

WSDOT/ACEC-WA Executive Liaison Committee Meeting

Tuesday, March 22, 2022 – 1:00 pm to 2:15 pm

Meeting Minutes

- 1.) Chris Christopher and Mark provided a WSDOT update regarding OCOI Manual updates:
 - WSDOT is motivated to bring clarity to the OCOI Manual and issues.
 - 25 people are currently engaged in the review and comment process, WSDOT, ACEC, AGC and non-ACEC consultants are engaged.
 - The team has met twice to date and there has been good discussion and feedback regarding draft language. Appreciated feedback, but lots of flexibility will be needed to balance needs.
 - WSDOT wants the manual to be crystal clear regarding OCOI's and will provide clarifying criteria with good examples within the manual, including the section on firewalls.
 - During this process, WSDOT will update the draft manual based on group discussions, then share back with the workgroup for feedback.
 - The group is meeting tomorrow to talk firewalls, then PHD's.
 - Goal to have an updated manual by June, and the work appears to be on target to achieve this goal.

Van agreed the conversation has been frank and collaborative. These are hard issues, with a spectrum of answers depending on priorities of policies on an individual circumstance. Van questioned the recent WSDOT Bridge and Structures Staff Augmentation vendor proposal and how OCOI's will be dealt with?

WSDOT's intent is to not place the on-call consultant in an OCOI position and will allow the consultant to defer to participate if there will be a conflict with their firm and other pursuits. WSDOT will develop language that covers this so that consultant firms will not be put in a precluded position. Mark took an action item to work with Chris on this language.

2. Kevin and Marshall provided the following WSDOT COVID update and outlook:
 - WSDOT follows the Roadmap to Recovery developed by OFM, Dept. of L&I, State HR, and CDC guidelines.
 - WSDOT is not required to mask up in office settings with their own staff and other state agencies, contractors, etc. that are in compliance with the state mandate.
 - Most Regions in-person attendance is well below the 25% of in-office work and are still restricted to meeting with either their own staff or those that comply with vaccine mandate.
 - WSDOT intends to start edging back to a normal work environment, with up to 50% in office work.
 - With Roger's statewide goal of 40 – 50% teleworking, there will be a higher average of office workers working from home as maintenance and ferry workers have to report to work.

- Wearing masks is an acceptable choice as well for those that choose to.
- The state is seeing a significant down tick in COVID cases with not a lot of severe illnesses, but they do expect some case counts may go up with the next variant.

There was general group discussion regarding WSDOT's expectations with the broader community of consultants and future meetings. Some WSDOT employees have concerns regarding meeting with consultants if they are not following the same statewide mandates that WSDOT has been held to.

WSDOT needs to be very clear about expectations regarding in-person meetings and a COVID protocol that is acceptable to them.

Future WSDOT/ACEC-WA Executive meetings could be scheduled to be a mix of in-person or all on Teams to save travel. After the annual meeting we will discuss next planned meeting protocols.

3. Kevin and Marshall discussed an update regarding this past Legislative Session:
 - Legislature provided \$16.9 billion over 16 years in a short supplemental session.
 - The new revenue is tied to new programs and new priorities. WSDOT is challenged to deliver new programs and grants with key focuses on equity and climate change.
 - There will be a lot of work to do to make it happen and WSDOT needs consultants as key partners.

Van noted that the industry is happy to be a good partner. ACEC is looking forward to helping with delivery, but also to work as a partner on legislative issues such as clarifying and/or advocating for answers that are needed.

4. Jay Drye provided the following Local Programs Update:
 - Z Program has \$168 million of new projects in the current biennium. This was a big jump in local programs and local jurisdictions that received funding.
 - Under IIJA, WSDOT will continue to work with FHWA to work through and sort out new programs and determine what they look like and how the funding flows to the local agencies.
 - While there are still questions regarding administering and processing some of the federal programs, local programs is advancing several of the call for projects.
 - The bridge program is out and advertised. They are expecting a significant bump in this program's dollars, though challenges with storm water issues and consultations with NMFS are complicated and some projects have been held up as long as 2 years.
 - Local programs work does not operate under the state programmatic agreement with NMFS which is why they are held up. They have been struggling to get a path forward with NMFS challenges and are expecting new guidance from NMFS in May.
 - 51 different cities applied for the City Safety Program. These 51 cities identified 198 projects that amounted in over \$100 million + in requests. Unfortunately, the need is much higher than the program funding, which is only \$30 M.

- Local programs is also putting out the Railroad Crossing, Section 130 call for projects. It's been a challenging program to date, but they have better coordination with railroads in place for the next round.

5. Mark, Linea, Van and Claire provided the following Annual Meeting Updates:

- Claire has been researching potential Venue locations. She is looking at the Red Lion in Bellevue, the Hotel Murano in Tacoma, and the Silver Cloud in Rustin.
 - Red Lion includes free parking. It's a venue that has been used in the past. It's conveniently located for many Seattle or Bellevue consultants. It's not so convenient for travelers that come from the south due to traffic considerations. There is some desire to do something different.
 - Hotel Murano is a nice facility and centrally located for travelers in downtown Tacoma. They will provide parking passes that attendees can present at the parking garage venue. The parking cost can be included in the bill. She is waiting to see about technology needs and costs.
 - The Silver Cloud is centrally located and in a nice venue on the Rustin waterfront. It has a close parking garage available for \$2 per hour. You can use an app on your phone or a credit card at a parking kiosk to pay.
 - Claire is working to get final pricing on options and should know more by the middle of next week.
 - A question was asked as to whether the Tacoma location better supported attendees versus the Bellevue location. Mark and Van noted that WSDOT would likely show up to either location but traveling south in the morning and north in the evening was much preferred for traveling attendees. Many consultants have offices in the Seattle area so Bellevue is likely closer though it's expected transit and carpooling would be a good option for travelers as well.
- Janelle will set up the next planning meeting to firm up plans. We will share info via e-mail.

Linea reviewed the draft agenda with the group:

- The agenda is still fluid, and timelines may change depending on presenters' availability, though Roger Millar's presentation needs to be scheduled in the am.
- The following suggestions were noted for updating the agenda:
 - Adding an afternoon break.
 - Allison supported the Environmental Justice and Heal act as a timely topic.
 - Subcommittee reports may need more time.
 - Kevin offered to reduce his presentation time to 30 minutes.
 - Timeline for the afternoon Climate Resiliency can be adjusted for one speaker.
 - Claire will check the venue to see if we can have a presenter or two participate remotely on a screen. This has been done in the past if needed. The goal is for the presenter to be in-person, if possible, but a screen works for those that are unwilling to attend in-person. More to come.
 - We reviewed the Subcommittee Reports Template, and an electronic version was provided in the meeting invitation.

- Additional questions or suggestions regarding the agenda can be sent to Mark or Linea before the end of next week.

6. Mark and Linea noted the following action items and upcoming meetings:

Action Items:

- Janelle will schedule the next planning meeting for Thursday or Friday of next week to firm up plans. We will share info with all via e-mail.
- WSDOT/ACEC-WA ELC Committee will be kept informed via e-mail if there are no other meetings planned after May 5th.
- Annual meeting agenda questions or suggestions should be sent to Mark or Linea before the end of next week.
- Claire is working to get final pricing options from venues and should know more by middle of next week.
- Mark has an action item regarding WSDOT's expectations regarding in-person meetings and required/acceptable vaccination status.
- After the annual meeting we will discuss options regarding in-person vs Teams for future ELC meetings.
- Mark has an action item to work with Chris on updated vendor language to address OCOI issues regarding recent Bridge and Structures Staff Augmentation vendor contract.

Upcoming Scheduled Meetings:

- WSDOT/ACEC-WA Executive Liaison Committee Meeting on Thursday, May 5, 2022 from 1:00-3:00 pm.
- If we need another meeting, we can look for a time in early June.
- WSDOT/ACEC-WA Annual Meeting on Tuesday, June 28, 2022 from 8:00 am–4:30 pm

7. Meeting Adjourn at 2:15 pm