



2019 UCI Annual Meeting

“Utilities Relocation”

**Matt Reynolds
Right of Way and Utilities Division**

Commonwealth Transportation Board

Utility Relocation Working Group

- **Chaired by CTB member Marty Williams and comprised:**
 - Chief Deputy Commissioner, Chief Engineer and other VDOT staff;
 - Utility owners;
 - Locality representatives; and,
 - Contractor representatives
- **Focused on driving improved utility relocation performance on highway projects**
 - Reviewing processes, procedures and policies;
 - Reviewing all projects; but, bringing extra focus to design-build and locally administered projects;
 - Working group has been meeting since November to develop recommendations for the CTB's consideration

Recommendations of CTB Approved April 10, 2019

Total of 10 recommendations approved by CTB

VDOT to report to CTB on implementation of and impact of implementing the recommendations by July 2021

Recommendation 1

VDOT should identify an overall champion to continue and enhance the implementation of improvements developed through the Utility Relocation Working Group.

Recommendation 2

VDOT should develop a policy whereby early phase project drawings with basic project details would be provided to utility companies earlier in the project development process. These early drawings will provide utilities with an early notice of the project in a standard format the opportunity to provide a standard set of responses to potential design-build contractors in advance of the project's procurement.

Recommendation 2

This is geared towards Design Build projects and dependent on Utility Coordinator communicating and working with Project Manager/Designer to have basic project features developed and included on plans. There will be several final design items such as Drainage, geotechnical (unsuitable material – “undercut”), sound barriers, temporary detours etc. that will need to be discussed and finalized prior to Utility Field Inspection being held.

Hopefully this will occur closely following completion of the NEPA process so project footprint is known and approved.

Earlier utility owner involvement by providing them this stage of project plans will accomplish the utilities having input on project features to avoid/minimize utility conflicts and having them engaged and aware of the project sooner, understanding project features and tentative schedules to provide necessary resources to the project for both preliminary engineering and utility relocation construction aspects.

This should enable utility owners to provide responses to potential questions/options presented from Design Build teams in advance and during project procurement and assist with “prior rights” determinations.

Recommendation 3

VDOT should develop common templates for use by utilities, contractors, VDOT and local partners in the planning and relocation processes for utilities on VDOT funded projects. These templates will list the information, documentation and protocols for each phase of the utility relocation process to be followed by all involved.

Recommendation 3

VDOT is utilizing existing templates such as UT-9 – Conflict and Cost Responsibility Determination form, UT-4 Utility Field Inspection Confirmation to be completed by each utility owner, Utility Easement Checklist, Plan and Estimate checklist, Utility cost estimate format, Narrative statements and work schedules.

The goal is for consistency with the utility industry so any entity administering any type of project: VDOT Design Bid Build, Design Build, or Locally Administered will have the same documentation utility owners are accustomed to receiving and providing.

Recommendation 4

VDOT should develop a policy requiring trained and certified utility coordinators be utilized on VDOT funded projects based upon project size and complexity criteria. This policy should also require trained utility inspectors be utilized on VDOT funded projects based upon project size and complexity criteria.

Recommendation 4

VDOT is developing a Utility Coordinator Certification program and training to address a proposed policy/requirement.

This will be available to contractors, consultants and localities. This will insure all Utility Coordinators have a sound understanding of related policies, procedures and practices along with correct application of these combined with necessary experience required in this role.

The goal is to promote consistency statewide for all projects with the utility coordination/relocation process.

VDOT has also developed a VDOT Utility Inspector Guide for use by utility relocation inspectors. This will be used to guide training for utility inspection.

Recommendation 5

VDOT should develop a policy regarding providing a stipend to utility companies under certain conditions and circumstances. This stipend could be offered to utility companies to facilitate their efforts in the early phases of project development to reduce their risks of designing utility relocations which may later change. This policy should consider project size and complexity criteria.

Recommendation 5

This is to provide a mechanism for utility owners to receive preliminary engineering reimbursement for efforts and resources expended in earlier project involvement.

Primarily larger Design Build or other “mega” projects. This will provide input from utility owners prior to and during procurement of Design Build projects.

Design Build teams reach out to utility companies asking many of the same questions which VDOT assists with them providing consistent responses. This should also assist with requests for input on design/construction alternatives or options to be reviewed and responded to accordingly.

VDOT coordinates with all utility owners on projects and provides plans as soon as available and overall project information and overview to include tentative schedules. It is hoped this will assist in utility owners providing more precise and detailed information regarding their facilities, such as time of year limitations, etc. and potential avoidance of conflicts. This will also assist in utility owners understanding what resources will be needed from them for the project and when they should expect the need to occur.

Recommendation 6

VDOT should incorporate any approved policy improvements in its Utility and Locally Administered Program Manuals, and other guidance documents, to provide clear direction to all utility companies, local partners, VDOT staff, and contractors.

Recommendation 6

Based on feedback received with the locality and utility stakeholders, Local Assistance Division has been working with the Utilities Section to update our manuals to provide consistent and clearer language for activities leading up to utility relocation.

Currently, the Locally Administered Projects Manual has a very short two paragraph write-up on utility coordination in the Project Development, Chapter 12 of the LAP Manual. The Chapter refers most of the discussion on utility relocation to VDOT's Utility Manual of Instructions.

Clearly based on discussions and concerns with the group, we realized we needed to expand this section of the LAP Manual to include additional guidance for local, utility and VDOT staff to try and encourage earlier communication and to identify VDOT touchpoints and best practices.

We also heard from the group that there is a lack of consistency on how utility relocations were being coordinated statewide.

To address this, in addition to expanding this section of the LAP Manual, we are requiring certain forms to be filled out by localities and utilities to be submitted to VDOT.

With this we have created a Utility Checklist (called the UT LAP-100 form). This checklist will be required for completion by localities for projects requiring utility relocation.

The checklist includes the major components, processes and procedures necessary for utility relocations beginning at the pre-scoping activities all the way thru the actual utility relocation.

Recommendation 6 (continued)

We have also updated the RW-301 which is required by localities to submit to VDOT for right of way and utility authorization. We have added an additional check box for a locality to certify that they have completed the Utility Checklist (UT LAP-100 form) referenced above.

Other updates to documentation include;

Adding language in the LAP Manual requiring localities to complete VDOT's UT-9 form (Utility Conflict/ Cost Responsibility) to submit to VDOT's Project Coordinator.

This form identifies the utility conflicts on a project and the cost responsibility for relocation.

Having everyone use this form will help with consistency.

And language requiring utility companies to fill out and submit a UT-4 form (Utility Field Inspection Condition Checklist).

This form is filled out by utility companies that certify that they have attended a project utility field inspection and have identified various conditions on the project.

We heard from localities that they are not able to access some of the other forms VDOT uses for utility coordination. We will make forms and other templates that improve the consistency in communication available to localities outside of VDOT systems.

There is also a component for utility relocations and coordination to be included as part of LAP Compliance Reviews.

To: (Appropriate Regional Utilities Manager) _____

SUBJECT: Project _____
Utility Owner _____

Dear (Name):

In reply to your letter of _____ confirming the utility field inspection held on the above-noted project, which is scheduled to be advertised on _____, we wish to inform you that the conditions checked in the box below apply:

- 1. It is necessary to adjust our existing facilities at project cost. A Plan and Estimate will be prepared and will be ready for submittal on or before: _____
- 2. It is necessary to adjust our existing facilities at no cost to the project. Three sets of relocation plans will be submitted on or before: _____
- 3. It is necessary to install new facilities on this project. Three sets of plans providing for the new installation will be submitted on or before: _____
- 4. It is expected to have all adjustment work and new work completed prior to the award of highway contract.
- 5. It is not expected to have all adjustment work and/or new work completed prior to the award of highway contract. Detailed information for work to be covered by a special provision will be submitted no later than: _____
- 6. Attachments to highway bridge structure(s) (has been) (will be) requested. Details of the attachment will be submitted by: _____
- 7. The State (has been) (will be) requested to acquire (replacement) (VDOT Utility) easements. Prior rights information and details of the proposed easement will be submitted by: _____
- 8. It is desirable to have certain utility work included in the highway contract to be performed by the highway contractor. (See Chapter 10 of the Utility Relocation Policies and Procedures Manual). Preliminary plans and specifications of this work will be submitted on or before: _____
- 9. Final drawings will be submitted on or before: _____
- 9. The relocation or adjustment of our facilities will not affect the navigable waters or wetland areas.
- 10. We are forwarding required navigable water and wetland permit information to be included with the Virginia Department of Transportation permit application.
- 11. We will make application for the necessary navigable water and wetland permit.

Sincerely,

Name: _____
Title: _____

Utility Milestone Dates

Project# 0001-020-S82, C501 UPC# 104661

Replacement Easement Request (Red/Green line) by	<u>02/06/2017</u>
Replacement Easement Forms by	<u>TBD</u>
Right of Way Plans	<u>03/06/2017</u>
Right of Way Funding	<u>08/01/2017</u>
Plan & Estimate and Special Provisions by	<u>07/03/2017</u>
Preliminary Plans (50% In-plan) by	<u>07/03/2017</u>
1" Submission Plans (90% In-plan) by	<u>04/09/2018</u>
Final Plans (100% In-plan) by	<u>07/09/2018</u>
Right of Way Acquired Complete	<u>12/08/2017</u>
Start Utility Relocations (target date)	<u>01/08/2018</u>
Utility adjustments Complete by	<u>01/07/2019</u>
In-plan Utility Relocation	<u>In-contract</u>
Project Advertisement Date	<u>01/08/2019</u>

Recommendation 7

VDOT should develop a policy regarding allowing for a time-only contract extension for design-build projects based upon utility delays outside of the contractor's control provided strict criteria are met.

This is currently being developed in conjunction with Construction, Alternative Project Delivery and Right of Way and Utilities Divisions. As stated this will have very strict criteria to be met.

Recommendation 8

VDOT should implement additional utility relocation training for all involved parties. This training will enhance understanding of utility relocation requirements and will allow key project delivery personnel in obtaining training and/or certifications as utility relocations specialists and/or utility inspectors.

Recommendation 8

VDOT is developing utility relocation training for all involved parties in the utility coordination/relocation process to include utility owners.

This will assist in having utility owners:

Understanding and comprehending VDOT project plans.

Understanding the overall project utility relocation process

Understand expectations during the process: who does what, when and why.

VDOT meets routinely with all utility owners statewide and one common question posed is “What can we do to help you help us?”

The most common response is to have their staff, since many are new to this process, attend training on how to read VDOT plans so they fully understand everything being depicted and what it will look like “on the ground” in relation to their facilities.

Recommendation 8 (continued)

Local Programs Workshop:

VDOT will be hosting the annual Local Programs Workshop (LPW) from September 9th thru 11th in the City of Williamsburg.

Similar to two years ago, there will be a Breakout Session on utility relocation best practices. Matt will be presenting along with a utility and local representative.

UCI Annual Meeting: Here we are!

Qualifications program:

VDOT is in the process of launching a qualifications program that each locality and consultant that works on locally administered projects will need to attend in order to be eligible to work on state or federally funded local projects.

There will be two parts to the training. The first is 14 online self-paced training sessions that are about 15 minutes a piece that have to be completed before moving on to part two of the training. Part two of the training is a 7 hour classroom training that will be completed with a test.

The goal is to have all localities that are administered projects to have at least one “qualified” person by December 31st, 2020.

Additional details will be posted on the LAD external VDOT website shortly.

Recommendation 9

VDOT should add language to the agency's permit manual to solicit reviews and comments from local jurisdictions as part of the permitting process for the placement of utilities in the rights of ways for roadways planned for widening as part of the local jurisdiction's comprehensive plan.

Some localities have had issues with utilities receiving a land use permit from VDOT on a VDOT maintained roadway that would now conflict with a planned roadway project that is part of the local jurisdictions comprehensive plan.

VDOT's goal is to include localities with the land use permit process when there is an identified local widening project on their comprehensive plan.

Currently VDOT is collecting information on the various internal permitting processes across the state to determine how to implement this in a consistent fashion.

Recommendation 10

VDOT should establish best practices and timelines for the relocation of private fiber companies' infrastructure within established timeframes.

VDOT has established best practices that apply to all utilities. Fiber can be a challenge given lack of records, unknown installations and change in ownership of the owners/companies.

Training will assist in how to identify ownership and communications with proper company staff.

Early knowledge of fiber being present in the project footprint and how to trace back to the owner through various means will be developed and provided as this issue is addressed further.

Other:

VDOT Monthly/semi monthly utility status meetings

Small cell wireless installations

TERF (Dominion Energy)

Communication, Coordination, Cooperation,

Questions?

Thank You!

