

## Railroad-DOT Mitigation Strategies COI Call

### Meeting/Call Notes

**Call Date:** April 3, 2019

This call served as the final Community of Interest (COI) virtual meeting for *Railroad-DOT Mitigation Strategies* (R16). The purpose of the meeting was to: receive feedback on the recent R16 webinar (*Best Practices Related to Flagging* on March 21, 2019); discuss the status of remaining case studies; review feedback from the Annual COI Meeting on March 5-6 in Washington, DC; and provide an update on program continuation.

#### I. Participants

There was a total approximately 30 participants, including state DOTs, Class I Railroads, AASHTO, FRA, and Jacobs.

#### II. Safety Moment

Hal Lindsey presented a safety moment on safety tips for spring cleaning to kickstart the meeting.

#### III. Feedback on Flagging Best Practices Webinar

The R16 team welcomed feedback on the March 21 webinar, *Best Practices Related to Flagging*, presented by BNSF and TxDOT. This topic sparked additional questions and conversation among the COI members.

**WisDOT:** How does TxDOT contract with a third party?

**Caltrans (Response):** Outside of this call, Caltrans asked this question of TxDOT, and it is a condition of the contract that the contractor has to engage a flagging vendor approved by the railroad.

**WisDOT:** How do other state DOTs or Railroads manage the cost? If we need a flagger for dates A through B, we end up paying for the work even if it isn't done, or if it's completed sooner than anticipated.

**BNSF (Response):** BNSF has the flagging contractor provide a schedule and daily report of what was done. BNSF can prorate the cost for the exact number of days. The purpose is to incentivize the contractor to have a well-thought-out plan. From an operational standpoint, it helps the Railroad utilize its resources as efficiently as possible.

**Canadian National (Response):** It's dependent on the individual railroad or how contracts are set up with the company.

**WSDOT (Response):** To avoid overscheduling, WSDOT has established special provisions that hold the contractor responsible.

**WisDOT:** WisDOT estimates costs during the design process, but then the contractor comes in with different (higher) amounts. How do state DOTs or Railroads avoid cost overruns?

**Canadian National (Response):** On bridge projects, CN has been involved in design teams with DOTs when they are developing their bid packages. This worked well to get feedback on projected costs and flagging needs. Other approaches include: 1. Suggest a reasonable timeframe and if the work is not completed, the contractor is responsible for the additional costs; 2. Provide an at-risk allowance if the contractor completes the work within the given timeframe. This incentivizes the contractor to work as efficiently as possible.

**CSX (Response):** CSX has consolidated its territories into four single points of contact for flagging coordination. Regardless of the type of work, we are aware of the documentation needed and outlook, and can connect with the project engineer or state through the Public Projects Team.

**TxDOT (Response):** TxDOT has one railroad vendor for all three railroads. Need to ensure you have the right contact information for the vendor. TxDOT has standard specifications and a scope of work sheet that identifies the responsible party/person for scheduling, payment, etc.

#### **IV. Conversion of Flagging Webinar into Case Study**

The flagging webinar will be converted into a case study. Sherry Appel will be reaching out individually to certain DOTs (WSDOT, TxDOT) and Railroads (BNSF, CSX, CN) for more information.

#### **V. Annual Meeting Feedback**

Hal Lindsey briefly presented feedback from the Annual COI Meeting on March 5-6 in Washington, DC.

#### **VI. Update on Program Continuation**

Pam Hutton provided an update on program continuation.

- AAHSTO and FHWA are continuing discussion regarding scope of the program and funding.
- R16 has been formally adopted by the FHWA Office of Infrastructure
- AASHTO will maintain the Innovation Library through its Rail Resource Center
- The R16 team asked for volunteers to participate in a meeting on April 15 with AASHTO and FHWA. Troy Creasy (CSX), Frank Frey (FRA), French Thompson (BNSF), Connie Raezer (WSDOT), Dan Leonard (PennDOT), and Lisa Stern (WisDOT) volunteered. Others volunteered by email following the meeting.
- The R16 final implementation report will include an outline of future plans for continuing R16.
- Julie Johnston will be FHWA contact after May 8. Email: [julie.johnston@dot.gov](mailto:julie.johnston@dot.gov), Phone: 202-591-5858
- AASHTO and Jacobs expressed thanks and gratitude to the COI. WSDOT and BNSF also expressed thanks and commented on the COI's value.

#### **VII. Other Business**

No other business was brought up.