MoDOT/Industry COVID-19 Weekly Meeting Minutes

April 1, 2020

Status of Construction Projects: MoDOT will continue to move forward with Highway Lettings and Construction Projects as scheduled. MoDOT has a continuity of operation plan and care for the infrastructure has been deemed as a critical function. That means that construction of highway projects will continue. In addition, MoDOT staff will perform construction inspection, materials testing and contract administration. We will provide payments to contractors in a timely manner. A discussion followed regarding the reduction in state and federal income due to lower fuel and vehicle sales.

CDC Guidelines on Construction Sites: As we are completing our duties, we should follow the Center for Disease Control and Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services guidelines which require social distancing and reducing personal contact when possible. Preconstruction meetings will be held virtually by video or teleconference. We should be flexible and innovative in determining ways to communicate and complete our necessary duties while reducing personal contact. Additional discussion occurred involving the need to emphasis social distancing on construction sites. In some parts of the country, concerns have been raised regarding the continuation of highway projects. It is important that we demonstrate proper distancing and safety practices while constructing our projects. AGC provided a link that highlights what is being done to work safely under the current situation.  
https://www.agcmo.org/WCM/Nav_Items/Member_Resources/Safety/COVID-19.aspx?hkey=2dce1930-99d5-47a7-8e6e-a67d1c42f4cd&WebsiteKey=708684a5-efcc-4443-925f-08672231c877

Point of Contact: Your Resident Engineer for your project is your primary point of contact. If you have more general questions, you can contact myself, Dave Ahlvers at 573-751-7455 or email david.ahlvers@modot.mo.gov.

Impact of State Office Building Closures: As many of you have heard, state offices are being closed. As we discussed earlier, construction projects are considered essential infrastructure and therefore contracts will move forward. All MoDOT workers involved with construction contracts are deemed essential and will continue working while adhering to social distancing recommendations and conduct communications virtually and by phone when possible.

Travel in Shelter in Place Locations: Some areas of our state have been designated “shelter in place locations”. We have provided letters to our employees identifying them as essential. MoDOT prepared a letter that contracts workers could carry with them that authorized continued work in these locations. This document was issued through the resident engineer. We have ended this process and ask that contractors and suppliers go to the CISA website. The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency within the Department of Homeland Security published a list of private sector businesses and workers considered critical infrastructure industry. Contractors could review the list and develop a document specific to their situation.
The contractors have not experienced problems with travel at this time. Currently in St. Louis local agencies have exempted highway construction from the shelter in place order. 

Technician Certification Extension: MoDOT is extending the due date for individuals needing technician certifications until September 1, 2020. Existing technicians will be allowed to work under their existing certification for this time period. This applies to all certifications within MoDOT’s certification program, IRI and IP equipment certifications are included in this extension.

Lead Licensing for Painting Contractors: The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services informed MoDOT that anyone who has a lead license that is due to expire in March or April should send in their paperwork to DHSS and it will be kept on file until the recertification training can be completed. They will be able to continue work in the meantime. If they do not have a license with DHSS they will not be able to obtain one until training resumes. There currently is a shortage of respirators and this has impacted some of the painting companies.

Extending Working Hours: Due to lower traffic volumes on our roadways, it may be possible to revise work hour restrictions on projects. Projects will be reviewed and evaluated on an individual basis. Please contact your Resident Engineer to discuss this opportunity. Please be aware that while traffic volumes have decreased the Highway Patrol has reported an increase in excessive speeding. It is important to manage the work zones by using rumble strips, law enforcement and proper notification to keep workers and drivers safe in work zones.

Contract Delays: MoDOT recognizes material shortages, subcontractor availability and illness impacting the workforce as possible issues due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Delays due to epidemics are specifically addressed in the Missouri Standard Specifications for Highway Construction Section 108.14.1 Excusable or Non-compensable delay. MoDOT will provide appropriate extensions should a delay occur. Please document and send your request to the Resident Engineer as these situations occur. Additional discussion occurred regarding the importance of taking into account delay impacts on all projects that a contractor is completing for the entire construction season as opposed to focusing only on the specific project impacted. Industry appreciated MoDOT’s flexibility on this issue.

LPA Projects (contracts with cities and counties): Please contact the owner of your contract for specific information on how the contract is being managed as a result of the COVID-19 virus. Reimbursements to those entities for projects that have funding through MoDOT will still be processed for completed work.

Stimulus Bill: Discussion occurred regarding the opportunity for additional funding from the Stimulus bill and MoDOT’s ability to have projects ready to let on a short time frame. Industry was interested in an update from the Director regarding the stimulus program at the Federal level.
Additional Note: We will extend an invitation to Bruce Wylie of ACEC.

The next meeting will be held on April 8, 2020 at 10:30 a.m.