil introduced Tobilynn Erosky, meeting logistics and note taker, with CDOT and Andrea Meneghel, meeting facilitator, with CDR Associates. Andrea asked the group to introduce themselves and share one personal objective for the meeting or identify the most important issue to address during the meeting . The group stated the following:

Issues and Concerns

- There was clarification requested if CDOT's Local Agency program was focused on transportation projects, because there was a perception that it had moved away from transportation/roadway projects in this program.
- Desire to learn more about Local Agency Program and the current process.



Issues and Concerns (continued)

- Local agencies see inconsistencies between LA manual and CDOT Specifications. These inconsistencies have created problems on projects.
- Local agencies need more education and coordination with CDOT prior to application process on understanding the entire project process along with the requirements and the costs.
- There could be some improvements done regarding the use of SAP (CDOT asset management program software). It can be more effective regarding the tracking and management of Local Agency projects.
- Interested in hearing what's going on with current projects.
- The Local Agency Manual is not always clear and can be improved.

Neil introduced Federal Aid Highway Program Stewardship Agreement and talked about federal, state, and local relationship for Local Agency projects. Neil gave a brief overview of the application process and its connection to TIP/STIP process. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss how to make positive improvements to the program. The group then asked to provide input regarding the project initiation process. The discussion notes are below.

Project Initiation Process: Identify key issues and recommendations –Local Agency Manual – Chapters 1-4

- Federal Funding is not available until a project is approved. There is a lot of work required upfront by Local Agencies to prepare the application and if a project is not selected, those expended funds are not recoverable. Many Local Agencies have had difficulties providing funding for the upfront work required. One such unrecoverable fund is the hiring of an engineer or architect required to prepare project plans. Smaller Local Agencies don't always have an engineer or architect on staff and the additional cost to hire one becomes a risk the Local Agency is experiencing if the project is not selected. An inquiry was made if planning/design funds be made available for this type of pre-application activity. Can grants be limited to scope only with no pre-work required to minimize upfront costs?
- Can the upfront design costs expended by Local Agencies to submit as part of the application process be used for local match (i.e. seed money) for the project?



Project Initiation Process (continued)

- Local agencies stated that training and education at time of application process would be very helpful. CDOT's assistance to walk them through the LA Manual and project process on what is needed throughout the project would be helpful. Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) and Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) conduct grant writing workshops; suggest that a similar process be held for Local Agency projects.
- A comparison was made to the CDOT Aeronautics project process as a simple application process. Local Agencies recommended using a structure similar to this that is easy to understand and be able to design the project one year and construct it the next.
- Because of limited staff and funds, smaller Local Agencies are less likely to apply for federally funded projects. However, a checklist of what requirements would be needed for a project would be helpful for a Local Agency to assess the level of effort and allow it to make an informed decision on the level of investment it would take on. Local Agencies stated that they are often asking themselves if the federal funding granted for a project is worth the time needed for the procedural requirements that comes with it.
- Local agencies feel working with CDOT engineering for a non-CDOT project is a challenge since the Local Agencies are interested in administering projects the way they always have in the past when using their own funds. A sidewalk project is not a highway project. Local Agencies have one way to do it, CDOT has another way. Materials testing should be commensurate with the type of project and verification of quality workmanship. Does the materials tester need to be on the project all the time?
- Buildings and non-highway Local Agency projects are a challenge for CDOT as stated by CDOT. CDOT does not have the expertise on staff for buildings and would need to rely on outside expertise. Non-highway projects pose a challenge in making sure all of the required information is included and the time it takes to go through the process before the project is advertised.
- Local Agencies could use additional CDOT assistance with processes associated with the Local Agency Manual. Local Agencies stated that CDOT assistance can be used to answer questions that often occur during projects such as "what are the materials testing requirements? Is a consultant inspector or consultant project manager needed for the project? Should this be included in the total budget request?"
- If the Local Agency process takes a long time, then this process may not work for some local agencies where there is turnover in Local Government staff every few years and change in priorities.



Project Design/Advertisement: Identify key issues and recommendations – Chapters 5-7

- Can CDOT provide clear guidelines on what information and federal/state requirements have to be included in the Local Agency consultant contracts?
- It was stated that time is wasted in the back and forth dealings around contracting, and that the overall process for developing an IGA is taking too much time.
- Challenge for CDOT to administer all Local Agency projects consistently statewide. CDOT currently faces this challenge with its administered engineering projects from Region to Region. Suggest looking at revising the process for projects that don't fit the current process.
- When local agencies only work on projects every 5 years, they see surprises on certain requirements that they aren't familiar with. Refresher training from CDOT on the process would be helpful.

Award of Project/Construction: Identify key issues and recommendations – Chapters 8-11

- It would be helpful for the Local Agency Manual to employ more of a user friendly format that uses step-by-step process diagrams where possible and that clearly explains what forms are needed, their purpose, along with where they are to be submitted and to whom.
- On bidding process, locals want the Local Agency manual to clearly show consistency with the bidding "rules". Check with Richard Ott for input on getting this updated.
- On form #205, local agencies need to know process on submitting form #205. Suggested that discussion of Form 205's may be able to take place at payroll training sessions.
- Local Agencies suggested that meeting with CDOT to discuss the award of projects and construction phases during initial stages of project would be helpful to clearly understand and anticipate what is required in the latter stages. This is the most important phase (usually the funding has already been set on projects and at times there have been perceived surprises in latter stages when it is learned that additional actions are required).
- CDOT has a rigorous process on reimbursement and required cancelled check and monthly bank statement. Need a more simplified process that is similar to that of other state agencies like Colorado State Historical fund.
- Warranties – are the requirements covered in the LA Manual? Local agencies would like manual to outline warranties.



Other issues: Identify key issues and recommendations

None were raised

Next Steps

The audience expressed appreciation to CDOT for holding this meeting. They noted that this is a positive approach to working on these issues. They expressed thanks to having these meetings in order to be able to share their concerns with CDOT.

Andrea encouraged everyone to stay in communication with CDOT regarding any further questions/concerns. Additional comments can be submitted by emailing ProjectDevelopment@dot.state.co.us. The meeting summary will be posted on the CDOT website.

PARKING LOT

None

ATTENDEES:

Bea Haggard	CDOT
Mike Ulrich	Otero County
Kelly Melgoza	CDOT
Paul Westhoff	CDOT
Ron Stock	City of Lamar
Skip Ruedeman	City Council
Wiley Work	City of Lamar
Dacra Jones	PATS - Lamar
Bill Pfelsticker	City of Lamar
Kathy Finau	KSF Strategic Services
Neil Lacey	CDOT HQ, Project Development Branch
Tobilynn Erosky	CDOT HQ, Project Development Branch
Andrea Meneghel	CDR Associates