

ACEC/MD - April 8, 2020 Weekly Call with Transportation Industry Partners Focusing on Impact of COVID-19 (Being Sent to You as ACEC/MD Representative or Alternate - Please distribute as you see fit)



American Council of Engineering Companies
Maryland

ACEC/MD continues to be an active participant and raises issues facing our member firms during the continuing series of weekly calls with members of the transportation industry discussing the impact of COVID-19. MDOT SHA's Acting Administrator Tim Smith opened the teleconference by stating that Maryland just experienced the biggest one-day spike yet in Coronavirus cases and deaths, and that the curve is currently not flattening. We continue to emphasize the importance of following proper precautions to keep employees and the communities in which they work safe.

Topics discussed included:

- Proper Health Practices - Still following CDC guidelines, and operating remotely when possible. Biggest change this week is when social distancing is not possible staff should be wearing masks.
- General Impact of COVID-19 - Transportation and Public Works are still deemed essential, therefore, planning, design, construction and procurement are still operational and moving forward.
- Contract Requirements - Contract terms and established issue resolution procedures are to be followed.
- Payment/Invoice Processing - If there are issues, contact your MDOT SHA PM. Follow established resolution procedures if questions arise that delay approvals.
 - All MDOT SHA offices have been advised to accept electronic invoices, and treat them as originals
 - Invoices are transmitted to Annapolis daily, and are being tracked to determine how many are in play.
- Procurement -
 - Proposal Submittals - OPCM will coordinate with the TSO to determine viability of accepting electronic proposal submittals. MDOT MPA, MAA and MDTA currently accept electronic proposal submissions. OPCM commented that, if there are no barriers, MDOT SHA would pursue allowing electronic submittals. MDOT SHA is also moving forward with a task force that will review transitioning to an "electronic world". An update is expected by next week or sooner.
- MBE Certification Renewals - MDOT's Office of Minority Business Enterprise has been asked to look into the slowdown of MBE renewals and the possibility of allowing for a grace period that extend renewal deadlines during the crisis. An update is expected by next week or sooner.
- Possibly Extending OH Calculation Deadline Beyond End of Fiscal Year - They are looking into possibly extending. Update expected by next week or sooner.
- Upcoming Budget - Two major components of funding are gas tax and titling. Currently, due to a 50% reduction in traffic, there is real concern that it is going to impact the program moving forward. They are sticking with the FY 20-21 budget. MDTA is seeing a similar decline.
 - MDOT SHA staff are being asked to ramp up for a potential stimulus package focusing on infrastructure.
 - Federal elected officials need to be aware of the need to do something now.
 - MDOT SHA is trying to shorten the gap between funding that could become available and the ability to react.
 - Tim recognizes that design activities will need to ramp up if the stimulus is enacted.

- With 90% of the current budget going towards construction, there is no easy way to immediately turn off the spigot.
- P3 Projects - While there is a perception that things will slow down, in fact, in the current low interest rate environment it might be a good time to accelerate the projects.

Member firm representatives are requested to contact their federal elected officials to encourage them to support another stimulus package that focuses on the important role that infrastructure plays in sustaining the economy.

We very much want to continue to be perceived as a part of the solution to the current crisis, and encourage firms to provide items they would like addressed at these weekly calls. In order to prepare for next week's call, if there is something that you would like considered for the agenda, please send them to the ACEC/MD office no later than the COB on Monday, April 13th. We also encourage you to submit items for consideration on the agenda for the April 22nd meeting with MDOT SHA's Procurement Officials and at our regular partnering meeting currently scheduled in May. Thanks in advance for any input that you might have.

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Jim Otradovec, Executive Director
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