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Chapter 9. Utility and Railroad Responsibilities

9.1 Overview of Local Government (LG) Utility and Railroad Responsibilities

The GDOT District Utilities Engineer is the primary point of contact for the LG for all activities related to utilities. The GDOT railroad point of contact for the LG is the GDOT Railroad Liaison Engineer in the State Office of Utilities. The LG is responsible for all arrangements with the owners of affected facilities for their protection, relocation or removal. The LG must accomplish this in accordance with GDOT policy and procedure for those facilities located within the limits of work. The LG will meet the requirements of the current edition of the GDOT Utilities Accommodation Policy and Standards Manual (UAM), to ensure encroachments are permitted and meet all conditions of existing agreements. The LG will follow the Federal Code of Regulations 23 CFR 645 & 646 and provide the GDOT with Certification of Compliance prior to its request for FHWA construction fund authorization. The LG must follow the PDP (See Chapter 5).

Any rail crossings involved or impacted by the project must be evaluated for adequate crossing protection. Crossing protections are to be coordinated with GDOT Railroad Crossing Program Manager in the State Office of Utilities, regardless of whether the railroad is located on system or off-system. Permission to work on railroad right of way must be obtained and coordinated with the Railroads which may extend project delivery for two years or more. When a Railroad Agreement is required the LG will provide details of work by each party, Buy America Language, method of payment, maintenance responsibilities and Insurance.

Any utilities not owned by a Railroad will be processed as a utility relocation by the LG and utilities own by the railroad will be covered in the Railroad Agreement. The GDOT District Utilities Engineer will assist the LGs to ensure compliance with federal and state laws but it is solely the LG responsibility to obtain specific authorization, including GDOT certification to relocate utilities and obtain approval of all utility agreements before proceeding with advertising for bids. It is also the LG's responsibility to ensure all Utility and Railroad activities initiate and end with the GDOT State Office of Utilities.

NOTE: Advertising any local administered project for bid prior to the FHWA construction authorized approval can result in the loss of all federal funding.

9.2 Local Government Overhead/Subsurface Utility Engineering (SUE) Responsibilities

The LG must make a decision as early as possible, but no later than the concept stage, whether or not to obtain a first submission directly from the affected utility owners (traditional method) or to obtain SUE services. The LG must consider using SUE services on any project where inaccurate underground utility information would negatively impact the project in a significant way. If the LG decides to obtain SUE services, then it will be their responsibility to notify the State Office of Utilities of their decision to ensure that SUE services were not already performed under a separate project. The SUE services will take the place of first submission to the Utility Owners.

The LG will refer to the UAM for details regarding the different Quality Levels of SUE and their uses or contact the State Subsurface Utilities Engineer in the State Office of Utilities for guidance. The selected SUE consultant/sub-consultant must be prequalified in area class 5.08. The Department's

SUE Scope of Services and other pertinent information can be found on the GDOT Office of Utilities SUE Website:

<http://www.dot.ga.gov/PS/Utilities/SUE>

The LG will be responsible for ensuring that the SUE information complies with the Department's Electronic Data Guidelines (EDG) and the Plan Presentation Guide (PPG). Also, when applicable, the LG must coordinate with the project's surveyor to ensure that there is no overlap in scope and to ensure that the SUE consultant/sub-consultant uses the proper survey controls.

The milestones set in the PDP must be adhered to by the LG to avoid delaying the project's schedule. The proper implementation of SUE in relation to the project's development is critical to maximizing its usefulness in utility conflict avoidance. Second submission to the Utility Owners follows the process detailed in Section 9.3 below regardless of whether the LG decides on obtaining First Submission to the Utility Owners or obtaining SUE services.

9.3 Local Government Utility Coordination

After the project mapping database is completed and concurrent with the field surveys, the LG will prepare utility plan sheets of the database, the concept alignment and an outline of the agreed upon proposed limit(s) of survey. The utility sheets will include all mapping features provided to date including (but not required) existing right of way and any identified environmental resources. The designer should note the approximate project limits for both the mainline and the side roads. The project limits should, in general, be the same limits provided to the environmental resource team for their surveys. Utility plan sets along with the proper electronic files will be provided to the Utility Owner for their use as the first (1st) submission of utility plans to "mark up" the location of existing utilities within the project limits. In addition, the LG should request information about the condition (type, age, recent maintenance issues, etc.) of the facility, prior rights to R/W or easements and whether the utility company has any plans for replacement or upgrade. Upon return from the utility companies the LG should verify the information provided for completeness and accuracy. The District Utilities Office shall be copied on all correspondence.

As preliminary design plans are developed, an interim submission for preliminary utility relocations should be requested from the Utility Owners in the same manner as the 1st submission. The preliminary utility relocation design should provide enough information to make fundamental determinations of how the proposed utilities will impact environmental resources, bridges, stage construction and ROW acquisition. The preliminary relocation plan request shall include preliminary design elements including but not limited to: preliminary roadway and cross street plans, profiles, cross sections, preliminary staging plans, and all identified environmental resources. The interim submission will also include a request for updated relocation cost or a preliminary request to retain facilities in place. Upon receipt of the markups, the LG should review to ensure the preliminary relocation design is consistent with the GDOT Utility Accommodation Policy and Standards Manual, and incorporated into the project plan set. This request is intended to provide preliminary relocation plans prior to PFPR. The District Utilities Office shall be copied on all correspondence.

The request for utility relocation plans, second submission for utility plans, must go to the respective Utility Owners for the utilities' use in verifying the location of their existing facilities and incorporation of the final utility relocation information. The LG will send updated base plan sheets and/or

electronic files to the Utility Owner as soon as the existing utility information has been plotted and the project's footprint is verified. This updated information will contain current construction plans with the plotted existing utility information, preliminary relocation, drainage plans (including longitudinal drainage and drainage profiles) and erosion control plans, stage construction plans, approved bridge layouts and wall locations with footing locations, ROW and easement lines, strain poles, overhead signs, and signal pole locations, cross sections, roadway profiles, and construction limits as set following the PFPR. The District Utilities Office shall be copied on all correspondence.

The final utility plans will be furnished to the District Utilities Engineer no later than three months before the Final Field Plan Review (FFPR). The District Utility Office shall be copied on all correspondence.

9.4 Utility Agreements

Utility Agreements are required on projects that involve a utility easement, utility right-of-way, or conflict with a utility that provide documentation showing "Prior Rights." The need for a utility agreement must be anticipated to avoid delaying the project. The LG Project Manager should check with the GDOT District Utilities Engineer early in the preliminary design stage to ascertain the required information needed to furnish the utility owner in order that utility agreements can be negotiated. All utility agreements must be approved and signed before a project can be certified for letting. Utility Certification is usually eleven (11) weeks before a letting for all projects. The District Utilities Office shall receive a copy of all reimbursable agreement between the LG and the Utility Owner.

9.5 Railroads

LGs are herein notified that railroad coordination and the processing of railroad agreements can take several years. It is imperative that any proposed work within 200 feet of or on railroad property such as the roadway crossing of any railroad or railroad right-of-way, including parallel encroachment, be identified early and coordination began immediately thereafter. The State Office of Utilities will be notified immediately upon the recognition of any such railroad involvement by the GDOT Project Manager or the LG. Any railroad coordination with the railroad located on an on-system route or on off-system route will be handled by the LG. The LG will provide the Railroad Liaison Engineer a copy of the executed construction agreement between the LG and the Railroad

All railroad agreements must be approved and signed before a project can be certified for letting. This is usually eleven (11) weeks for all projects.

9.6 Utility and Railroad Certifications

LG responsible staff in charge shall submit on municipal or county letterhead to the GDOT District Utilities Office the Utilities Certification Letter along with all utilities and railroad executed agreements. The required information is outlined below. The District Utilities Office will submit the information to the GDOT State Office of Utilities (Atlanta) who will certify to the Office of Engineering Services.

Local Let Utility Certification Requirements FOR STATE ROUTES

- Letter of facilities in conflict from each affected Utility/Railroad Owner to Sponsor
- Permit Requirements (submitted thru **Georgia Utilities Permit System**)
 - Permits Data/Form 8413
 - Utility Adjustment Schedule (UAS)
 - NPDES Compliance Form
 - Cost Arrangement Letter
 - Project Plans
- Agreement(s) for utility reimbursement (Include “Buy America” clause)
- “Status” for each Utility/Railroad Owner
- Approved Design Variance/Exception (if applicable)
- Executed Lighting Agreement
- Submit Utility Certification Request Letter to GDOT DUE

Local Let Utility Certification Requirements FOR OFF-SYSTEM ROUTES

- Letter of facilities in conflict from each affected Utility/Railroad Owner to Sponsor
- Agreement(s) for utility reimbursement (Include “Buy America” clause)
- “Status” for each Utility/Railroad Owner
- Submit Utility Certification Request Letter to GDOT DUE