Project Delivery Task Force
Meeting Summary
August 7, 2015

ATTENDEES	
TAQC	N/A
TCC/LOCAL AGENCIES	Jennifer Harper (PCIDs); Michael Smith (Dunwoody); Michelle Wright (Douglasville); Tavores Edwards (Coweta); Chris Haggard (Johns Creek); Randy Hulsey (Douglas); Phil Mallon (Fayette); Geoff Morton (Cherokee); Kyethea Clark (Marietta); Bill Andrews (Clayton); Shelley Peart (Atlanta); Michele Wynn (Atlanta); Greg Holder (Atlanta); Jeff Mueller (Norcross)
ARC	John Orr; David Haynes; Kofi Wakhisi; Byron Rushing; Allison Duncan; Haley Berry; Amy Goodwin; Chris Faulkner
GDOT	Bobby Hilliard; Matthew Fowler; Henry Green; Albert Shelby; Paul DeNard; Kaycee Mertz; Bessie Reina, Julia Billings
USDOT	Neosha Price (FHWA); Tamara Christion (FHWA); Mindy Roberson (FHWA)
MARTA	N/A
OTHERS	Jonathan Cox (Jacobs Engineering); Janille Smith-Colin (GA Tech), Kim Conroy (Jacobs Engineering); Jamie Fischer (GRTA); Shaun Green (ABI); Gil Grodzinsky (GAEPD); Josh Rowen (MBP), Todd Barker (Adrian Collaborative)

SUMMARY

1.   **Introductions**

Kofi Wakhisi, ARC, kicked off the meeting by welcoming the group and leading the introductions. Wakhisi reviewed the agenda with the committee.

2.   **Subcommittee Strategies**

Project Programming and Feasibility

Haley Berry, ARC, provided a quick overview of the discussions from the Project Programming and Feasibility Subcommittee. Berry noted that discussion has centered on developing a Screening Phase that includes completing a detailed risk assessment to understand the most likely fatal flaws. The Screening Phase is seen as a pre-TIP activity where once screening is complete, the project could move into a more formal scoping phase or directly into PE using federal funds. The Screening Phase may include producing a report that closely resembles a concept report which defines a projects in sufficient

detail to determine that it appears to be feasible. It may also include determining the conceptual project's budget, schedule, and most practical funding source. The outcomes is an action plan to move the project forward into engineering and design. Berry noted that the subcommittee will continue to discuss outstanding issues on criteria, process, funding, and requirements of a Screening Phase. Comments received by the committee members included eliminating throwaways.

Dealing With Change

Wakhisi gave a short summary of the Dealing with Change subcommittee. The subcommittee's discussions have focused on education and accountability of elected officials and local staff to ensure everyone understands the implications of funding increases and scope and schedule changes; consultant procurement procedures; a waiver process; project history documentation; and exploring abbreviated PFAs for studies.

Limited Scope Projects (formally Less Complex Projects)

Amy Goodwin, ARC, explained the subcommittee has changed names to Limited Scope Projects as it better meets the intent of the issues and projects being addressed by the subcommittee. Projects having a limited scope may use an abbreviated Concept Report format. Goodwin then identified several issues and resolving strategies that the subcommittee has been focusing on:

(1) Problem: when it is not cost effective to use federal funds. Strategies: set funding (dollar or investment) thresholds and implement fund swaps or trades

(2) Problem: costly and lengthy ROW process for projects requiring only temporary construction easements. Strategies: revise the three foot rule, changes to cost estimation tool, more training

(3) Problem: NEPA process for CEs take an average of 18mos. (GDOT est.) to 27mos. (LCI average). Strategies: streamline process through programmatic agreements, fund flexing, waiver procedures and or reduced requirements (when possible).

Streamlining Environmental Analysis

Chris Faulkner, ARC provided a quick overview of the discussion of the Streamlining Environmental Analysis subcommittee. Faulkner noted that this subcommittee has also been meeting with the RTP Environmental Consultation Group. The first recommendation defined in the PDTF Action Plan for this subcommittee called for developing a planning requirement for environmental screening. The Project Feasibility and Programming Subcommittee is developing a Screening Phase. The subcommittee has also encouraged improvements to the process to focus less on checklists and more on mitigation and

strategies to better plan projects (scope, schedule, and budget). Faulkner also mentioned that there is a meeting scheduled with environmental review consultants to get their feedback on the process and potential improvements. It was also noted that GDOT is updating the OES Manual and other improvements to better track internal review and progress of projects through the environmental process. Faulkner then presented a quick overview of the Environmental Database that has been developed that includes 13 environmentally sensitive layers. The database could be used as an initial screening tool during project concept and feasibility to understand the environmental risks and impacts.

Lunch was served.

3. **Project Feasibility and Deliverability Risk Assessment Guidelines for Local Governments**

Jonathan Cox, Jacob Engineering, provided an overview of the Risk Assessment Guidelines. The objectives of the guidelines is to improve project definitions, develop a clear project justification early in the process, identify risk impediments and early mitigation strategies, and develop a reliable scope, schedule, and budget. The guidelines are not intended to say whether a project is better than another project. The guidelines do not determine whether a project receives federal funding. It is intended to facilitate early conversations and develop delivery strategies early in the process.

There are five categories of the risk assessment: project management, environmental, utilities, ROW, and construct ability. The guidelines offer a risk scale based on whether there is a potential risk with zero meaning no risk and three meaning these is a high risk associated with the project for that particular element (historic resources, for example). Based on the number of risks determined, a more realistic schedule and budget is able to be developed.

Discussion by the committee included:

- How do we institutionalize the guidelines/risk assessment tool in the project development process?
- Has the tool been tested? Are there plans to test to the tool against projects?
- Tool should tell you things based on the outputs, for example, this project is good for a CE or these studies are needed/warranted.

- Tool is great if feeding in the right information- do you have to go out in the field. Going out in the field and conducting the assessment will help to determine the risk.
- Focus on field required information before going to the tool- need to know the real constraints to input into the tool.
- Understanding what they tool can and cannot do will be important.
- Is it possible to share the information that is put into a database for public use (for example- wetland delineation- when it is complete, can it be put into a database and made for public use?)
- This is a good tool to help local governments remember what to consider to establish a correct schedule and budget; however, not sure if the score provides meaningful value to the overall process.
- How will ARC use the score/outcomes to program in the TIP and ultimately program the use of federal funds?
- It would be helpful if the tool could self-interact with the (environmental) database.
- Include whether the federal, state, or local funding is a good fit for the project as an outcome of the tool.
- Indicate impacts to schedule and budget based on the risks as an outcome of the tool.
- This is a good exercise when in scoping and deciding if the project should be pursued or not.
- Make the tool accessible (by tablet) for use in the field. Extra feature would be the capability to import GIS data while in the field.
- Consider ARC to be the entity to complete the tool to ensure its reliability.
- A local government will choose to complete the assessment in house or consult out depending on where it is incorporated and/or required in the process.
- Is this intended for transit projects?
- Consider assigning a scoping phase (in the TIP) just to do the traffic analysis (and to determine logical termini).

4.   **Discussion of Subcommittee Findings**

Following the presentations by the subcommittees and the risk assessment guidelines/tool, Wakhisi opened the floor for discussion.

- Common theme: education. One strategy needs to be how to educate each of the various groups and provide technical resources.

- One challenge includes the political realities of implementing the tools.

- General weariness of numerical consequences of the risk assessment guidelines/tool. It's not one size fits all; but rather a guidance tool.

- If the tool is effective, should see big difference in schedule and then again in delivery assessment.

- The tool could be used for procurement qualifications- what are the biggest strategies for mitigation- since it is a qualified based selection.

- It would be nice to have a uniform procurement contract developed by ARC or GDOT. (Consider sharing GDOT's excel spreadsheet used during the procurement/negotiation period)

- Two areas to make significant progress by the end of the year: (1) Education- determine target audience and what needs to be done; (2) for limited scope projects, pick a dollar value for minimum federal funding level.

- Any changes to how GDOT does business needs to be shared across the state with the other MPOs. It was suggested that GAMPO's Annual Meeting in October may be a good time to share information about the PDTF and suggested recommendations.

MEETING HANDOUTS

1. **April 17, 2015 PDTF Meeting Agenda**
2. **2014 Project Delivery Action Plan Report**