

HEADING: September 4, 2014 EDC II LPA Summit

SUBJECT: Follow-up to Meeting Questions

From: Paul O'Brien

Date: December 4, 2014

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Questions

Q - 1) *Training opportunities in Tucson?*

A - 1 Yes, but not in the immediate future. We are currently working on process changes related to changes to the regulations that were introduced by MAP-21. It will take into 2015 to complete this. There will be training for the CA re-certification that will be developed. Once that has been conducted we could look to expand those opportunities to others in the LPA community in terms of the general environmental content of that training.

Q - 2) *Why is a report that is good for Army Corp not good enough for EPG?*

A - 2 Documentation and jurisdictional determinations of Waters of the US need to be prepared in conformance with Corps standards. So, yes, what is meets Corps standards would be adequate for ADOT. ADOT has a Corps liaison in place, Kathleen Tucker, who reviews all ADOT federal-aid projects, including LPA projects. By having one Corps person responsible for all projects will insure consistency in projects reviews and permitting decisions.

Q - 3) *Next meeting follow-up what did ADOT do with our ideas?*

A - 3 Follow-up is to be discussed at future meetings.

Q - 4) Can we partner with Universities to fund archeological studies/digs on corridors planned for development 10-20 years out?

A - 4 Though it's conceivable to partner and fund such action the cultural resources work has to be performed by people who meet certain professional requirements (Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties). Given the training and oversight responsibilities there would be limits to attaining cost savings if that is the goal.

Q - 5) Prepare ADOT to respond more quickly to rule making on re-authorization. You know it is coming but AZ is slow on implementing MAP-21

A - 5 Rulemaking for the MAP-21 changes to Categorical Exclusions was only completed on November 5, 2014. Prior to that, we were not able to update our

process or programmatic agreement with FHWA for approvals. We are now working to fully implement the new regulations.

### Ideas

- I - 1) *Talk to AZ Game and Fish Wildlife Corridors Branch to see how they can help.*  
ADOT has a contract and agreement with AZG&F. Like other State agencies they have financial needs and do not provide services without compensation. We contract with them in the same way we would a consultant.
- I - 2) *Add a pre-scoping contact/department area for pre-project development.*  
Progress is still being made in this area. The ADOT MPD program to offer PARA funds for pre-scoping was a first step.
- I - 3) *Changes to project that are an environmental mitigation e.g. enhances or improve wildlife connectivity should it trigger a scope of work change for EPG.*  
This idea is not fully understood by EPG.
- I - 4) *For ADOT to proactively participate with the Governor's 2009 initiative Arizona Geographic Information Council (AGIC) GIS Strategic Plan..*  
ADOT MPD is responsible for GIS and has been developing extensive tools for the State highway system. LPA/MPD to provide further response.

### Requests

- I - 1) *Allow for ROW process earlier in the Environmental process if and as possible.*  
MAP-21 introduced changes related to advance acquisition using federal funds. ADOT ROW and FHWA should be able to provide additional information.
- I - 2) *Develop a Programmatic Document in ADOT concerning what constitutes the need for an EA/EIS/CE and what does not or the degree of Environmental Document required (Programmatic vs. Non- Programmatic CE, etc.)*  
The CE process and ADOT-FHWA Programmatic Categorical Exclusion (PCE) Agreement are being reworked. As part of this process EPG has developed a guideline for determining which type of CEs may be applied to projects. This guideline is to aid planners and managers who work on Federal-Aid projects. This guidance will remain in draft form until the new PCE is in place but will be made available once the new process is in place.

- I - 3) *An updated and accurate ADOT contact list of who the local agencies should call with environmental questions (to included PMs).*

This action was completed.

- I - 4) *ADOT presence at planning meeting is very effective and should be maintained.*

There was agreement at the Summit on this. LPA Section to respond.

- I - 5) *A template describing what scoping document is required for which situation with a best practice attachment.*

Scoping is defined in the LPA Manual and in ADOT Predesign Guidelines available online. Scoping documents should be in context to the project and not 'overdone'. There is no one template but the existing guidance should provide enough information. The vast majority of LPA projects should be scoped with a simple Scoping Letter. Do not overpay for things like photographs and colorful graphics in scoping documents. Talk to the Project Manager about scoping needs and do not rely solely on a consultant's opinion.

