

District 4 Design Newsletter

December 2014

Utility Certification

By: District Four Utility Guys

Have you ever had a project with utility issues during construction that wasn't addressed by the Utility Work Schedule (UWS)? This article discusses a few steps the utility office has put in place to deliver a higher quality UWS to our construction office. Yes, we are here to support the design office, however construction is the end user of our product, the UWS. We have informally surveyed our construction customers and the results were ... we need to improve the UWS's.

As part of this improvement process we are performing an independent quality assurance review that strictly relates to the submitted UWS and associated plan set. Our focus is to ensure all identified utility conflicts (as well as ones we feel may be a conflict) has a corresponding action plan either prior to or during construction. This action plan must be detailed in the UWS for each impacted utility agency. We then provide comments to the Utility Agency Owner (UAO), designer and our construction customers. The current schedule allows two weeks for our utility certification process. Ideally we are striving to provide our comments within the first five days, then having the UAO and designer address our comments and return any revised UWS within the next five days. As you know we don't live in a perfect world, so is 10 days enough to complete this utility certification process? We encourage you to submit your package with enough time for us to complete our certification process so as not to impact the biddability date.

You might be saying: "We use to have a 2 to 3 days turnaround from when we submit our utility certification package to when the utility office certifies that all utility are clear, so how is this better?" Our focus is to eliminate delays in construction due to the UWS. Delays in construction is time and money and we need to deliver a quality product (UWS) to our customers in construction. One FDOT.

Let's say we have some comments on a submitted UWS. Depending on the comments, the best case scenario is the Engineer of Record revises the plans to address the comments. The worst case scenario is when we need to change the UWS. The additional time for the UAO to respond and provide a revised UWS may impact our utility certification date, which in turn may impact the biddability date.

In this effort to improve our utility certification process, we are asking the design team to involve our respective operation center's utility coordinator early in the process. They need to be invited to all utility design meetings and receive a copy of the plans and utility conflict matrix beforehand so they can provide input. Their names can be found in our utility certification checklist. This is all in an effort to eliminate utility conflicts, mitigate the conflicts and avoid unnecessary change orders or delays during construction as it relates to utilities.

Our utility certification procedure states: The District Utility Office (DUO) will review the submitted UWS and coordinate between other District Offices and UAO's to assure compatibility with highway construction and inform the UAO if the schedule needs to be revised.

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Design is measured on meeting our scheduled dates, nevertheless, the quality of our product will affect our construction customers if things are missing on the UWS. The overall measure of our success is no time and money on our construction contracts due to utility involvement. In our ongoing process improvement within the Utility Office, we plan on conducting more customer surveys as well as monitoring our current scheduling activities. Please stay tuned and remember early coordination is always welcome.

Bid Lessons Learned

By: Anson Sonnett, P.E.

This lesson could be called "how to miss a letting at the last minute." This particular project had a May letting. This project had very challenging R/W issues and the R/W Department worked miracles to get the right-of-way certified for construction so that the letting didn't have to move to June. We had everything delivered to CO in time to advertise the project in April. It seemed like everything had worked out fine. I did not think anything could possibly go wrong at this point. The project was scheduled to let on Wednesday, May 21st and I was on vacation the week prior, returning to the office Monday, May 19th. I had my laptop with me on vacation and read my email daily to see if there were any issues that could not wait for my return.

Construction has a website for bidders to ask question about advertised projects (<http://www2.dot.state.fl.us/construction/bidquestionmain.asp>). Construction answers these questions if they know the answer, but may ask the PM for help if needed. On Wednesday, May 15th a question was asked on the website about a plan note and exactly what work the District-Wide Contamination Assessment and Remediation (DWCAR) contractor would perform as it related to dewatering in contaminated areas. The EOR and I were not sure how to best answer the question, as the note was added by the District Contamination Impact Coordinator (DCIC). I forwarded the note to the DCIC, but he was also out of the office until Monday, May 19th.

Bidders are allowed to ask questions on the website any time before letting, however only questions received at least *seven calendar days* before letting are guaranteed a response. Construction must respond to these questions at least *two business days* before letting, so for this project we were required to respond by COB Friday, May 16th.

At this point I should have forwarded the question to my supervisor or another member of my section *in the office* to follow up with environmental staff *in the office* who could have responded on the DCIC's behalf. I thought I had forwarded the question to the DCIC's supervisor (per the DCIC's out of office email) but I had not. Instead Construction staff proposed a response. The response looked fine to me but I honestly had no idea if the response was correct or not. Per my approval, the incorrect response was posted.

On Tuesday, May 20th, the DCIC informed Construction and myself that our response was incorrect. The response we gave indicated the DWCAR would be doing a significant amount of work that should be done by the contractor. What was worse, if the DWCAR were to do this work, the contractor would lose any incentive to minimize impacts in contaminated areas. Our answer was not just wrong, it was very wrong, potentially costing tens to hundreds of thousands of dollars.

After meeting with Construction staff we decided it would be best to delay the letting and correct the answer. This required Director approval, and Gerry concurred.

The next step was to correct the answer to the question on the website, and possibly clarify the note in the plans. After discussing the note with Construction and the DCIC, we all agreed the note itself was fine, it was clear and concise. The question asked by the bidder implied a lot of things in the note that wasn't there, and was actually very simple to answer.

The lesson I learned from this is the damage an incorrect answer can cause and to treat these questions very seriously. The questions need to be answered by staff who are 100% sure that their answers are correct. In the future, I will have a delegate in the office who can handle any last minute questions that arise 3-4 business days before letting, if I am going to be out of the office.

New/Relocated Employee Introductions



Monifa Godfrey-Baker - Design Admin

Monifa was born in Kingston, Jamaica. Her family migrated to Chicago, IL and then to sunny South Florida. She attended Illinois College, Richard J. Daley College and Olive Harvey College in Chicago, IL. Monifa began her career working in various positions as a Secretary, Preschool Teacher, Executive Assistant/Human Resources Manager and Editor (editing over 30 books). After working at Wisdom Books for 5 years, she returned to education with a job at Northwestern University as a Program Coordinator. She worked there for approximately a year and a half before relocating to South Florida. She is married with 3 daughters (Malani, 12; Micaiah, 7; Alayna, 1). Please stop by and welcome Monifa to the Department.



Olivia Bonilla - Drainage Design

I am delighted to be a part of FDOT-Drainage Team. Having completed my Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from Florida Atlantic University in 2012, I worked as a Project manager with a non-profit organization leading technology projects in Latin American Countries. My desire to pursue a career in Civil Engineering motivated me to join the Drainage Team. From day one, I have enjoyed the warmth of this team and I have found it to be a great working environment. My hobbies include running 5K's and road biking. I enjoy training for these races with friends and family to build strong relationships and support one another achieving our common goals.



Carl Dorvil - Consultant Management

Please join me to welcome Carl Dorvil as a new member of Consultant Management Section 6. Carl comes to us from In-house Design Section 3 with eight (8) years of solid design experience. Carl is a graduate of Florida International University with a Bachelor of Science degree in civil engineering. Carl has been with the Florida Department of Transportation for over twelve (12) years. He began his career with the Department in District 6/Traffic Operations office as the Assistant District Safety Engineer. As the assistant to the District Safety Engineer, he managed multiple consultant contracts, skid hazard program, disposition of fatal crash reviews and handled citizen requests. He conducted several location assessments and intersection studies. He served as the Department's liaison to Monroe County through the Community Awareness program. He also represented the Department at the Dade County Emergency Operation Center during hurricane Jeanne in 2004 for which he received Team Achievement Award. He moved to District 4/Traffic Operations office in November 2004 where he was responsible for similar tasks. In 2006, he seized upon an opportunity to join Roadway Design. As a designer, he has either designed or assisted in the design of multiple projects including resurfacing, bridge rehabilitation, noise abatement, canal rehabilitation, signing and pavement marking. Carl loves sports and can totally enjoy a thrilling soccer game. He enjoys jogging, reading a good book and the company of family and friends. Please welcome Carl to the Consultant Management family.



Kadian McLean - District Utilities

Please welcome Kadian McLean to District Four Utility. Kadian has been with the Department since 2009 and a part of Program Management for the last four years. He holds a Bachelor of Business Administration degree from Florida International University. Kadian is from the beautiful island of Jamaica. He enjoys playing volleyball and soccer.