

Why Local Public Agencies Are Not Using Federal Funds to Maximum

Part III—Consultant View

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[Editor's Note—This paper—though submitted in outline form—makes its points quite clearly].

TAKES TOO LONG—TOO COMPLICATED

Local Public Agencies (LPAs) do not thoroughly understand the system and what it takes to work with it—neither does anyone else.

Many agencies to deal with:

- FHWA, IDOH, DNR, Corps Engineers, local agencies, archaeologists, biologists, historical societies, public utilities, railroads.
- Continual changes in policies, procedures—some recent examples:
 - Prime farm ground—Farm Land Protection Policy Act
 - Public Involvement Policy
 - New AASHTO Design Criteria
 - Vertical curves, structure widths, shoulder width encroachments

Each phase of project needs special expertise and holds many uncertainties—always unanticipated problems:

- Programming—project may not be approved by IDOH
- Environmental Assessment—archaeology reconnaissance, fish and wildlife habitat, wetlands
- Preliminary Engineering—public hearing consequences
- Land Acquisition/R/W—condemnations, relocations
- Construction Inspection—shortage of qualified people
- Funding—appropriations, allocations, obligations/ceilings, etc.

Review process involves many people:

- Many personnel involved
- Each is expert in own area but not others
- Personnel changes continually
- Large volume of work slows down process
- Communication/Mailing slows process (worse if remote from SOB)

Federal aid will always be a complicated process. Not much LPA can do about it. Too many agencies to deal with.

LPA can do things to reduce the length of time involved:

- Must have someone responsible to learn and work with the system.
 - Must work at it daily—everyday
 - Must know each activity and plan next move—anticipate problems
 - Must know the personnel involved in the review and talk to them
- Must have a program of projects:
 - Prepare work program—annual—long range
 - Annual programming—FA2's
 - Funding of local share
 - Appropriate funds
- Must stick to the projects in the program.
- Must show an interest keeping the projects moving and completing them in a timely manner.
- Three ways to accomplish the above:
 - LPA Forces—larger LPA's do this
 - Consultant—smaller LPA's do this
 - Combination—best solution
- Consultants—can do all of the above but also can contribute to the complication and slow down:
 - Overloaded with work
 - Do not thoroughly understand the process
 - Work on projects where pressure is put
 - Low fees/no profit—can be caused by bidding
 - Annual overhead factor approval by IDOH
- Selection of a consultant:
 - Follow approved selection procedures, all LPA's must have one.
 - Make sure all work items are covered. Save time for additional selection process on other phases:
 - Environmental
 - PE—utility agreements, permits, DNR, Corps of Engineers, public hearing, RR force account work, reimbursable utilities
 - R/W Engineering—plans, legal description, title insurance, stake out
 - R/W Services—appraisals, review appraisals, relocation, condemnation, encroachments certification of R/W
 - CE—construction inspection
 - What will consultant do?/What will LPA do?—item for item?
 - What is consultants experience on all items?
 - Check their performance record:
 - IDOH rates performance
 - Check with other LPA's
 - Pre-proposal meeting with IDOH is required
 - Monthly progress reports required—written
 - Also ask for personal progress reports when needed
 - Follow completion schedule per agreement

Show an interest in timely completion of the project. If LPA not interested consultant may lag in progress.

Hold consultant accountable

COST TOO MUCH—MATCHING SHARE LACKING

Truly costs more but you get safer, quality controlled, longer lasting, low maintenance projects.

Paying for all the extra work items to assure the project takes into account the best interests of all parties involved.

At 20-25% (matching share) LPA gets quality project.

At 80-75% FHWA pays for all the additional work not required by 100% local funded projects.

Federal Funding of projects is here to stay.

In order for LPA to get their fair share they must be in position to pay the matching share.

Other LPA's, IDOH, or worse, other states will get the funds if you don't use them.

LPA's must find revenue for match.

Cumulative fund, wheel tax, etc.

Work for larger share of MVH

Work for reduction of matching share

SUMMARY

Plan your work and stick to it. Don't keep switching project each year.

Work your plan. Need someone to stay on top of all activities daily.

Fund your plan (matching share)

Go for all the federal funds available to you.

If you do all the things, the projects will begin to flow and the time will shorten and it won't seem so complicated.

When you see your projects under construction and open to traffic you will wish you had started sooner.