

ACEC Sub-committee on Transportation Planning

Departments of Transportation are facing many technological, environmental, economic, and social challenges and opportunities. Transportation planning and policy is on the front line. ODOT and the consultant community will need to work closely together to deliver not only on the projects and expectations connected to the recently passed HB 2017, but also help the State and communities plan for and lead the way through the challenges of today and those in the future.

The passage of HB 2017 resulted in a substantial increase in work for ODOT. The Oregon legislature only authorized the creation of a limited number of new positions for ODOT to implement HB 2017, resulting in the need to find new ways to deliver the growing workload. Some of the additional workload will likely be directed to Consultants, and in some ODOT Regions and technical disciplines changes to organizational structure, roles, training and processes will be required to deliver this increased workload. Due to years of strong transportation markets in Washington and California, some consultants have relocated to other markets, further straining the overall access to professional services. The transportation market will face one of the most daunting challenges in recent history to deliver this much needed increase in transportation funding. Both ODOT and the consulting community that supports it will need to work together in new ways to successfully deliver the workload to solidify the trust and support of the Legislature and the public.

Similarly, transportation planning is changing rapidly. New technologies such as automated and connected vehicles, changes in freight logistics, asset management, shared mobility, new modelling applications performance measures, and major advancements in bicycle planning and design have resulted in a new set of needs in the professional services community. In addition, these issues must also consider broader stakeholder interests such as equity, livability, public health, housing, and climate change. It will be important for ODOT and the consulting community to work together to help guide decision-makers and policy through connecting to national lesson's learned and best practices.

The role of transportation planners at ODOT is critical to successful delivery of HB 2017. Transportation planners craft policy, identify needs, prioritize and define projects and prepare the project pipeline. Specifically, planners typical must align political, financial, public and technical considerations, but must also help track and measure progress towards achieving the policy and planning goals, objectives, and outcomes.

This ACEC sub-committee on transportation planning will strive to work together to most effectively deliver ODOT's increased workload, provide access to best practices on emerging practice areas and help streamline delivery of HB 2017.

Goals:

1. Continue partnership between ODOT and the Consulting Community that serves ODOT.
2. Promote quality competition across the consultant community for policy and planning contracts
3. Exchange information and best practices on emerging subject areas
4. Proactively streamline coordination with OPO, ODOT Regions and HQ and Consultants to ensure the system is running in alignment with policy goals.
5. Identify potential partnerships that intersect with other sub-teams, business functions, and potentially other state agencies.

Objectives:

1. Reduce poor quality proposals (e.g. proposals with more flash than substance)
2. Achieve an average of three proposals per contract procurement
3. Provide 6 Consultant and ODOT presentations (at Consultant cost) on emerging topics in 2018
4. Review and disseminate a planning procurement look-out to improve quality and number of proposals
5. Streamline upcoming procurements coordination
6. Provide feedback to Consultants and ODOT

Strategies:

1. Promote open discussions regarding contracting mechanisms for upcoming procurements between consultants and Agency PMs. Use the venue as a one-stop shop to reduce the number of required visits with Consultants for Agency PMs.
2. Evaluate options to avoid or reduce failed procurements. Consider concepts such as blind “straw polls” or other options to gage level of consultant interest and competition. Agency will ask Consultants whether or not they are likely to pursue, Consultants to provide info secretly (firm blind).
3. Request presentations from Consultants or Agency on emerging topic areas to help Agency define needs, scope and estimate budgets for potential work programs and review lessons learned.
4. Review, update and discuss upcoming anticipated RFPs to promote active participation and competition for planning RFPs (e.g. Open House events with industry members?).
5. Agency procurement, planners and PMs to provide feedback to Consultants on ways to better serve the agency.
6. Evaluate training needs for transportation planners and identify opportunities to connect to existing organizations or implement. Shared perspectives on roles with all the challenges faced by Consultants, city and ODOT staff
7. Promote open discussions regarding Federal and/or State Transportation Planning regulations and rules.
8. Communicate the findings, lessons learned and ideas to the broader planning community.
9. Explore mechanisms for small contracting and RFIs
10. Negotiation training to get projects up and running more quickly
11. Increase DBE leadership opportunities and industry capacity for DBEs

Committee Expectations and Roles

1. The Committee will be comprised of six consultant members. Committee size may be reevaluated and modified, as needed.
2. Committee members shall serve a two-year term. Committee membership will change on a staggered and rotating basis, with half of the membership terms ending every two years. *Note that the initial members' 2- year terms expire in 2020. At that time half the members will rotate off the committee and the remaining three consultants will stay an additional third year, leaving the Committee in 2021*
3. Members are responsible for attending scheduled Committee Meetings in person, if possible, or via teleconference. If a Committee Member is not able to attend a meeting they may send an alternate from their firm. If a member misses three (3) or more meetings, they will be asked to recommend a colleague from their firm or another consulting firm to complete their term.
4. Each member of the Committee is responsible for 1 presentation during their 2-year term.
5. The Committee Chair will rotate every year, with a vote of the current membership appointing the new chair at the first meeting of the year.
6. The Committee Chair is responsible for coordinating with ODOT TDD, proposing meeting agendas, and preparing information and materials for meetings.
7. The Committee Chair will maintain a communications list to inform the broader consultant community about Committee activities. In addition, this list will be used to invite people not on the Committee to listen to speakers and presenters.