Introduction

Utility coordination is an integral part of every Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) project. Project Managers (PM) must be involved with their utility coordinators early in the project lifecycle to avoid major risks involving utilities.

Utility Guidance

The ***Utility Accommodation Manual (UAM)*** regulates the location, installation, and adjustment of utility facilities within any transportation facility under FDOT jurisdiction via an FDOT utility permit. The ***Utility Procedures Manual (UPM)*** establishes uniform procedures to comply with laws and rules regarding utility installations, accommodations, relocations, and adjustments. The PM should be familiar with the UAM and UPM and work closely with the Engineer of Record (EOR) and utility coordinator during each phase of the design project.

If a project is expected to have major utility impacts, it is critical to reach out to the UAO (Utility Agency/Owner) as soon as possible. Major utility relocations can take UAOs years and cost millions of dollars, impacting the Department's project schedule. It is imperative that the Project Manager ensures the utility coordinator is notified of any changes to the project.

The ***FDM 221*** provides guidance and references for coordinating with UAOs and accommodating utilities during the design of projects. Proper location and identification of all utilities on the project and coordination with all UAOs within the project limits are necessary.

Utility Coordination

FDOT shall plan to ensure that it is important to note that FDOT owns and operates facilities that are not documented within the ***Sunshine 811*** system. Examples of these facilities include water, sewer, lighting, traffic counters, ITS facilities, and signalization devices. It is the responsibility of the EOR to coordinate with respective FDOT Departments, coordinate with local maintaining agencies, determine impacts, and design relocations for FDOT-owned facilities. The location of these facilities may be determined by contacting the responsible FDOT offices.

A Proactive Approach

In a project, utility work might become necessary for tasks such as installing, removing, relocating, de-energizing, deactivating, and adjusting utilities needed for construction. Maintaining a proactive approach to coordination is crucial in identifying optimal solutions for the project. As a project manager, adopting a proactive stance toward utility coordination involves recognizing that, prior to deeming a production complete, all utility negotiations must receive a utility certification from the District Utility Administrator to guarantee comprehensive coverage of utilities within the project boundaries.

Utility Work

Subsurface Utility Engineering (SUE)

During the design phase of the project, the Design Project Manager (DPM) should coordinate closely with the EOR in determining whether additional physical exposure of a utility is needed. SUE uses a series of four Quality Levels (QLs).

QL-A is the highest and most effective SUE level presently available. The decision to proceed to construction without obtaining quality level “QL-A” locate information must be further coordinated with district construction personnel and the UAO.

Utility Matrix

The EOR will collaborate with the DPM and the UAO to identify conflicts. A comprehensive tracking system for conflicts and resolutions throughout each phase will be established by creating a utility matrix or spreadsheet.

Utility Work by Highway Contractor

When both the UAO and the Department agree to have utility, work performed by the highway contractor (FDOT’s Contractor), the District Utility Office (DUO) will execute the appropriate standard Utility Work by Highway Contractor Agreement (UWHCA). The agreement stipulates that the highway contractor is to construct or relocate the specified utilities in accordance with the Utility Work Highway Contractor (UWHC) plans and special provisions developed by the utility owner.

The Project Manager must know that UWHC plans must be incorporated into the project plans as per ***FDM 948.*** The DPM is to work with the district scheduler, the utility coordinator, and the EOR to add in the tasks required for the UWHC process.

A UAO may request to have the FDOT Design Consultant perform the utility’s design work as part of the UWHCA. If the request is approved by FDOT, the DPM would fill out **Form No. 710-010-56, Utility Design by FDOT Consultant Agreement (At Utility Expense)**, and process this agreement with a Supplemental Agreement as part of the design fee. The UAO would pay the Design Consultant for the design work of their facilities.

Reimbursable Utilities

When utility work is reimbursable, the DUO will work with District Legal to review the requested reimbursement for compensable approval. The DUO will execute the proper agreement, if approved, with the estimate and program funds.

When the UAO’s utilities are within an easement, per **Section 337.403, F.S.**, and **Rule 14-46, F.A.C.**, the **UAM**, and any existing utility permits may not be sufficient to obligate the UAO to adjust or relocate their utilities. In these cases, an agreement (such as a subordination agreement or encroachment agreement) may need to be executed to give the Department sufficient authority to order the UAO to adjust its utilities, or sufficient access to the easement to construct the project.

When a project includes a Florida Gas Transmission (FGT) facility within the limits of the project, the Project Manager should coordinate with the utility coordinator and the DUO early in the project. Regardless of whether or not the FGT’s facilities are directly impacted, the project timeline and budget could be greatly impacted due to the **Global Settlement Agreement** requirements.

Power Service for Department-Owned Roadway Applications

When Power service for Department-Owned Roadway Applications are needed see ***Section 3.13*** of the ***UPM.***