Minutes
Georgia Partnership for Transportation Quality (GPTQ)
Consultant Relations Committee (CRC)
March 17, 2020
Teams Video Teleconference

1. Introductions (reference Teams attendee list)

2. General information update- Hiral Patel- 3 CFR sent to FHWA for comment; NEPA, ROW acquisition, Bridge Inspection and Inventory.

- Eric Duff-NEPA
  - Council on Environmental Quality put out some proposed revisions to NEPA
    a) NEPA hasn’t had much of a change in 40 years
    b) Eager to get revisions
  - 188 pages of revisions
  - Any objections to submitted alternatives information and analysis for a final EIS would have 30 day period
    a) If you couldn’t get it in in 30 days, it was too late
    b) We concur with this part
    c) Reservations about lead agency inviting public comment on completion of draft EIS
    d) We believe agency/state DOT should be able to make that decision without having public comment
  - Time limits for completion of the NEPA process (specifically environmental assessment)
    a) Right now, asking us to complete environmental assessment in only 12 months, which is a heavy lift
    b) Fully supportive of anything that streamlines the environmental process
    c) Concern about leaving the flexibility for states to establish their own timeline…where do you start the clock of an EA?
      a. If you allow states to come up with their own starting points, probably going to have a lot of different timelines.
      b. Won’t be consistent across the transportation industry.
      c. We’d like more guidance so that it’s consistent across the country.
  - We support the deleting of cumulative effects from the NEPA document
    a) Those cumulative effects are the effects that agencies have no ability to prevent.
    b) Concern that a lot of our other laws (primarily Section 106) still contain cumulative effects
    c) Recommend that if cumulative impact is going to be deleted in NEPA, then all other laws need to be realigned
  - The proposed revisions included the ability for state DOTs to customize how public meetings & hearings are conducted
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- Our open houses have not been as successful
- GDOT is moving in that direction to try to cross the ‘digital divide’
  (some people have internet access & others do not)
- Met with FHWA
- Going to slowly start not having our traditional open houses
- Going to start sending out direct mails…trying to reach a lot more people
- Going to start creating web pages
- Want to initiate this in FY20/21

- Troy Byers – ROW acquisition
  o Summary of Comments in Response to U.S. Dept. of Transportation and FHWA request for on-line submittal of our comments on CFR 49, Part 24 (Uniform Relocation and Real Property Acquisition Act) a/k/a The Uniform Act proposed amendments as prompted by enactment of the Moving Ahead for Progress in 21st Century Act (MAP-21), Section 1521 of MAP-21 amendments to include increases in statutory relocation benefits and a reduction of length of occupancy requirements.
  o GDOT therefore produces comments as follows and for the Subparts and their respective Sections:
    o Subpart B – Real Property Acquisition
      a) 24.102 – Basic acquisition policies. Appraisal waivers. (*With increasing property values in Georgia at an average of around 4.9% per year, GDOT recommends raising the appraisal waiver limits from $10,000 to $50,000 when negotiating from an approved ROW cost estimate for uncomplicated parcels and with the ability to accept a counter offer up to the amount of $55,000. This would greatly assist with time and costs on many uncomplicated urban, suburban, and rural bridge, culvert, and passing lane projects across the state whereas after the time and costs of formal appraisals, the settlement amounts still range in average values from $10,000 to just below $50,000. GDOT is unable to take full advantage of many uncomplicated parcel projects due to these low limits and Georgia’s increasing land values. With increasing property values in Georgia at an average of around 4.9% per year, GDOT also recommends raising the appraisal waiver limits from $25,000 to $100,000 when negotiating from an approved Data Book for uncomplicated parcels and the ability to accept a counter offer up to $105,000. This would greatly assist with time and costs on many uncomplicated urban and suburban strip-take parcel projects whereas even after the time and costs of formal appraisals, the settlement amounts still range in average values from $25,000 to just below $100,000. GDOT is unable to take full advantage of the many uncomplicated parcels in our urban and suburban areas due to these low limits and Georgia’s increasing land values. This also would be more in line with our State-aid / Local-aid off-system projects program.*)
    o Subpart D – Payments for Moving and Related Expenses
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a) 24.304 – Re-establishment expenses – non-residential. *(With annual estimated inflation rates ranging from 2.1% to just over 6% (CPI) over the past 5 years, GDOT recommends increasing the limit of $10,000 to $65,000 as based on our Georgia market average of $55,000 for non-residential re-establishments.)*

b) 24.305 – Fixed payment for moving expenses – non-residential moves. *(With annual estimated inflation rates ranging from 2.1% to just over 6% over the past 5 years, GDOT recommends increasing the In-Lieu of Payment from $20,000 to $70,000 as based on our Georgia market average of $60,000 for non-residential moves and incidentals.)*

- **Subpart E – Replacement Housing Payments**
  a) 24.401 – Replacement housing payment for 180-day homeowner occupants. *(With increasing property values in Georgia at an average of around 4.9% per year; more housing demand than supply; and listings selling for an average of 2% to 5% over the listing price for “used” homes, GDOT recommends increasing the RHP from $22,500 to $75,000 as based on our Georgia market average RHP of $55,000 for rural and suburban areas, yet over $100,000 for our more urban markets.)*

- **Subpart F – Mobile Homes**
  a) 24.502 – Replacement housing payment for 180-day mobile homeowner displaced from a mobile home *(With increasing property values in Georgia at an average of around 4.9% per year; more housing demand than supply; and listings selling for an average of 2% to 5% over the listing price for “used” homes, GDOT recommends increasing the RHP from $22,500 to $75,000 as based on our Georgia market average mobile home RHP of $70,000 across the state.)*

- **Question/Comment from Chief Engineer (Georgia):** For certain payments and benefits throughout 49 CFR, Part 24, would it be feasible to tie those certain amounts set with caps to a national inflation index? The caps once set and agreed upon, would then automatically increase annually based on the annual inflation index.

- **Bill Duval – Bridge Inventory and Inspection**
  o Notice of rewrite coding and recording of bridge elements
  o Every item that we report to the Feds from national bridge inventory is coded in a certain way
  o Put together a whole new code. Kept many of the current items, but most are proposed to change. Also have added new items
  o Reached out to all the states to provide comments
  o Will take all the comments and put them together

- **ROW Cost Estimate Annual Update and Pre-qualified Consultants- Troy Byers**
  - What information is needed from prequalified consultants for GDOT contracts as well as locally-sponsored, federally-funded projects?
  - As of last year, ROW estimates should come from ROW specialist & not from
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the designer

- Engineers making ROW cost estimates weren’t taking into consideration impact damages, and other costs
- So, want to make sure that qualified personnel (from GDOT’s approved list) is making these estimates
  - Added over 80 consultants to the ROW consultant list
  - On GDOT website under ROW Services
  - Shows minimum qualifications under each discipline area
- On existing contracts, you can easily add a prequalified ROW cost estimate specialist
  - May or may not require a supplemental agreement; depends on the type of contract you have
  - For Task Order type agreement, can have a letter adding the prequalified specialist to your master agreement

3. CRC Task Force Reports (brief report out/update)

- Practical Design – Andy Casey/Allen Krivsky
  - Final phase of getting guide (PDG) out for everyone
  - Target date of April 1
  - Task force committee meeting Friday to go over internal comments
- Design-Build Delivery Task Force development- Andrew Hoenig/Tyler McIntosh
  - Scheduled to meet on Thursday
  - Will discuss scalability of RFP
  - Requirements for smaller, less-complex project versus more complex projects
  - Environmental process that we could modify for more efficiency during design-build process
- 3D Modeling Task Force development- Jonathan Langley/Sam Woods
  - No comment
- Planning & Environmental Linkage potential Task Force – Phillip Peevy/Charles Robinson
  - Next meet April 2
  - Case study reviews of 9 different states that have applied PELL
  - Gathering information on the project & more project-specific
    - Benefits
    - Challenges
    - Coordination with other agencies
  - Will be presenting on the case studies
  - Narrow down which states we want to have longer conference call to in order to get information out of them & give general outline of implementing PELL for GDOT
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- Utilities – Patrick Allen/Randy Sanborn
  o Training last month—fourth training for utility coordination
  o As demand requires it, we’ll do more
  o Probably won’t have more until Q1 of 2021 unless something else comes up

4. CRC Subcommittee Reports (brief report out)
- Bridge & Structural – Bill DuVall, George Manning
  o Met in February
  o Next meeting in April; going to push it back due to COVID crisis
- CEI – Jeremy Scott, David Graham
  o William Dunwoody is no longer the co-chair. It is now Jeremy Scott
  o Meeting last month
  o Put together comments to new proposed DBE policy
  o Will meet later this week
  o Following up with department to get CEIT test updated to match what we did with program text
  o Still looking into setting up a meeting with procurement to go over some issues we have
- Engineering Services – Erik Rohde, Scott Jordan
  o Have an estimating common errors class scheduled April 21
    a) Pushed to May 5
    b) Target audience: 0-5 year engineer
  o All plan reviews (at least until April 3) will be electronic
  o Moving forward with electronic review using BlueBeam
  o Everything being scheduled as normal
- Environmental – Eric Duff, Jordan Myers
  o None of subcommittees have met
  o Discussion with FHWA on historic bridges
    a) In the past, when a historic bridge is eligible for the national register, and contributes to the eligibility of a historic district, had to do full 4F
    b) Now able to persuade FHWA, as long as not having adverse effect to other components in the historic district, we can use programmatic for historic bridges
    c) Big change & big time savings
  o Still have to advertise historic bridges when up for replacement in case someone wants to take it
    a) Will now advertise all historic bridges coming up for replacement within the next 10 years on the website
    b) If anybody wants them, they can contact us
    c) Won’t have to stop in the middle of a project to advertise the availability of a bridge
d) Will fulfill FHWA’s requirement

- Materials – Monica Flournoy, Robert Barnes
  - No comment
- Preconstruction Awards – Tim Matthews, Kristen Kasmire
  - Everything remains the same as far as process & types of awards
  - We’ve been asked to add a new award for ROW
    - Going to ask that group to submit test projects too see how we can evaluate them
    - Rolling with how the schedule flows in a normal process
- Procurement – Treasury Young, Richard Markwith
  - Met in February & March
  - Skip April; see what’s going on in May
  - 2 active task forces
    - Reference check process & past performance scoring
    - DBE participation
  - Plan to meet Thursday morning to consider comments before policy is presented to the board to put the policy change into effect
- Program Delivery – Krystal Stovall-Dixon, Nikki Parris
  - Still working on scoping document
    - Working with some folks at GDOT
    - Trying not to duplicate efforts
  - Almost complete with guideline of things to think about & how to try to prevent/mitigate issues with schedules
    - Internal discussions to figure out scheduling issues
    - Should be finished within next month or so
- Right of Way – Troy Byers, Jody Braswell
  - Subcommittee met early March
  - Working on continuing flowchart of ROW process
  - ROW Office will post ROW 101&102 materials on the website
- Roadway Design Policy – Frank Flanders, Brad Robinson
  - Continuing to revise the drainage manual. Now that we have removed reference material, we are looking at how best to organize and index the remaining policy. Some sections may be combined or rearranged to be more concise.
  - As we are wrapping up the drainage manual revisions, we will be looking for additional topics. If anybody has anything for design policy, please email those over to Frank Flanders or Brad Robinson.
- Survey/Mapping – Benny Walden, David Simmons
  - Have not met since last meeting
  - No update
- Traffic – Andrew Heath, Sunita Nadella
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- Met twice in smaller groups to continue development of traffic analysis guidance workbook
- Met with program delivery & design policy…taking those comments back to broader subcommittee
- Next meeting scheduled today at 2pm

- Training – Kyle Mote, Robert Moses
  - 5 NHI classes scheduled for 2020 (available through NHI website & 50% off)
      a. Full for consultants
    b) LRFD for Highway Bridge Superstructures—August
    c) Practical Conflict Management Skills for Environmental Issues—Sept
    d) Urban Bridge Design—Oct
      a. Full for consultants
    e) Construction of MSE Walls in Reinforceable Slopes—Dec

5. Open Discussion
- Looking for guidance with submittals for the new COVID WFH/safety guidelines
  i. Nothing from GDOT other than what was discussed in this meeting
  ii. GDOT will keep everyone updated with any further changes
  iii. Impacts to ROW negotiations
    - Delays if we need to go to people’s homes
    - State agencies still open for business
    - Still reach out to invite the property owner to look at the property with us
    - If they choose not to, we ask to move forward
    - Should be able to meet with the property owner and maintain a safe 6+ feet
    - We have to respect the property owners’ desires
    - Delays on condemnations petitions
    - Courts will only be hearing cases of the utmost importance (like criminal)
    - We will be delayed in the court system
  iv. Direction on open houses
    - Open houses going electronic
    - Talked with FHWA about concern of many people together
    - Since we’re moving away from traditional open houses anyway, we’re allowed the flexibility to go ahead and do website & direct mails open houses
    - Some open houses may be delayed, but for the most part we will no longer have traditional open houses
  v. Direction on field plan reviews
    - All reviews between now and April 3 will be converted to email review
    - Reviewer sent out revised schedule letters to distribution lists
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- Currently, meeting scheduled after April 3 will, for now, continue as face-to-face
- Will make another assessment next week
- All been notified on individual basis if you had one scheduled within the next 2 weeks

6. Conclusion
   i. Next CRC meeting in July 21, 2020, 10:30am, MS Teams v/t/c