PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Montana Department of Transportation
Preconstruction Conference
February 14-15, 2018
Senate Bill 182

• Effective July 1st, 2017
• Right-of-Way may indicate Substantial impact
• 3 phases of project development
  – Survey, Design & Right-of-Way
• Website
• Substantial Impact Projects
• Electronic Notification List
  – Governments, Organization (motorists and Commercial Motor Vehicles), Travelers and Legislators.
Future of Public involvement

- How are we going to **Exceed** the requirements?
  - Why Exceed?
- New Public Involvement Process
  - Kris Christensen
  - Public Involvement
    - webpage
    - tools
    - Public Involvement Firms / Inhouse
      - Big Sky, Strategies 360 & Dowl with Partners Creative
  - Website Updates
  - Training
Future of Public Involvement

• New Public Involvement Process
  – Contact Database
  – Added Activities in Engineering Project Scheduler

• Other resources
  – Myself
  – Dustin Rouse
  – Kevin Christensen
  – Ryan Dahlke
Future of Public Involvement

• It is about Education
  – Montana Department of Transportation is the best kept secret!
  – Why Pavement Preservation?
  – How do Safety Projects get Selected?
  – Why does it take so long?

• Some things we need to improve!
  – TAG!
  – Engineering Speak!
  • Plain English

• Change the message through the development
Future of Public Involvement

• Paradigm Shift!
  – Save Time!
  – Save Money!
  – Save Lives!
  – Build Relationships!
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**Public Involvement**

- Management Unit: 300
- Activities: 652, 654, 656

**ACTIVITY 652: Distribute News Release**

The distribution of a news release fulfills MDT’s legal obligation to notify the public of proposed undertakings, including the news media for Categorical Exclusions, plus public and private agencies and individuals for Environmental Assessment, and also FHWA to put Notice of Intent in the Federal Register for Environmental Impact Statements.

**ACTIVITY 654: Public Informational Meeting**

A public informational meeting provides the public the opportunity to discuss a project directly with project managers and engineers, review diagrams and charts, attend presentations and provide comments.

**ACTIVITY 656: Formal Public Hearing**

A public hearing is a formal presentation to the concerned public on project details, and solicits public comments relative to the proposed project.
ACTIVITY 652: Distribute News Release

- **Template:** On the MDT Intranet, click “RESOURCES” tab
  > Under “Forms/Reference Materials” (2nd subhead)
  > click “Forms/Templates” (2nd link)
  > Under “Forms and Templates”
    > click “Correspondence/Media” (18th subhead)
    > “News Release Template” (1st link)

- **Draft the new release:** Summarize the project using information from the Preliminary Field Review.

- **Review:** Public Involvement edits the draft for content and style, and circulates it to the District for review and approval.

- **Distribution:** Public Involvement distributes the news release to media within the area, range and corridor of a project.
Spell out abbreviations and acronyms on first reference:
TCP, PATH, PMS, PTW, CL, SOW, PFR, EIS, EA, PCCP
... and ... and ... etc.
The first sentence in the 35-page MTDOT Transportation Acronym Guide: "The Montana Department of Transportation developed this guide to help Montana citizens decipher the confusing and seemingly endless acronyms associated with transportation planning and programs."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rather than:</th>
<th>Simplify/Clarify:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• &quot;damaged PCCP panels&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;damaged concrete panels&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>• &quot;w-beams&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;guardrails&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>• &quot;polymer overlay&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;high-friction surface treatment&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>• &quot;concrete barrier&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;concrete barrier rail&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>• &quot;Class A bridge deck repair&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;concrete bridge deck repair&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• &quot;chevrons&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;chevron signs&quot;</td>
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"Excuse me, sir. Seeing as how the VP is such a VIP, shouldn't we keep the PC on the QT? 'Cause if it leaks to the VC he could end up MIA, and then we'd all be put on KP."  
— Adrian Cronauer  
(Robin Williams)  
Good Morning, Vietnam  
1987
News Release: Where Does It Go?

That depends on the location of the project:

- **Within a Community:** If the project or study area is located within the City of Billings, for example, the Billings media receives the news release.
- **Between Communities:** A project located between communities means each community and one or more beyond will receive the news release.
- **State Border:** For a project located near a state border, such as Fairview on the North Dakota border, communities within both states receive the release.
- **High-Traffic Crossroads:** The roundabout construction just north of Grass Range affects north-, south-, east- and westbound traffic; the news release will receive extensive distribution in all directions.
- **Interstate:** An interstate project will receive statewide distribution.
Activity 654: Public Meeting

Open House: Informal one-on-one interaction with the public. No facilitation. No recording.
- **Benefits:** One-on-one interaction with the public.
- **Disadvantages:** Requires additional staff. No facilitation. Project team handles the entire event.

Public Informational Meeting: Formal, facilitated, recorded, public comment period.
- **Benefits:** Presentation provides delivery of one clear message. Facilitated. Requires fewer staff.
- **Disadvantages:** Opportunity for grandstanding.

Activity 656: Public Hearing

Must meet certain legal requirements to ensure people are notified and provided opportunity to comment on an official assessment, statement or other document.
A minimum of one month is needed to prepare for a public meeting.

It takes a month to:

- Find and secure an appropriate venue for the meeting
- Procure a Certificate of Insurance and/or deposit, if needed
- Draft and receive approval of the news release announcing the meeting
  * News release distribution precedes a public meeting by two weeks
- Create and receive approval of the display ad announcing the meeting
  * First display ad insertion precedes a public meeting by three weeks
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PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT
PRECONSTRUCTION PHASE

Shane Stack, P.E.
Missoula District Preconstruction Engineer
Topics Covered

• Determining Public Involvement During Preconstruction
• Public Involvement Tools
• Decisions Based on Public Involvement
• Coordination with Construction
• Planning/OT Phase to Preliminary Engineering
• Successful Examples
Determining Public Involvement

- Use the Engineering Project Communication Process Guide
- Determine Level of Impact (LOI)
- Develop Communication Strategies
- Develop Public Engagement Strategies
- Create a Contact List – Use Jasper Reports
- Create a Communication Log – Documentation
- Worksheets for all activities are included
Determining Public Involvement

- Developing a Public Involvement Plan
  - Why? – Purpose of the Plan
  - Who? – Affected Stakeholders, Issues, Interests, and Sensitivities, Physical Impacts
  - What and How? – Description of overall approach for Public Involvement
    - Outreach
    - Education
    - Gathering Input
    - Making Decisions
    - Feedback from Stakeholders on Decisions
    - Plan for Monitoring, Evaluating and Adjustment
  - Determine Level – A through D
  - Keep Plan up to Date – Living Document
Determining Public Involvement

• Resources
  – Public Involvement Handbook
  – Public Involvement Plan
  – Engineering Project Communication Process Guide
  – SB 182 – May Determine Plan Level
Determining Public Involvement

• Guides, Worksheets, Documents, Plans

• MDT – Hired 3 Public Involvement Firms

• Assist in Both Construction and Preconstruction

• Web Link: http://mdtinfo.mdt.mt.gov/const/pc-process/default.shtml

• Main Contact - Kris Christensen
Public Involvement Tools

• Press/News Release – Display Ads
• Use the Press
• Public Meeting
• Open House
• Landowner Visits/Meetings
• Local Events (Farmers Markets)
• Social Media (facebook, twitter, webpage, pinterest, youtube)
• Email Updates (Jasper)
• Post Cards/News Letters
• Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) Steering Committee
• Feedback Options (webpage, forms, public survey)
Decisions Based on Public Involvement

• Share Information with Stakeholders
• Document Feedback
• Consider the Project
  – Purpose and Need
  – Scope of the Project
  – Range of Alternatives
  – Potential Impacts
  – Mitigation
  – Stage of Project
• Document Decisions
• Share Proposed Changes with Stakeholders
• Document Feedback
Coordination with Construction

• During Preconstruction include Construction Staff
  – Construction Staff better understands why the project was designed
  – Project is constructible
  – If there are questions during construction, PM can answer
  – Prevents decisions from being changed
  – Develop a Public Involvement plan for Construction
Planning/OT Phase to Preliminary Engineering

- Public Involvement During Planning & OT
- Continue with Public Involvement During PE
- More Public Involvement maybe needed beyond Study
  – Higgins Ave Bridge & Madison Street Bridge
Successful Examples

- Bigfork Bridge over Swan River (2016-2017)
  - Great use of Citizens Advisory Committee
- Russell Street – NTP (Nov 20, 2017), Project began 2000
  - Meeting with all landowners individually during design
  - Technical Design Committee (TDC) (2012)
  - Lessons Learned – Compromise, Coordination, Cooperation, Flexibility
- Stevensville South Safety Project
  - Open House – Followed by Landowner Meetings
Introduce self-
• 30 years w/ MDT
• 10 years in DCS role
Transportation Management Plan (TMP)

Three Elements

- **Temporary Traffic Control Plan (TCP)**
  - Traffic Control – Safe, efficient, allows for construction, Staging Areas

- **Transportation Operations (TO)**
  - Demand Management Strategies – Ride Sharing, Transit, Ramp Metering, Speed Limits, Safety, Incident Management,

- **Public Information (PI)**
  - Mailers, Press Releases, Paid Advertisements, Telephone Hotline, Website, Social Media, Stakeholder Notifications, Highway Advisory Radio (HAR), Temporary Signs, Motorcycle Advisories for unpaved surfaces, and VMS

• Notes first, then slide-

• MDT’s TMP policy and practices resulted from the Work Zone Safety and Mobility Rule published in the federal registry in September, 2004. All state and local governments that receive federal-aid funding were required to comply with the provisions of the rule no later than October 12, 2007.

• The TMP process allows a multi-discipline team the opportunity to begin discussions and plan work sequences in the design phase as opposed to doing so after the project has been awarded to a contractor.

• The number of elements required in a particular TMP are determined based on project complexity and level of significance. Level 1 projects are those having the potential to cause significant impacts to the travelling public during construction.

(Review the three elements displayed on slide)
Work Notification

• Annual Projects & Impacts Lists
• Variable Message Signs (VMS)
  – MDT or Contractor Furnished
  – Purchase History
  – Target Commuter Traffic
  – Static Signs vs. VMS

Notes Only-

Projects Impacts Lists-
• In Butte; we prepare a listing of projects and expected travel impacts to share with the Director’s Office, the District Administrator, preconstruction staff, and the media each spring and as the construction season progresses.

Variable Message Signs-
• When considering their use; always check with the appropriate Area Maintenance Chief before committing MDT owned signs to a project. Also note; the contractor inventory of VMS has diminished since MDT began purchasing them.

• MDT’s purchased the majority of their VMS inventory with federal aid contracts and the understanding they would be utilized on future projects.

• Deploying VMS signs a few business days before work begins has been an effective way to target commuter traffic. This practice has conditioned the public
to expect this type notification in appropriate situations.

- While developing the TMP; team members are advised to consider whether static signs might be more appropriate for a given situation. For example- truck detour route notifications. Just like the sign; the message is static and not expected to change during construction. These signs can be covered during periods when the message is not applicable.

- When paid through the contract; VMS signs cost 10 units each/hour. Using a bid of $0.80/ unit; equates to $192/day. At this rate; MDT would reimburse the contractor an amount equivalent to the purchase price ($16k) of a new VMS every 83 days of use.

- In comparison; large (7’ x 15’) truck detour static signs have typically cost around $2,200 each.
Contract Provisions

• Standard Special Provisions
• Project Specific (Hybrid) Specials
• Pre-Work Public Meetings
• Regular Project/Public Meetings

Notes Only-

Special Provisions-
• As a general rule; avoid repeating language/requirements in existing specifications and special provisions.

• Use language such as “In addition to Section 618 requirements; provide the following.”

• Hybrid or project specific special provisions are a leading cause of contract claims; so please utilize “standard” specials whenever possible.

MDT has entered into contracts with three PR firms; contractors will no longer be required to hire their own. Standard special provisions have been updated accordingly.
• Public Advisory Program- Lowest level of involvement, notification and description of work; contractor maintains a local telephone number to field questions and complaints.

• Public Involvement Firm- MDT will hire and administer PR firm involvement.

Depending on complexity or local interest; some projects may also require a pre-work
public meeting and/or regular project meetings to allow public input during construction.
Coordination With Others

- City/County
- Emergency Services
- Media
- School Districts/Bus Routes
- Service Organizations

Notes Only-

- No one likes surprises; and especially not emergency services personnel in Park County! Recently, these folks requested that MDT notify them whenever department activities are conducted in the county. Although that level of notification is not practical; we did include Park County officials in our weekly construction road report distribution so they could be apprised of planned work in the county.

- My phone will ring off the hook whenever the public is surprised to discover unexpected impacts to a particular roadway.

- Interested parties may provide their e-mail address and receive weekly construction reports.

- Service organizations (i.e. Kiwanis) typically request a presentation of area projects each year.
Formats-
• E-mail distribution is made on a weekly basis; road report staff and I meet each Monday afternoon during construction season to review and verify weekly reports. We also review Traveler Information on the MDT web page.

• Updates are provided once weekly or when/if major changes occur.

• Impacts to wide loads require a minimum seven days notice before implementation. Width restrictions are distributed to MCS scale sites across the state.
Slide first, then notes-

Oracle Data Base-
• The Construction Report on MDT’s web page is populated via the Road Reporting oracle data base.

• It is crucial that the district provide real-time updates and ensure the information provided is credible.

• The current system/process limits use of only one type of work description; this can make it difficult to accurately describe the work taking place. However; users are able to select numerous “impacts” associated with a given type of work.

• Any given route could include more than one corridor or “segment”. Example- US 89 between Gardiner and WSS contains three separate corridors within the boundaries of the Butte District. It is important to select the appropriate corridor as doing so impacts where the men working symbol appears on the Traveler Information page.
Generational Considerations

- Radio/Television
- Newspaper
- Social Media
- Highway Advisory Radio

Notes only-

As there are now four generations with interests in department projects; multiple venues are required when providing public information.

- Prior to social media; MDT relied on traditional means such as newspaper, radio, and television to provide public information.

- I receive calls from social media users each construction season; they expect MDT to provide information through the various social media venues. And on the other end of the spectrum; my mother’s generation anxiously awaits the weekly edition of the Dillon Tribune to get the latest news.

- Highway Advisory Radio- Low frequency radio signal with limited coverage area; requires network connectivity to program remotely. Although we rarely utilize HAR radios in the Butte District; they can be useful on projects having unusual impacts and longer than normal traffic queue times. Messages to users are in the form of recordings

Example- Controlled excavation (BLASTING) work; the HAR could be utilized to explain the project and cause for delay. It could also be used to remind drivers to remain in their
vehicles during traffic stoppages. This is becoming a prevalent trend and safety concern as construction vehicles pass by a waiting queue of traffic. In contrast; messages on VMS signs must be structured/displayed according to MUTCD guidelines which include three lines of eight characters per line, and three phases per message.