

## Michigan Local Public Agency (LPA) Stakeholder Partnering (SP)

### 2017 Accomplishments Report

September 10, 2018

Stakeholder Partnering Team met five times in 2017 with initial focus on developing charter, identifying sponsors and team leaders, and issues development including status.

Meetings occurred on 2/22/17, 4/12/17, 6/6/17, 8/8/17, and 10/10/17.

Sponsors: Denise Donohue from County Road Association (CRA) of Michigan, John LaMacchia from Michigan Municipal League (MML), Brad Wieferich from Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), Theodore Burch from Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

Team Leads: Steve Puuri from CRA/MML, Tracie Leix and Kelly Crannell from MDOT, and Kurt Zachary from FHWA

Thirty-two issues within four categories were identified by the team and then ranked by each association or agency. Once issues were ranked, the top 3 priorities for each association or agency were identified and timeframe for completion of each issue was assigned as short (less than 1 year), medium (1-2 years), or long (more than 2 years) term.

Categories of issues include Organizational Change (11), Culture/Paradigm Shift (12), Education/Risk Management (6) and Legislative Issues (3).

June 6, 2017 Team Sponsors signed LPA Stakeholder Partnering Charter. Sponsors determined this team will function on consensus rather than formal voting.

Charter signing highlighted within MDOT in a Monday Memo and Bureau of Development Newsletter article, by FHWA in EDC News on June 15, 2017, and by the National Association of County Engineers in the June 2017 NACE News.

Team focused on what issues to consider vs. what is already being worked on by other groups.

Initial high priority topics included development of a process to approve NEPA classification for local agency categorical exclusion projects, development of a survey to identify inconsistencies in construction oversight, investigation into option for replacement of FieldManager (FM) software, identification of a MDOT Region Engineer Liaison to the LPA program, streamlining of MDOT invoices and other communications, and status of excess equipment sales.

Other high priority topics being addressed by other groups include cradle to grave project tracking, local agency force account guidelines, education of federal aid requirements, local agency warranty program, and wetland banking.

Specific actions taken on high priority items include:

**NEPA Process Development:** A team consisting of CRA, MML, MDOT and FHWA members was developed. MDOT identified the need for increased training and local agency support for NEPA

activities and established a new position to carry out those duties. Various LPA Stakeholder Partnering team members have been providing notice to local agencies on the upcoming changes. Documentation needs were initiated by NEPA team which met on November 1 and December 12, 2017. *2018 actions include filling newly established position, continued development of a draft process, detailed training, and piloting projects through the draft process.*

**Survey to Identify Inconsistencies in Construction Oversight:** MDOT Construction took the lead on developing questions to probe oversight inconsistencies statewide. LPASP team reviewed and provided recommendations to the draft survey. The survey went live on September 18, 2017, was promoted by LPASP Team members through various communications, and received 276 responses. Survey results pointed toward need to clarify roles, responsibilities and expectations of each agency involved in a federal aid project, need to enhance the MDOT Construction Manual, and confirmed the need to improve consistency in construction oversight statewide. *2018 actions include development of an action plan based off survey results and posting of survey results to the LPA construction website.*

**FieldManager Software Replacement:** FM utilized by agencies for both federal aid and non-federal aid projects. The proposed replacement, AASHTOware Construction and Materials, is intended for use on federal aid projects only. This may ultimately create issues for local agencies needing to replace FM for non-federal aid projects and train staff on the use of multiple software programs. Various LPASP sponsors reached out within their organizations and nationally to gather more information. *2018 actions include creation of a local agency task force and solution development for FM for non-federal aid projects.*

**MDOT Region Liaison:** MDOT identified Demetrius Parker, MDOT Southwest Region Engineer, as a liaison to the LPA program and will be available to bring issues and solutions from the LPASP Team to other Region Engineers for discussion and/or implementation. Although many MDOT business areas have had a Region Liaison, the LPA program has not. Interest and assistance to the Region Liaison was offered by Kim Avery, Bureau of Field Services, and Matt Chynoweth, Bureau of Bridges and Structures. *2018 actions include integrating Region Liaison into LPASP Team activities.*

**MDOT Invoicing:** Inclusion of additional project information within MDOT invoices is critical for local agencies to know what they are being billed for. MDOT Finance attended the 8/8/17 LPASP Team meeting to discuss local agency needs and provide clarification where possible. Implementation of SIGMA Financial System will change how information is received in the future. Finance noted that invoices should include a 3<sup>rd</sup> page which has more detailed information including location information. Efforts to make sure this information is including with invoices will be made. In addition, cost sharing agreement cover letters also need location information. *2018 actions include identifying SIGMA impacts to invoicing process and identification of other finance-related communications between MDOT and local agencies that need clarification.*

**Excess Equipment Sales:** Current process only allows 3 days which does not allow local agencies time to react to those sales. LPASP Team members agreed to reach out to various entities involved with development of state law and policy development regarding excess equipment sales. *2018 actions include possible policy modification based on what is allowable per state law and communication of that policy.*

**Standard Bridge Plans:** MDOT LAP has been partnered with Wayne State University develop a set of standard bridge plans which should expedite the bridge design process for local agencies as well as result in a significant cost saving when the standard plans are utilized for those shorter span local agency bridges. *2018 actions include posting final plans on the MDOT website and partnering with LTAP to deliver training.*

Next steps for 2018 include revisiting the issues list to determine next activities as those initially identified are completed.

Initial interest in project bundling/joint projects and final development of local agency warranty program.