



Right of Way & Land Surveys Manual Improvement Workshop

Wednesday, May 10, 2017

#	Attendees	District/Affiliation	Email
1	Lori Brownell	Planning and Management	lori.brownell@dot.ca.gov
2	Curtis Burfield	Right of Way	curtis.burfield@dot.ca.gov
3	Lori Burger	Right of Way, Headquarters	lori.burger@dot.ca.gov
4	Richard Covey	Right of Way	richard.covey@dot.ca.gov
5	Rene Fletcher	Right of Way	rene.fletcher@dot.ca.gov
6	Carol Hanson	Right of Way	carol.hanson@dot.ca.gov
7	Joe Horton	DRISI	joe.horton@dot.ca.gov
8	Marietta Latus	Construction	marietta.latus@dot.ca.gov
9	Jennifer Lowden	Right of Way, Division Chief	jennifer.lowden@dot.ca.gov
10	Mark Lyles	Right of Way, District 7	mark.lyles@dot.ca.gov
11	Jennifer Madrid	Construction	Jennifer.Madrid@dot.ca.gov
12	Melanie Mallard	Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)	Melani.Millard@dot.gov
13	Ben Martin	Right of Way, Headquarters	ben.martin@dot.ca.gov
14	Austin Perez	Construction	austin.perez@dot.ca.gov
15	Jeffrey Purdie	Right of Way	jeffrey.purdie@dot.ca.gov
16	Tadeusz Ratajczak	Right of Way, District 3	tadj.ratajczak@dot.ca.gov
17	Anthony Rizzi	Construction, District 8	anthony.rizzi@dot.ca.gov
18	Hossein Rostam	Right of Way, Headquarters	hossein.rostam@dot.ca.gov
19	Mark Samuelson	Division of Local Assistance	mark.samuelson@dot.ca.gov
20	Kamal Sah	Division of Local Assistance	kamal.sah@dot.ca.gov
21	Linda Tong	Right of Way	linda.w.tong@dot.ca.gov
22	Justin Unck	DRISI	justin.unck@dot.ca.gov
23	Megan Van Alstine	Right of Way, District 7	Megan.Van.Alstine@dot.ca.gov
24	Amy Vargas	Right of Way, District 11	amy.lamott.vargas@dot.ca.gov
Facilitators			
25	Eric Norton	Highlands Consulting, Facilitator	enorton@highlandsconsulting.com
26	Amanda Priest	Highlands Consulting, Scribe	apriest@highlandsconsulting.com

Opening Comments – Jennifer Lowden

- Thanked participants for attending. The Right of Way Manual is referenced by both internal and external stakeholders; thus, it is important that the Manual be functional, clear, and updated. Today's workshop will create an action plan to improve our Right of Way Manual, and will pull from the lessons learned from our peers in other Caltrans Divisions.



Right of Way Manual Improvement Workshop

- The Right of Way Manual contains a lot of great information. However, the Manual was developed a long time ago, and with younger generations entering the workforce this is an excellent opportunity for us to update our Right of Way Manual.
- Caltrans sets a goal of organizational excellence – this effort directly feeds into that, and also supports Right of Way and Land Survey’s strategic direction.

Opening Comments – Joe Horton, DRIS!

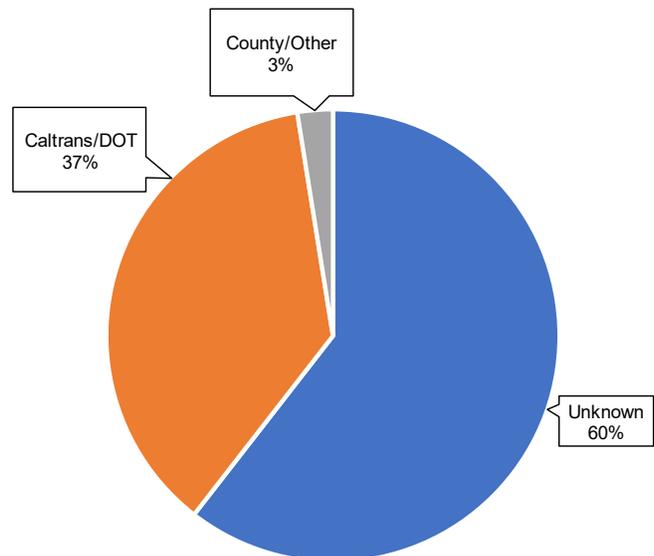
- Encouraged participants to provide feedback on today’s workgroup, and champions DRIS!’s commitment to serving Caltrans’ Divisions.
- Reminded participants that today’s workshop will result in a series of action plans, which is a great start to improving the Right of Way Manual.

Survey Results and Discussion

Results from the April 2017 *Caltrans Right of Way Manual Improvement/Optimization Survey* are as follows.

- The Survey was open from Monday (4/17) to Friday (4/21).
- There were 119 responses, over 600 individual comments
- Comments were categorized according to topic.
- 47 people responded to the demographic question (approximately 40% of the total survey respondents). Of those 47 people, 44 self-identified as Caltrans employees, and 3 self-identified as representing a County or Federal authority.

Demographics (47 respondents)



- The Top 5 Requested Improvements were:
 - Update the Manual
 - Add hyperlinks!
 - Improve clarity
 - Integrated revisions/updates
 - Improve searchability
- The Top 4 Challenges were:
 - Manual is outdated
 - Lack of clarity
 - Revisions aren’t integrated or tracked
 - Lack of searchability
- Other frequently mentioned suggestions included:
 - MS Word integration for forms
 - Improve the “readability” of the Manual
 - Add glossary/index, definitions, FAQs/Q&A sections, graphics, flowcharts
 - Combine the discrete chapters into one document



Right of Way Manual Improvement Workshop

Workgroup participants discussed the survey results:

- What is the *purpose* of the Manual?
 - The current Manual is BOTH policies and procedures.
 - While it can be used for both, the Manual needs a vision.
 - Many people within Right of Way would like the how-to's to be included in the Manual, since we don't do a good job of updating desk Manuals.
 - However, it might be appropriate for the how-to's to be internal-facing (not visible to external end users of the Manual)
 - Things that are temporary (like software) shouldn't be in the Manual. Keep it general, so that it doesn't have to be updated.
 - Be cautious when considering separating the policy from the procedures – historically Right of Way has tried this before, and the old Manual ballooned from 17 volumes to 34 volumes.
- Who is the audience for the Right of Way Manual?
 - Internal audiences for Right of Way and Caltrans and Audits and Investigations, as well as external audiences like the public and lawmakers.
 - Consider separating aspects of the current Manual out into desk Manuals or internal FAQs.

Construction Manual Lessons Learned – Austin Perez

For details of Austin's presentation, please refer to the *Construction Manual change management* PowerPoint.

- Austin Perez is the Project Manager (PM) for the revision of the Construction Manual. Manual maintenance is in hands of Mary, Jan, and their staff.
- The Construction Manual is written for Caltrans engineers out in the field, although we know our external audiences use it.
- Construction Policy Bulletin (CPB) vs CPD (Construction Procedure Directive)
 - Who determines whether a CPD gets included or not?
 - CPBs are always included
 - CPDs are determined by our SME
 - Speed of process depends on complexity of issue. Recently took 2.5 years, this is the extreme. The process can be expedited in response to legislation, which will take a couple of months from end-to-end.
- Notification of changes
 - List serve (via IT) is used to push updates to stakeholders on Manual revisions.
- The Division of Construction has updated with their existing resources; they were not allocated more PYs.
 - Currently have two staff who edit the Manual and a dozen SMEs who provide input (do not work on the Manual fulltime).
- All major Manual revisions are assigned a PM, have a charter, and a tracking system.
 - Charter defines the scope to minimize/eliminate scope creep, and lists the stakeholders and risks
- Lessons learned



Right of Way Manual Improvement Workshop

- Publishing the Manual section by section results in difficulty controlling and integrating cross-references; it's better to publish the entire Manual all at once.
- Update the Manual once or twice per year.
 - Currently, updates are still paper-based, although the Division of Construction is developing a hyperlink process.
- Maintain version control.
- Provide structure and training for collaboration.
 - Create a flowchart for Manual revision process, which coordinates with the PM's tracking tool
 - Train SMEs on documents, filename convention, where to store files, etc.
- Regular status meetings and reporting.
- Use MS Project or equivalent for tracking and reporting project status.

Division of Local Assistance Manual Lessons Learned – Kamal Sah

For details of Kamal's presentation, please refer to the *Division of Local Assistance Manuals_2017_v1* PowerPoint.

- Kamal Sah is the Publications Manager for the Caltrans Division of Local Assistance (DLA) Procedures Manual (LAPM). Assisting Kamal are a Webmaster, Policy Liaison, and Forms Officer.
- To amend the Manual, DLA uses office bulletins – the bulletins have the most recent information.
 - If a chapter is effected by an office bulletin, there is a pop-up when a user clicks on the chapter, so they *know* there have been updates to the chapter. All office bulletins are incorporated into the Manual on an annual cycle.
 - DLA uses blog and mass email distribution to notify internal and external stakeholders when an office bulletin is released.
 - DLA uses Constant Contact to send out mass emails to end users. Constant Contact allows us to manage the communication that is going out, what the open rate is, what subjects they're interested in.
 - Trying to encourage stakeholder to rely on digital version of the Manual, so that they know when office bulletins have been sent out (through the pop-ups).
- In addition to a Style Guide, DLA has an "Editor Checklist" to ensure that no crucial step is overlooked when updating the Manual.
- Forms
 - All forms that are public-facing must be converted to ADA Compliant PDF version through Caltrans e-Forms System (CEFS).
 - However, DLA is not responsible for converting forms, CEFS is.
- When the LAPM is being updated, Kamal, the Publication Editor, takes ownership and brings the parties together.
- Lessons Learned
 - Distribute any necessary amendments to the Manual first, *then* work on incorporating those updates into the Manual.
 - Trying to make the Manual perfect led to a slower publishing cycle, and delayed distribution of essential information to our local partners

Debrief – Presentation Observations

- Both Construction and DLA have more dedicated resources than Right of Way in terms of Manual updates and edits.
- Construction is moving away from a paper Manual, transitioning to a fully-digital Manual.
- Love the idea of a bulletin/pop-up to call out updates to the Manual since the last publication.
- Both Construction and DLA have dedicated missions for their Manuals
- User-friendly and easy to access
 - It would take fewer steps to find the information I need
- Both are able to maintain a history of where the policy originated from and what the authority is.
- Construction and DLA have split their Manuals to separate policies from procedures.

What procedures do Construction and/or DLA follow that Right of Way doesn't?

- Clear process, easy to follow, up-to-date
- Set expectations for when Manual will be updated
 - Bulletin vs. update
 - Once per year
 - Otherwise, we're building the plane while it's flying and we don't have any pilots.
- Dedicated staff and webmasters
- Constant Contact, blogs, and list serve should be investigated further.
 - Communicate the changes after they happen
 - Communicate externally, beyond Right of Way, beyond Caltrans
- Construction vs. DLA
 - Construction has paper drafts migrating around, DLA was much more digital.
 - Local Assistance is *very* clear on who their audience is – it's not an internal document, it's for external customers to use.
 - Right of Way is the same as Local Assistance, which is a good argument for transitioning to a web-based Manual
- Infrastructure, and whether we are a policy and procedure or a how-to Manual
 - Instead, let's focus on more of an action plan generating phase.

Brainstorm Actions

Participants brainstormed potential actions for further discussion with a focus on changes that can be made with existing resources. Potential actions were classified into the categories of People, Process, and Tools.

People

- Establish dedicated resources to manage Manual updates and revisions
- Improve communications between SMEs and Manual staff
- Define and clarify the purpose of the Manual
 - Current definition is from the 1990s, should be updated to reflect Caltrans in 2017
- Involve district SMEs in Manual updates



Right of Way Manual Improvement Workshop

Process

- Wording/phrasing of content
- Streamline Manual content – “Less is best”
- Move forms to CEFS
 - Clarification that Right of Way is not responsible for converting current forms to CEFS
- Remove forms from the Manual text, instead use reference hyperlinks to direct users to forms
 - Establish guidelines for MS Word vs PDF versions of forms
- Communicate Manual changes – both in process and in content
- Revise the Manual update process
 - Recommendation for an annual update cadence
- Bulletin updates
 - Utility reference file
- Ensure legal authority is referenced consistently throughout the Manual
- Standardize formatting and styles throughout the Manual
 - Suggestion that local university students might be willing and able to assist in creating a Style Guide
 - Noted that Jennifer Lowden has already requested funding for this effort

Tools

- Improve communication with stakeholders through Constant Contact/List Serve/Blog
- Integrate chapters for entire Manual into one Master document
 - Could have both Master document and discrete chapters, as the Division of Local Assistance does
- Electronic tracking/ Track history electronically
 - Tracking the history of changes, when the changes were made
 - Revision history (2014 vs. 2017)
 - HQ vs District need
 - HQ should be tracking history of Manual, but the average user won't need access to those.
- Document management system
 - Caltrans has 29 divisions, each one must maintain their Manual. A Document management system is easily obtainable via external tools (via IT). Bring up the need organizationally
 - This might be elevated to DRISI to have them campaign Caltrans to establish a document management system.
- FAQ section
- Hyperlinks
 - Eliminate redundancies, make the Manual leaner, just leave the essential materials and use internal cross-references and external references. Back up the Right of Way Manual content with hyperlinks to laws.
- Pop-Up bulletins
- Web-based Manual
 - Don't need to receive blue sheets and updates, emails are better
 - Inconsistent, whether districts receive hard copies or not



Right of Way Manual Improvement Workshop

Prioritize Actions

Participants ranked potential improvements in terms of importance.

Importance of Improvement Actions

- Dedicated staff (19 votes)
- Annual Update – establish timeline and reduce time (13 votes)
- Standardize formatting (4 votes)
- Resolve redundancy within Manual (2 votes)
- New way of communicating change (2 votes)
- Move forms out of Manual (1 vote)
- Policy vs Guidance/how-to? (10 votes)
 - Legal Authority references throughout the Manual (7 votes)
- Web-based (6 votes)
- Search tool (6 votes)
- Hyperlinks (4 votes)
- Track history electronically (3 votes)

Level of Effort for Improvement Actions

- Workshop participants noted that obtaining dedicated staff to update/improve the Manual would accelerate the overall effort.

Action Plan Brainstorm and Presentations

After brainstorming and drafting action plans for highly important improvement actions, participants presented their action plans to obtain feedback and input from the group.

Description for Exhibits

- If you're new, you need a description of the exhibit/form
- This can be done in a day

Obtain Dedicated Staff

- Goal: Have senior publication agent for Right of Way Manual
- A few options to achieve goal – promote to fill vacancy, take position from other office, or retired annuitant
- Establish a governance process
 - Can start this soon

Annual Update of Manual

- Goal: Have a Manual that is up to date.
- Get best practices from Kamal and Mark.
- Modify Right of Way plan to account for internal implementation.
- Question: Have we discussed establishing governance?
 - We do have an existing process, but improving the process would stem from the publication manager
 - When you bring a publications manager on board, where would you want them to focus first?
 - Currently takes too long to make simple changes



Right of Way Manual Improvement Workshop

- Question: Are annual updates the best fit for our division?
 - Ideal is to update the entire Manual and publish it at once, at a set cadence.
- Pop-Up Bulletins need to be included in the annual update process
- This effort will provide ease of mind for Right of Way's customers, so they know when the Manual will be updated.
- Updates should take place no more than 2 years apart.
 - Updating once per year is a great approach because it gives us more time internally to finalize the language for the annual Manual update.
 - Bulletins help eliminate the crunch time
 - Right of Way is already doing the memo updates, but our process is not as clearly defined as DLA.

Hyperlinks

- Dedicated staff is necessary to make this happen, because dedicated staff will be able to track this process.
- SMEs must be IDed, and dedicated staff must be linked with the SMEs
- ID areas of the Manual that require links.
 - Link to actual code and CFR itself
- Legal review will still be important, along with HQ, FHWA, and District review, to ensure that Right of Way is in line with statutes and laws.

Policy vs Guide

- We must distinguish laws and statutes from guidance and procedures.
- Within the Manual, specify and clearly identify requirements vs recommended procedures and best practices.
 - May want to delay creating a desk Manual.

Next Steps

- To make this effort successful, the group recommends transitioning the Right of Way Manual to a more user-friendly format.
 - Move from PDF to web-based Manual for ease of editing and updating, and a more streamlined user interface.
 - However, this should not hold back improvements to the current version of the Manual.
- There are actions Right of Way can take to improve the Manual with existing resources, with acknowledgement that the goal is to obtain a Right of Way publications manager, to facilitate faster improvements to the Manual.