**AGENDA**

WSDOT/ACEC PD Team Meeting

*September 17, 2021*

*9:00am – 11:00am, Video Call*

Attendees:

## Kevin Miller/WSDOT

## Mike Fleming/WSDOT

## Lisa Reid/SCJ Alliance

## Alec Williamson/WSDOT

## Amir Rasaie/WSDOT

## Ben Hoppe/JUB Engineers

## Brian White/WSDOT Cesar Mayor/WSDOT

## Chad Hancock/WSDOT

## Chris Keifenheim/WSDOT

## Chuck Meade/WSDOT

## Daniel Babuca/WSP

## Don Sims/HNTB

## Heather Weeks/Jacobs Jeff Lavinder/Parsons

## John Donahue/WSDOT

## Larry Larson/WSDOT

## Manuel Feliberti/DEA

## Steve Olling/Parametrix

## Suryata Halim/RHC Engineering

## Mark Gabel

1. Welcome & Introduction Kevin Miller
2. Staff Updates All

* FHWA
  + Acting Division Administrator: Mindy Roberson (formerly Dan Mathis)
  + Acting Deputy Division Administrator: Susan Wimberly
  + Right of Way Program Mgr: Dave Leihow (retiring end of September)
  + Civil Rights Program Mgr: Autumn Young (formerly Jodi Peterson)
  + Financial Specialist: Chris Wiggins
  + *Area Engineer (NW Region): Angel Rivera (transition to new Eastern Federal Lands)*
* Roadmap to Recovery Plan
  + Governor’s Vaccination Proclamation
* WSDOT Regions & Consultants
* Chuck Meade
  + Hiring a few new PEs for Fish Passage office (Olympia and Tumwater)
  + Executed GEC with Jacobs Engineering, help deliver FP and Safety & Preservation work
  + Hired APE in Port Angles
  + Will need to backfill with trickle-down effect of staffing
  + Seeing multiple staff making decision to submit for exemptions or looking for other work
* Ben Hoppe
  + Also hearing the same about people deciding to pursue other employment = opportunity for consultants
  + How will this affect how work is delivered – more reliance on GECs?
* Larry Larson
  + Concerned about proclamation impact on delivery, huge morale issue for some
  + New Program Manager, Chad Simonson
  + New PE Jody Falls
  + Promoted multiple E3s
  + Other vacancies coming
  + Hiring/promoting 7 E2 positions
  + About to lose LP Engineer (Keith Martin) to retirement
  + Darrell McCallum retiring end of year
* Heather Weeks/Jacobs
  + Jacobs announced to employees that they had to be vaccinated to work in an office.
  + Some concern about hiring folks that would never get vaccinated.
  + Excited to work on Olympic GEC
  + Looking for staff

1. Design Policy Updates John Donahue

* A little behind on updates. Manual will be updated next week.
* Most updates were minor, John summarized the changes coming soon (see the posted table of changes that are attached to the meeting minutes.)

1. Focus Areas: Continued Discussion & Specifics All

* CEVP/CRA/VE
  + Feedback and discussion with Mark Gabel
    - Areas that could benefit with support
      * Consultant subject matter expertise, especially construction
  + Potential conflict of interest for DB contracts if they can participate in CEVP. Need to make sure we are transparent and clear that they could be considered a conflict of interest if they want to pursue future work on the project later.
    - RFAI associated with CEVP/VE/CRA – put in “boiler plate” language to mindful of potential conflict of interest requirements if your firm desires to pursue additional work associated with project. Reference the OCOI (organizational conflict of interest) manual
  + **Good to do CEVP on large projects before the preferred alternative is selected**. Look at timing especially with Practical Solutions and CEVP being a tool for that. Integrate into developing on an ongoing process. Instead of 1-time deal, look at opportunity to revisit at different points to bring costs down.
    - Small projects (<$100M) CEVPs are one and done. Almost all large projects conduct multiple CEVPs. Policy Statement 2047 - Estimating Project Budget and Uncertainty provides guidance as to the frequency of CEVPs.
    - Advise that it conduct early (mentioned in the DM); however, usually self-determined by the project manager
    - Rarely conduct multiple VEs.
  + **Look at best practices during the actual CEVP/CRA process**
    - HQ constantly looking to improve the process. WSDOT considered to be one the leaders amongst other DOTs & industry.
    - HQ is not organizing/orchestrating all workshops (e.g. large projects/programs can handle this independently). Often notified that process is occurring without HQ support/involvement
      * HQ could consider being involved with prep activities
    - For CEVP, ideally have outside/independent consultants conduct the study which may add objectivity/validity. This may contribute to variations in process, facilitation and approach.
    - CRA is more in-house.
  + **Look at timing in life-cycle and making sure we’re on track with funding and estimates**. Integrate with when we need to update funding estimates, there may be a better time to do this with respect to funding updates.
    - To a large extent, this is determined by the managers. HQ works with them, when asked, to advise and help to identify the optimal time for the study.
  + Be careful in selection of SMEs to select for specialty for project and have experience with prior processes and are more effective.
    - This may be a result of our contracting process such that it is too difficult, cumbersome and not attracting the best talent. If we want to be the owner of choice, our consultant contracting process could benefit from streamlining and/or other improvements
    - The one you want may not be available. Hybrid/virtual opportunities may allow more consultants to be available.
  + SME shouldn’t be the “loudest person in the room” if they’re not the most effective.
    - The facilitators need to manage as appropriate. Make note of who may be a good fit. Participants can be sent with an agenda. Politics can find their way into study.
    - Sometimes, the SME does need to be the most prominent voice in the room.
  + System is broken and needs to be looked at. Team members don’t come prepared with numbers. Throw around numbers that are “well my gut tells me” numbers. Numbers get used for programming when they shouldn’t be. Seems less organized than in the past. Throw out ideas that aren’t feasible.
    - The process is maturing and has been around for some time. As this happens, the Department may be becoming de-sensitized or take it for granted and not coming prepared as they did during the earlier years.
    - HQ could hold a stronger prep-meeting to ensure teams are approaching with the right level of focus, attention and preparation
    - Need to allow the process to unfold as designed. Full spectrum of ideas are considered, assessed, and either move forward or are dismissed.
  + Often just a process to throw out risks and then try to work through them.
    - Need to allow the process to unfold as designed. Full spectrum of ideas are considered, assessed, and either move forward or are dismissed.
      * Cognitive bias. Only look at things from one way. Fresh perspective can be healthy for the process.
  + Quality varies, need good independent facilitator, not getting the value, documentation not to perform,
    - Agree. Quality does vary. Department believe the process is sound.
    - Assessing possible updates to the process to document not having a VE study.
      * Designer may not realize how flexible the process can be
  + CVEP and Risk assessments vary, have had good experience especially if conduct them early on and procure a good, independent facilitator.
    - HQ does advise that it conduct early (mentioned in the DM); however, usually self-determined by the project manager
    - The quality of facilitator can vary
  + Not getting value from weeklong risk assessment for some projects, for example on the fish passage projects they have written a memo to the file on why they did for the first project, but not subsequent projects.
    - Weeklong risk assessment are very rare
    - The length of the study is determined is collaboration with the project manager
    - Unaware of when a study was not conducted
  + Facilitator should be more of a voice to push the process along, promote ideas, and truly facilitate the process. Are seeing some facilitators with their own agenda and desire to promote their favorites.
    - Yes, facilitator are to push the process along and should not introduce personal bias.
  + CVEP was a big deal years ago, but now is routine. Need to look at the processes and see how they’ve changed and what others are doing.
    - Agree. There seems to a direct relationship with maturity of program and excitement of the study.
      * We need to work with everyone to embrace the fundamentals and trust the process.
  + Independent facilitator is crucial, VE person may not understand how to facilitate a CEVP, they’re different processes. Find some trying to run a cost-centered VE that addresses issues already answered.
    - Yes, correct. Try to keep VE and CEVP separate but coordinated.
  + In some cases, may be combined if appropriate and desirable to project manager. Requires close collaboration with HQ.
* Project Documentation Requirements
  + Discuss specific areas/points of improvement
* **Project Documentation Requirements**
  + During the previous meeting, the time shared the following thoughts/comments regarding documentation requires:
    - Consider requirements that don’t add value or aren’t needed at the time.
    - In NWR, the continuous movement of people is challenging and loss of experience. Do we need to do something differently?
    - Project office could do a more robust job.
    - DM does a good job of laying out what is required for 75%, another 25% project specific.
    - Additional tools would be helpful regarding the documentation of the DM documentation.
    - Assist with implementing plan expert that would watch the project offices in the process.
    - Less is more (not conflicting with better tools)
    - Problematic with attrition of staff.
    - Less is more.
    - Don’t require approval of all steps too early in the process (sometimes plans for approval for example seem too early. Look at timing of documentation.
    - Timing of the documentation is critical, sometimes want channelization plans for approval at 30%, but there are city and local agency comments that are going to impact the process and require rework. At the appropriate time.

1. New Focus Areas/Topics

* Explore/discuss potential inconsistencies regarding the timing or requirements for various design documentation elements for Design-Build contracts. As an example, submittal requirements for the final hydraulics report can sometimes be required after as-builts are complete for some projects, whereas other projects don’t require such a delayed submittal.
* Explore the evolving business models to address potentially variable staffing levels that may be affected by the pandemic and associated workplace requirements (such as governors proclamation concerning vaccinations). This could include managing in-person, virtual workspace hybrids, etc.
* Streamlining of the submittal and review processes to account for potential variability in Department staff levels.
* Explore statewide guidance associated with software to conduct reviews of submittals which may include adopting various platforms

1. Adjourn