

Notes from OAC Technical Council Teleconference
Monday, September 28, 2015

Attending

Jim Spalla, Chair
Barbara Wessinger, Vice Chair
Bill Wright
Kristin White
Clyde Johnson
Ron Johnson
Lyle McMillan
Matt DeLong
Rob Jessee
Juanice Hughes
Lindsay Brown, AASHTO (sitting in for Evan)

Not available for call

Ron Johnson
Evan Rothblatt, AASHTO

The meeting was called to order by Jim Spalla, Chair.

- (1) Status on NCHRP 20-7 Project Proposal – A list of projects were approved for funding at the Fall AASHTO Engineering Committee meeting several weeks ago. Juanice will secure the approved project list from Keith Platte of AASHTO and distribute it to the Technical Council members. Matt indicated that if our project was not selected, we can push for its approval at the Spring meeting. If our project was not approved, Barbara recommended that the Council members contact the appropriate person for NCHRP 20-7 projects in their Department and advocate for project approval at the next meeting. Also, Barbara and Juanice will draft a template on the project proposal and Rob will take it to the NAHBA Board at their next meeting to secure support from their members.
- (2) Pilot Project with FHWA on moving nonconforming signs impacted by transportation projects – Barbara reviewed the draft Pilot document that includes a General Overview Section and the Six Concepts required by FHWA to be addressed (2015 Guidance Document for the development of Pilot Projects).

Clyde recommended additional details be added to the draft regarding the savings in time and money in reducing the construction schedule. Matt DeLong suggested an addition in the Pilot of having one state as the lead in drafting and reporting to FHWA the cost savings and reduced administrative and construction time. Because Florida has indicated an interest in assisting with the Pilot requirements, Barbara asked if Florida would take the role as the lead reporting state. Juanice indicated she will discuss with staff and get back with Barbara and Council. Kristin advised that Minnesota would also assist in the effort. Matt also emphasized the importance of including the FHWA Every Day Counts concept into the Pilot proposal. Barbara said she would incorporate the comments from Clyde and Matt in the draft document.

Barbara asked that everyone review the email Virgil Pridemore of FHWA sent out in June of 2015 regarding moving nonconforming signs. The document basically reiterates that current rules do not allow for relocating nonconforming signs. He interpreted the movement to be another location within the same property. Barbara reminded everyone that this not in the Regulations, as the Regulations say you cannot move a sign to a new location. One of the purposes of the Pilot is to seek a reinterpretation of location.

Barbara outlined the proposed timeline for the Pilot proposal:

- Once the draft is approved by the Technical Council, the next step will be a discussion with Dawn Horan at FHWA to seek the viability of the Pilot.
- If FHWA is open to the concepts, the next step will be for the participating states to begin their public involvement process/meetings. It was noted that when the participating states are identifying their corridors for the Pilot, consideration should be given to local government support of such a project. It might be advantageous that the participating states agree on a set of criteria in considering the selection of their transportation projects.
- Bill Wright asked how long it would take to put the Pilot in place once FHWA has approved the concept. The best answer that could be given is based on past pilot projects in South Carolina and Florida. The public involvement process of the affected groups and the remaining NEPA requirements could take up to a year. Following those events, a final Pilot request would be submitted to FHWA for their review and hopefully issuance of the Notice to Proceed. Beginning from that point, the states would put their 3-year Pilot into place.

Barbara asked that if any Technical Council members have federal memos relating to the movement of nonconforming signs in their files to please supply her with a copy so we don't miss any guidance from FHWA on this issue. Clyde indicated that he had a document that gave outdoor advertising projects a blank exemption on NEPA and he would provide a copy to the Technical Council members.

Action items for the Pilot project were discussed:

- (1) Everyone is asked to review the draft Pilot to see if the document can be strengthened and provide comments to Barbara within one week.
 - (2) Barbara will contact Ron Johnson to secure the involvement of Texas in the Pilot.
 - (3) Juanice will check on Florida taking the lead for reporting.
 - (4) Barbara will set up a teleconference with Dawn to discuss the concepts of the Pilot.
 - (5) Clyde will provide a copy of the NEPA exemption document.
- (3) Preparing for Conference Planning Session (Orlando) in January 2016 (selecting topics) – Jim reminded everyone that the planning session for the 2016 co-located Conference will be held the second week of January, and we need to ensure sessions for the Technical Council and NAHBA be identified by that time. Jim listed several topics that might be of interest. Juanice referenced that the Technical Council discussed at its August 20th meeting that the two priority issues (NCHRP 20-7 project and the proposed Pilot project) of the Council be discussed at the Conference, perhaps as a Technical Council meeting session.

(4) Other Business

- (a) Rob indicated there are no issues at the current time to be brought up to the Council from the NAHBA Board.
- (b) Juanice indicated two states have submitted requests to AASHTO for representation on the OAC Technical Council:
 - Wendy Knox of Texas
 - Jill Hendrickson of Oregon

Juanice was asked to contact each, to welcome them to the Council, and to notify them of upcoming meetings and information available for review on the Technical Council page of the AASHTO website.

- (c) Juanice reminded everyone the next Council meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 15, 2015 from 2:00-4:00, EDST.

Jim thanked everyone for their participation and adjourned the meeting.