

AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION IS WORTH A POUND OF CURE

By Debra Drecksell

Pre-project planning is an "ounce of prevention" that is "worth a pound of cure." When pre-planning is done well, it can prevent and resolve disputes, thereby eliminating costly, risky and time-consuming litigation. .

In addition, according to research performed by the Construction Industry Institute ("CII"), well-conducted pre-project planning can:

- Increase the chance of the Project meeting environmental and social goals.
- Reduce total project design and construction costs by as much as 20 percent (versus authorization estimate)
- Reduce total project design and construction schedule by as much as 39 percent (versus authorization estimate)
- Improve project predictability in terms of cost, schedule and operating performance

An excellent example of well-conducted pre-project planning is the Arizona Department of Transportation's ("ADOT") State Route 68 design build highway construction project. While those involved with this project engaged in pre-project planning at many phases in the process, this article outlines pre-project planning at what CII terms the "project execution phase." In particular, this article will describe pre-partnering efforts. The inspiration behind these efforts was Debra Brisk, ADOT Kingman District Engineer, and Ginger Murdough, ADOT Partnering Executive Administrator.

Pre-Partnering Meetings:

Seven pre-partnering meetings were held before the Initial Joint Partnering Workshop. The purpose of these pre-partnering Meetings was to give focused, specific attention to the interests of key project stakeholders. Descriptions of the pre-partnering meetings follow.

Design Pre-Partnering Meeting

Kevin Stockbridge (Design-Builder Job Sponsor from Kiewit Western) and Bahram Dariush (ADOT Project Manager) welcomed participants and got the partnering activities off to a great start. Participants introduced themselves, shared information, answered questions and discussed ideas. Workshop accomplishments included:

- Hearing the overall project concept;
- Learning about design quality procedures;
- Clarifying roles and responsibilities;
- Developing effective communication processes;
- Developing mutual expectations about personnel locations and staff facilities;
- Clarifying design review and acceptance procedures;
- Learning about public relations needs and plans;

- Giving reactions to the Design Builder's proposal;
- Generating an escalation ladder for project issues;
- Discussing information to be presented at the upcoming Initial Joint Partnering Workshop.

The workshop was informative and collaborative.

Participants identified workshop highlights such as: getting answers to questions, meeting team members, hearing about roles and responsibilities, dividing up into task groups and identifying lines of communication. Participants left the workshop feeling very positive about the project and the team.

Executive Pre-Partnering Meeting

Dick Wright (ADOT State Engineer) and Dan Howell (Design Builder Principal-In-Charge from Kiewit Western) welcomed participants and demonstrated their support of the project. Participants introduced themselves and enhanced their working relationship. Workshop accomplishments included:

The workshop gave participants an excellent introduction to the project. Participants identified workshop highlights such as: receiving direction from the executive members, learning about the project scope and team, hearing how team members will make the project a success and communicating openly with our management. Participants left feeling that this project is a very exciting opportunity and believing that the project would be very successful

- Hearing the overall project concept;
- Learning about the Design-Builder team's organization for the project;
- Clarifying the "Approved for Construction" process;
- Learning about the ADOT/General Consultant's organization for the project;
- Hearing key aspects of the public relations plan;
- Generating ideas for the Initial Joint Partnering Workshop;
- Deciding on key ongoing partnering activities;
- Refining an escalation ladder for project issues;
- Discussing issues of interest to executive project members

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Project Leaders Pre-Partnering Meeting

Project Leaders attended this workshop to share information about and refine various project programs. Workshop accomplishments included:

- Understanding the specifics of the Motorist Assist Program
- Learning how quality checklists will be finalized and will function;
- Discussing best practices for the Traffic Management System;
- Finalizing plans for additional upcoming Pre-Partnering Meetings

The workshop gave participants an opportunity to discuss project details. Participants identified workshop highlights such as: additional clarification of issues and processes, continued small group contact with the peer group for the project and discussion and resolution of issues up front

Bureau of Land Management Pre-Partnering Meeting

Jennifer Livingston (ADOT Resident Engineer), Ken Hanna (Design-Builder Project Manager from Kiewit Western) and John Christensen (Manager of the BLM Kingman Field Office) welcomed participants and set a collaborative tone for working together on the project. Workshop accomplishments included:

- Gaining a more detailed understanding of the project Mitigation Measures;
- Being updated on items such as the Hazardous Materials Report status, project clean up and title;
- Sharing and addressing historic, cultural and archeological concerns;
- Discussing plans regarding removal of a scenic pullout and moving a wildlife crossing;
- Arranging a site visit where decisions could be made;
- Learning specifics of vegetation salvage plans and slope treatments
- Getting an overview of the project
- Generating BLM counterparts for the project escalation ladder;
- Discussing options regarding the abandonment of the existing highway
- Enhancing the group's ability to problem solve collaboratively,

The workshop gave participants an opportunity to discuss project details relating to land management agency concerns before construction. Participants identified workshop highlights such as having the chance to talk with all affected parties at one time, getting input from BLM and Game & Fish early in the process in order to help the project get started in the right direction, meeting the people and gaining a better understanding of the project and the design- build

process. Participants left the meeting with a better understanding of each other's interests, constraints and issues.

Cities Pre-Partnering Meeting

Project leaders met with representatives from Bullhead City, the City of Kingman and Mohave County to share information and address concerns. Workshop accomplishments included:

- Hearing an overview of the project;
- Learning about traffic control and incentives;
- Discussing the community information program;
- Addressing questions and concerns.

The workshop gave participants an opportunity to meet one another and gain some common understandings. Participants identified workshop highlights such as allowing the project team to present the project to the cities and county, gaining interesting information and project details, obtaining project schedule and overview, hearing local communities' concerns, meeting the cities' and county's representatives and ensuring we have the right contacts.

Utilities Pre-Partnering Meeting

Project leaders met with representatives from various utilities in the project area. Workshop accomplishments included:

- Hearing an overview of the project;
- Identifying utility locations within the project area;
- Addressing concerns;
- Arranging site visits to view key utility locations.

The workshop gave participants the opportunity to coordinate the needs of emergency response services with project construction. Workshop highlights identified by project participants included: learning road closure information, learning about the different emergency services, getting the word out concerning our project and establishing TSM meetings, hearing the concerns of the various issues of the roadway so they can be considered during design, knowing that we will be notified 72 hours prior to blasting, hearing the phases of construction and times and seeing that ADOT is interested in community relations.

Emergency Response Pre-Partnering Meeting

Project leaders met with various emergency response groups in the project area. Workshop accomplishments included

- Learning about the TSM Committee
- Hearing an overview of the project
- Finding out how to get vehicles through the project during construction
- Hearing about the Motorist Assist Patrol
- Planning for access to accident sites
- Coordinating needs of school buses

This project is now a little over a year into construction. All the pre-planning efforts, including the pre-partnering meetings, have contributed to a successful project. This is

especially to be commended given that the project is under a relatively new delivery system for ADOT (design build), is in a rural location, simultaneously performed design in Phoenix and construction in Golden Valley and is being built on public (ELM managed) land. The ounces of prevention are truly paying off!