



Community of Interest Panel Discussion

DOT and Railroad Key Issues for Improved Collaboration in the Future

French Thompson, BNSF
Connie Raezer, WS DOT

March 5, 2019



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF STATE HIGHWAY AND
TRANSPORTATION OFFICIALS

AASHIO

Railroad-DOT Mitigation Strategies



- SHRP2 product: Railroad-DOT Mitigation Strategies (R16)
- Designed to improve program delivery, reduce delays, and improve communication between and among state DOTs, railroads – both Class 1s, regional rail, and short lines

Background of R16

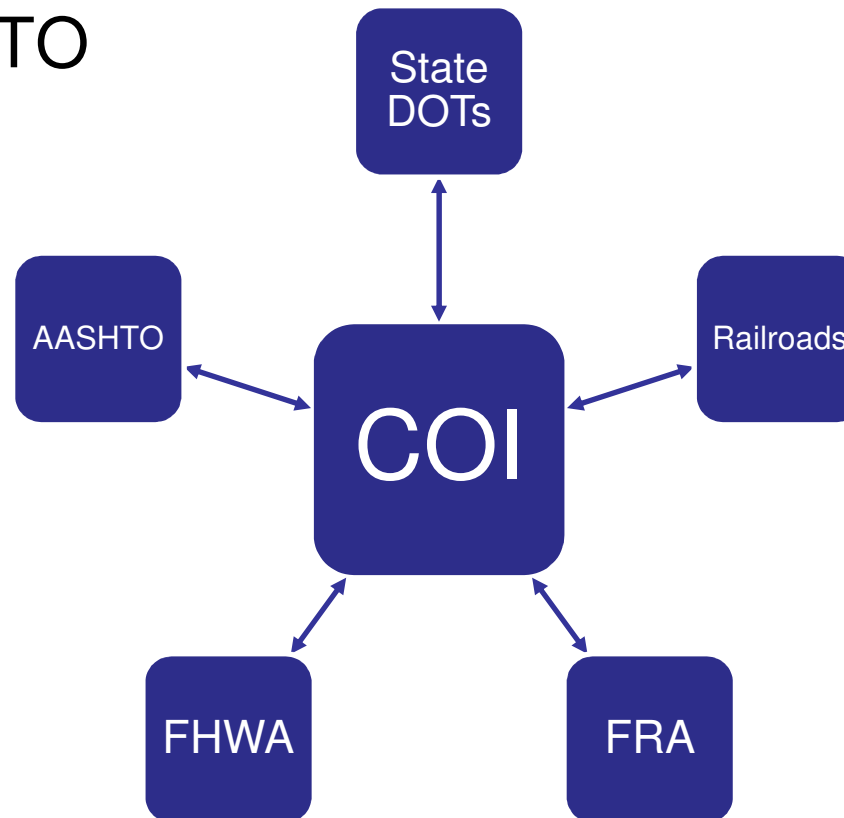
- Ranked #1 in terms of importance by state DOTs
- Offered through the SHRP2 Implementation Assistance Program and Every Day Counts
- Since 2013, 35 states, 6 Class 1 Railroads, and representatives of American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association and several regional rail/short lines have been actively engaged

Representative Achievements

- Master agreements and contract streamlining
- Maintenance Letter Agreement reduced approval time from 12 months to just a few weeks
- Workshops improved integrated processes and better communication
- Mutual aid agreement framework
- Electronic file sharing systems as possible best practices
- Design-build questionnaire as a model for others
- Online Innovations Library

Community of Interest

- Community of Interest includes 20 state DOTs, 6 Class 1 railroads, many regional rail/short line railroads and their national association, FHWA, FRA, and AASHTO



Why the COI Should Continue

- SHRP2 formally ends in May 2019
- Continued engagement is needed to address unresolved and ongoing issues such as:
 - Clarity of federal programs
 - Consistency among federal partners
 - Communication between and among all partners and COI members

Communication and Consistency

- Need for a single point of contact within FHWA and FRA.
 - Resolves:
 - Conflicting guidance
 - Notification issues
 - Section 130 interpretations
 - Role of public utility commissions (PUC) where they hold regulatory power and authority over grade crossings versus a state DOT

Communication and Consistency, cont.

- FHWA bi-annual report to Congress
- Federal obligation
- Collaboration and support for research

Policy, Legislation, and New Technology

- Definition & mitigation for “profile deficient crossings”
- Legislative requests :
 - Increase federal match for Section 130 to 100%
 - Increase close crossings limit \$100,000
 - Add replacement of functionally obsolete warning devices as eligible for Section 130 funding

Policy, Legislation, and New Technology, cont.

- National Crossing Database software
- Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CAV)
- Use of drones to safely review and image infrastructure

Contract Administration

- Contract administration guidance
- Section 130 contracting guidance
 - Funding to upgrade a previously upgraded crossing to a higher-level
 - Competitively bidding Section 130 funded projects when contractors are already under contract with a railroad for a different project
 - Contractor testing vs. independent testing
 - Holding company contracts use by an individual short line

For More Information

Product Leads

Katie Hulbert
FHWA

kathleen.hulbert@dot.gov

Kate Kurgan
AASHTO Co-Product Lead
kkurgan@ashto.org

Pam Hutton
AASHTO Co-Product Lead
phutton@ashto.org

Hal Lindsey
R16 Project Manager
hal.lindsey@jacobs.com

Panelists

Connie Raezer, HQ Railroad Liaison,
Washington DOT
RaezerC@wsdot.wa.gov

French Thompson, Director, Public
Projects and System Design, BNSF
french.thompson@bnsf.com

Web Resources

AASHTO R16 Web Page:
http://shrp2.transportation.org/Pages/R16_RailroadDOTMitigationStrategies.aspx

Innovation Library:
http://shrp2.transportation.org/Pages/R16_InnovationLibrary.aspx

Thank you!

