

# LOCAL AGENCY REEVALUATION TASK FORCE

## Meeting Notes

Friday, July 30, 2010

8:30am CDOT Videoconference Facilities/Teleconference

The following Videoconference Rooms were linked in to the meeting: :

CDOT Region 2 – Colorado Springs – Quail Lake Loop Office ; CDOT Region 2 – Pueblo – Creekside Conference Room; CDOT Region 3 – Grand Junction, Room 308; CDOT Region 4 – Greeley, Platte Conference Room; CDOT Region 5 – Durango, NCR; CDOT Region 5 – Alamosa Office, Videoconference Room

### Meeting Attendees

Brad Eckert	Jeff Dawson	Kurt Kionka
Art Griffith	Roger Mutz	Tobilynn Erosky
Jeff Wassenaar	Neil Lacey	Scott Brace
Jennifer Irvine	Don Scanga	Brian Killian
Nick Senn	Heather McLaughlin	Pete Graham
Rusty McDaniels	Justin Stone	David Valentinelli
Alisha Reis		

### WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS – Neil Lacey, Area Engineer, CDOT Project Development

### OPENING REMARKS – Jeff Wassenaar, Acting Project Development Branch Manager

Neil Lacey introduced Jeff Wassenaar. Jeff thanked everyone for participating and discussed the following:

- The work of this Task Force can help CDOT to find ways to work through processes and make suggestions for improvements.
- The process for ARRA projects dollars, etc. is very transparent and very significant and painful to set up. This is likely to be the model for administration and reporting for future federal surface transportation funding.
- The Task Force members should stay active and work on the “bigger” program issues that can have an impact on improving the program. .

### OVERVIEW & TASK FORCE PURPOSE – Neil Lacey

- The purpose of the Task Force is to work cooperatively and collaboratively for an approximate 6 month timeframe. This would allow 6-8 Task Force meetings.
- The 18 meetings held statewide provided the opportunity for CDOT to listen to concerns of Local Agencies. Local Agencies provided comments which were taken back by CDOT and then summarized by topics.
- Reviewed the contents of the Task Force Notebook and encouraged the Task Force members to read its contents in order to help develop strategies leading to recommendations for improving the program.
- Reviewed the following Task Force goals:
  - Recommend changes that make the Local Agency program better to manage within the Regions and less cumbersome for the Locals, yet complies with Federal and State regulations;
  - Do not add any more layers of requirements; and
  - □Emphasis on making requirements clearer, so that the process is easier.
- The Task Force should focus on specific areas identified by the meetings that are most important first.

- CDOT learned a lot with working with ARRA projects specifically in regards to Local Agency projects for monthly reporting, monthly billings, tracking projects, and timely closeout.
- As Jeff Wassenaar previously stated administration of ARRA program is a likely a model of federal program in the future.
- CDOT had problems tracking local agency projects in the past and is in the process due largely to the ARRA program of currently developing a tracking process using its SAP asset management software to improve the monitoring/tracking of Local Agency projects in the future.
- Those of you who volunteered to serve on the Task Force, brought knowledge, experience, and desire to change and improve the program. Remember why you joined and now think about what you want to see as an outcome of your efforts in serving on the Task Force.
- Some things as a group we can change and others we cannot due to the federal and state regulations.
- Changes that Local Agencies would like CDOT to make may/may not be possible due to inability to add additional resources (costs, personnel, etc.)
- Task Force members are encouraged to think creatively outside of the box. Where are areas that Local Agencies can be empowered and perhaps share risk with CDOT? How can CDOT and Local Agencies together focus on areas of risk and still remain in compliance with federal and state regulations?
- Neil Lacey's role as facilitator is to make sure work keeps going in these task force meetings and to use this time effectively. Neil will schedule all upcoming meetings, take notes, be available for questions/concerns, help with contacts on areas like ROW, change orders, etc. Meeting notes will be sent out to Task Force members for review and comment and then posted on the CDOT webpage.

### **MEETING FREQUENCY – Neil Lacey**

- Neil asked that everyone meet every three (3) weeks – he sent out a schedule using video conference rooms for the meetings. Scott Brace requested that no meetings be scheduled on Fridays.

Action Item: See revised Task Force Meeting Schedule: Proposed meeting for Friday, September 10<sup>th</sup> changed to Wednesday, September 8<sup>th</sup>.

#### Revised Task Force Meeting Dates

**Thursday, August 26<sup>th</sup>** – tied to allow Task Force members to attend DRCOG Local Agency Pre-application training on August 25<sup>th</sup>

**Wednesday, September 8<sup>th</sup>**

**Wednesday, September 29<sup>th</sup>**

**Thursday, October 21<sup>st</sup>**

**Thursday, November 18<sup>th</sup>**

**Thursday, December 9<sup>th</sup>**

**\*Thursday, January 6, 2011(\*if needed)**

**\*Thursday, January 20, 2011(\*if needed)**

## **CRITICAL TASKS & STRATEGIES – Neil Lacey**

With help from Andrea Meneghel, CDR Associates, Neil Lacey put together “Critical Tasks and Strategies” information. Neil requested everyone review this information that outlines the challenges for the Task Force from all of the 18 meetings. Neil wants everyone to focus on those issues that can add value to improving the overall program by the Task Force.

- A. The following captures the key initiatives the Task Force will be expected to undertake in order to resolve the issues raised during the statewide Local Agency Re-evaluation Meetings:

1. **Task:** Consider the appropriate level of requirements per the scope of the project.

**Strategies to address the issue:** Develop solutions for the level of requirements for on-system/off-system projects, and projects depending on overall project scope or costs; evaluate the merits of tiered level of requirements versus the ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach.

2 **Task:** Improve current program procedures for administering projects so that Local Agencies can work more effectively and efficiently with CDOT Regions.

**Strategies to address the issue:** Identify FHWA, CDOT, Local Agency needs for an effective working relationship within the CDOT Regions; also address the request for preliminary coordination meetings to set up the projects for successful implementation: when do they occur, what do they address, who is present, what decisions govern the project throughout?

3. **Task:** Reduce programmatic rigor required to assure that appropriate level of oversight is being carried out as it pertains to specific issue areas.

**Strategies to address the issue:** Ensure that issue specific solutions comply with CDOT policy and federal regulations; and that the appropriate level of oversight is compliant with regulations, risk management approach for CDOT level during construction.

4. **Task:** Develop strategies to reduce delays and expedite the implementation of projects and the overall process.

**Strategies to address the issue:** Identify ways to establish project schedules which take into account funding schedules, construction seasons, local government decision making cycles, turn-around/review times, and what project processes can occur concurrently.

5. **Task:** Identify “implementable” actions that can effectively improve the program and empower Local Agencies to successfully manage projects.

**Strategies to address the issue:** Simplify and explain CDOT forms; revise the Local Agency Manual for user-friendliness; determine training needs; and identify effective web-based resources.

### **Discussion from Group:**

There was general agreement among the members that the above listed tasks and strategies are the main issues for the Task Force to consider but not necessarily in this order of priority.

### **B. Discuss and prioritize those issues of most importance to the Task Force members**

- **Ground Rules – not everything can be changed. Federal and State regulations govern the program requirements.**
- **Suggest first focusing on those that provide biggest value and least effort (i.e. low hanging fruit)**

## Discussion from Group:

- Local Agencies expressed interest in having a tiered system where the requirements would be different from one tier to the other.
- Interest in developing a certification type process. Neil Lacey expressed concern that additional CDOT resources would likely be needed for this type of effort but it can be explored.
- Local Agencies would like to see processes shortened for specific types of projects.
- Pete Graham stated that CDOT is limited on resources and it would be hard for CDOT to manage several of these programs the way we would like to. Would like to see locals do more with limited oversight from CDOT.
- Brad Eckert expressed concern with funding cycles and how those impact the short seasons for those in mountain communities and if the timing could be changed. Would like to see a project process flowchart.
- Scott Brace wants to look into how a process can be developed for being able to swap out federal funds for state funds and what the requirements would be.
- Brian Killian discussed Policy Memo 23 and if this could be waived for Local Agency projects.
- Local Agencies wanted to work on those things that could be changed and wanted to know what those were. Concern was expressed that Task Force should consult with FHWA first on what is possible rather than going through a lot of effort and not be able to implement.

**Action: Neil Lacey asked to consult with FHWA for their input on a tiered system with different requirements. Gather information from other states and report back to the Task Force.**

- Concerns about IGA's were raised about doing a programmatic IGA with each agency and not by project, resolutions and overmatch.
- It was then suggested that the Task Force look at the summary of comments from the meetings and look at those areas by the comments provided. Neil Lacey e-mailed out the attachment below:



Summary of  
Statewide Local Agen

### **C. Need for Champions/Leaders to pursue issues further and develop strategies for suggested program improvements that can be brought back to the Task Force for discussion and further action.**

- Neil Lacey then asked about the formation of sub-groups to work on the above discussed items. The Local Agencies then stated that they wanted the work to occur at the Task Force meetings and not in meetings outside of the Task Force. Neil Lacey stated that only a limited amount of work could be accomplished at the Task Force meetings without doing work outside of these larger group meetings.
- The Task Force reviewed the Summary of Comments beginning with those that received the most and down to the least. In discussing these items it appeared that most of them had opportunities for pursuing and making some changes.

- Neil Lacey recommended that the Task Force review the attachment with the listing of the subject areas by comments and prioritize those areas that they would like to work on first.
- D. Action Item: Task Force members to prioritize those areas where they would like to work on suggesting strategies for developing recommendations and submit to Neil Lacey via e-mail by Friday, August 6<sup>th</sup>. Neil Lacey to then develop a prioritized list and send to the Task Force members. After the meeting in reviewing the meeting notes, Neil Lacey developed the Action Items listed below to facilitate the work of the Task Force for future meetings.

Action Item: [Tiered System] Neil Lacey to gather information from other states who have a process for “system” type approaches where the requirements are different from one system to another (i.e. NHS, Non-NHS etc.).

Action Item: [Certification and Acceptance] Neil Lacey to gather information from other states who have a Certification and Acceptance Program and find out information on the requirements and resources to implement this type of a program.

Action Item: [Process Flow Charts] Neil Lacey to investigate project flow charts from other states that could be used/adapted to model the typical project process that is followed here in Colorado.

Action Item: [Call for Projects] Neil Lacey to follow up with Region LA Coordinators for those Regions that have mountain communities to check with their Region planning persons for their ideas about being able to potentially alter the funding cycle at a time during the year where the design can be done over the winter and constructed during the shortened construction season the following year.

Action Item: [Other Funding Source Processes] Neil Lacey to follow up with DOLA and GOCO to see what their process is for dealing with mountain communities dealing with shortened construction season.

Action Item: [Exchange of Funds] Neil Lacey to look into what information is available from other states on developing required processes when federal funds are switched with state funds.

Action Item: [CDOT Policy Memorandums] Neil Lacey to discuss with CDOT Management the purpose of Policy Memo 23 and if it can be waived for Local Agency projects.

Action Item: [IGA's] Neil Lacey to work with Task Force members to get their questions and concerns about IGA's written down so that they can be submitted in advance to CDOT Contracts and Marketing Branch for review in advance of a meeting. This way those attending the meeting are prepared to discuss the questions if changes can be made.

## **NEXT MEETING**

Thursday, August 26<sup>th</sup> 8:30am-3:30pm

1. Discuss Pre-Application Topic based on attending DRCOG Training and Next Steps for Task Force
2. Report on action items and prioritized items.

## **ADJOURN MEETING**