
Purpose: The purpose of this document is to briefly describe the Locally Administered Projects (LAP) process and highlight the responsibilities for successful local utility coordination.

Locally Administered Project: A locally administered project (LAP) – also known as a local let project – is a project which is managed and let by a local government. The LAP Sponsor is the local government in receipt of Federal funds and responsible for letting the project, administering the construction contract, and coordinating all activities in the PE, ROW, and Construction phases. Local let projects are required to follow GDOT’s Plan Development Process (PDP). As part of this requirement, the Sponsor is responsible for all utility coordination on the project. Utility coordination shall be done in accordance with the Utility Accommodation Policy and Standards Manual (UAM), current edition, for locally administered projects unless another Manual has been adopted by a project Sponsor. (A Sponsor-adopted manual only applies to local jurisdiction routes.)

For locally administered projects, it is requested (as a minimum) that a copy of the following utility information be submitted to the District Utilities Office for each Utility Owner located within the project limits.

- Projects involving a State Route System:
 - A Copy of the First and Second Submission Letters to each Utility Owner
 - “No Facilities Letter” or “No Conflict Letter” from each Utilities Owner on their letterhead (if applicable).
 - Letter showing receipt of Marked Plans for Existing and Proposed Adjustments or Relocation of the Utility Facilities within the project from each Utility Owner.
 - Any Joint Use Agreements for traffic signal or ATMS work.
 - Copies of executed lighting agreements for any street or decorative lighting.
 - Prior Rights information along with documentation that satisfactory arrangements have been made with each Utility Owner for reimbursement of utility adjustments.

- Projects involving an Off System route will require the following information before certification.
 - A Copy of the First and Second Submission Letters to each Utility Owner
 - “No Facilities Letter” or “No Conflict Letter” from each Utilities Owner on their letterhead (if applicable).
 - Documentations that satisfactory arrangements have been made with each Utility Owner for reimbursements for utility adjustments (if applicable).

The project responsibilities and schedule will be coordinated through the GDOT Project Manager (PM) and will be in line with the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) / Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Concept Development: The Sponsor will begin developing a concept report that establishes the scope of work for the project. The Project Manager (PM) will request a Concept Team Meeting at which GDOT and Sponsor representatives will discuss the feasibility of the project and any alternatives considered. The report will be submitted to GDOT for management approval once any comments from the Concept Team Meeting have been addressed.

During the concept development, the project Sponsor is encouraged to perform a utility ballpark cost estimate based on anticipated impacts of the project. A ballpark estimate needs to be considered for each alternative and included in the report, as this may assist in providing justification for choosing one alternative over another.

Preliminary Design: The preliminary design phase begins after the concept report has been approved. The Sponsor will begin completing environmental studies and will submit an environmental document for GDOT review and FHWA approval. As per the PDP, the Sponsor should send a 1st Submission to all utility companies within the project area requesting existing utility information. Response time will depend on the project type as per the UAM.

Subsurface Utility Engineering (SUE) services are not required on local let projects; however, they may be beneficial and depending on the project's scope of work. SUE would take the place of 1st Submission plans and confirmation of SUE plans would be required from each Utility Owner. SUE confirmation would be sent out in the form of a letter to each utility requesting their concurrence or corrections to the SUE plans as well as their anticipated preliminary relocation for facilities in conflict (see next paragraph concerning preliminary relocation). The District Utilities Office should be copied on all transmittals related to this correspondence.

Following 1st Submission but prior to Preliminary Field Plan Review (PFPR), and once the design of the project plans is further developed, a request should be sent to each utility owner within the project asking for a preliminary relocation plan. This is not a 2nd Submission nor is it a request for a detailed analysis of anticipated adjustments. Rather it is intended to be a "first-glance" assessment of what facilities will likely be adjusted and any anticipated conflict points that could affect the phasing or staging of the project, help establish better defined Right of Way limits, environmental impacts and reduce any unforeseen impacts that may affect the project schedule. If a project utilized SUE, the request for preliminary relocation should accompany the SUE confirmation request.

Once the environmental document is approved by FHWA and the Sponsor is in receipt of all 1st Submission plans, a PFPR will be requested by the PM. Preliminary Plans should not be submitted for a PFPR request until all existing facilities gathered from the 1st Submission or SUE have been shown in the plans. Existing facilities based solely on survey data or field visits are not acceptable documentation.

If the project proposes a bridge or other structures, a GDOT-approved bridge layout or structural drawing must be submitted with the PFPR plans. If existing or proposed utilities are to be attached to or

otherwise impact a structure, that information should be shown on the bridge layout or structural drawing.

During the PFPR, the Sponsor will discuss the preliminary relocations provided by the utility owners. Some projects may be candidates for an e-mail plan review; the PM and GDOT's Office of Engineering Services (OES) will make that determination. An official PFPR report will be generated by the OES and responses will be made by the PM following the review.

The Sponsor will be tasked with ensuring that any required design variances or exceptions are submitted and approved. Approval of a variance/exception shall be completed before the Final Field Plan Review (FFPR) is requested. Design variances/exceptions are not encouraged but may be required depending on the project's scope and budget. The AASHTO Roadside Design Guide, GDOT Design Policy Manual, and UAM should be consulted to verify that existing features in the right of way are not out of compliance with clear zone or lateral offsets. Any feature that is within clear zone or does not meet the lateral offset requirements will require an approved design variance or exception.

For projects that propose lighting along a state route, the photometrics for those lights must be approved by GDOT prior to the request for FFPR. After photometric approval, the lighting plans can be included in the plans for FFPR. Lighting plans for on-system projects must be approved by GDOT and will require a lighting agreement.

Right of Way Acquisition: Once a PFPR has been held and an environmental document has been approved, Right of Way Plans can be submitted to GDOT for approval. Upon Right of Way Plan approval, Right of Way funds can be authorized and Notice to Proceed (NTP) for Right of Way Acquisition will be issued to the project Sponsor. GDOT highly recommends that all easements be purchased with the right to place utilities. If a utility company needs to purchase easements outside the limits of the project's right of way, the Sponsor's acquisition agent should coordinate with those companies as the right of way acquisition proceeds. If the required right of way extends beyond an existing utility easement, an Easement Limited Agreement shall be executed between the Sponsor and the utility company. If Right of Way acquisition is to be done by GDOT, the Right of Way Acquisition Manager will coordinate all activities during this phase of the project.

Final Design: Once the PFPR report is approved, the Sponsor will begin completing design plans and preparing the required certification documents. A 2nd Submission should be sent to all utility companies, with the same response time as requested for the 1st Submission, requesting a relocation design. The District Utilities Office should be copied on 2nd Submission transmittals to utility companies and given the opportunity to review proposed relocations. Once 2nd Submission responses are provided and the design plans are complete (including final bridge or structural plans), a FFPR will be requested by the PM. Plans that do not include all existing and proposed utilities should not be submitted for a FFPR request. At the FFPR, any final comments or corrections will be addressed and the Sponsor will make any adjustments to the plans. If the design of the project changes in a manner as to effect the current

relocation of utilities, a revised 2nd Submission should be sent to all utility companies for their review and response.

Certification: The utility, right of way, and environmental certification is a concurrent process along with the final design. The Sponsor is responsible for providing the following documentation to satisfy GDOT requirements for utility certification.

1. For all facilities in conflict and requiring relocation, a letter to the Sponsor indicating said conflict and proposed resolution and relocation is required from each utility company affected.
2. Additionally, if an agreement is in place for utility reimbursement by the Sponsor or some other entity, that agreement must be provided to GDOT which includes the Buy America clause.
3. For facilities that are not in conflict, a letter stating “No Conflict” and “No Cost” should be provided by each respective company to the Sponsor. If a utility does not have facilities in the project limits, a letter indicating such should be submitted to the Sponsor.
4. If a project is located along or intersects a state route, a utility permit must be submitted through GUPS by project PI number, for each facility within the right of way of the state route. If only a portion of the utility’s facilities are within the state route right of way, then only that portion must be permitted. Permits for proposed lighting, if said lighting is to be installed and maintained by a utility owner and “No-Conflict” facilities are required for portions of the project that are along the state route.

All permit requests must include the applicable documentation including DOT Form 8413, location map, project plan sheets showing relocations (if applicable), NPDES permit, cost arrangement documents, design variances and/or exceptions (if applicable), approved lighting photometrics (if applicable), and Utility Adjustment Schedule (UAS).

If facilities are being placed in the Sponsor’s construction contract for projects which are along an on-system route, and the utility owner is not providing any assistance towards their relocation work, then GUPS permits will not be required. The items which are required may include but are not limited to the following: Buy America clause, utility MOU, cost arrangements, construction plan utility relocation sheets, relocation pay items in the summary of quantities and specifications, utility special provisions, et cetera. These items must be provided as part of the utility certification package.

5. A Local Let Utility Certification Request Letter from the Sponsor will be addressed to the GDOT District Utilities Engineer on Sponsor letterhead, listing each utility company within the project area and an associated “status” for each company. “Status” is described as one of the following:
 - **Status 1:** The Utility/Railroad Owner is in conflict with the project and requires relocation by the Utility/Railroad Owner during construction requiring coordination with the Contractor and the Utility/Railroad Owner. The relocations are non-reimbursable

and the Utility/Railroad Owner will be relocating at no cost to the Local Government or the Department.

- **Status 2:** The Utility/Railroad Owner is in conflict with the project and requires relocation by the Utility/Railroad Owner during construction requiring coordination with the contractor and the Utility/Railroad Owner. The reimbursable agreement (which includes Buy America clause) between the Local Government and the Utility/Railroad Owner is attached.
 - **Status 3:** The Utility/Railroad Owner is located within the project limits but requires no relocation work.
 - **Status 4:** Utility/Railroad relocation to be incorporated into the highway construction project contract which requires Buy America clause.
6. An approved Design Variance and/or Exception for on-system facilities which do not comply with either AASHTO's Roadside Design Guide or GDOT's Design Policy Manual or UAM. Facilities which are off-system and not in compliance with the above manuals should be addressed in design documentation.
 7. An executed Lighting Agreement or Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between GDOT and the Sponsor for on-system proposed lighting on the project.
 8. Each of the documents addressed above, as applicable, must be submitted to GDOT's PM with the Local Let Utility Certification Request Letter.

Recommendation for utility certification by the District Utilities Engineer will be held until all items above are submitted, including final plans, and all required GUPS permits have been submitted.

Authorization and Letting: Once a project has received final plan approval and GDOT is in receipt of acceptable project certifications (utility, right of way, and environmental), GDOT will request construction funds to be authorized for the project. Afterwards, GDOT will issue a Notice to Proceed (NTP) for Bids to the Sponsor; the Sponsor subsequently advertises the project. Their bid results are submitted for review and approval by the District Construction Office. Their approval prompts the PM to draft the Construction Agreement for execution between GDOT and the Sponsor. The Construction Agreement establishes the responsibilities of both parties, the funding and reimbursement of the project, and includes the low bid results that have been recommended by the Sponsor and approved by GDOT. Upon execution of the Construction Agreement, GDOT issues NTP for Construction to the Sponsor.

Construction: A preconstruction conference is held on all locally administered projects subsequent to NTP (Construction). It is recommended that the Sponsor invite utility companies involved with the project to attend, and following the preconstruction conference, the Sponsor hold monthly utility coordination meetings with utility companies, contractors, and construction personnel until all utility work has been completed. The Sponsor is tasked with all construction management responsibilities.

Funding: The funding for a locally administered project may come from multiple sources. In many cases, a Federal award has been set aside for the project, conditional upon matching funds being provided by the Sponsor, usually at twenty percent. Related to utility costs, the amount which can be reimbursed to the Sponsor or the amount which can be included in the project's contract will depend on the type of funding and any restrictions associated with those funds. However, there are a few general rules that apply.

If utility adjustments are included in the project's contract, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and reimbursable agreement must be executed prior to utility certification. If reimbursement is being sought for utilities not included in the project contract, agreements for payment between the Sponsor and the utility company must be included in the certification documents as well as the Construction Agreement.

Roles: The role of the *Project Manager (PM)* in the local let process is similar to their role in any other GDOT project. They are the main point of contact for all project issues and questions and are tasked with keeping the project on schedule and within the scope and budgetary limits set forth. The Project Manager is responsible for ensuring that the Sponsor adequately handles all utility coordination.

The role of the *District Utilities Office (DUO)* is to review and provide comments to plans at PFPR and FFPR, serve as a subject matter expert to the Project Manager, and assist in the recommendation for utility certification once the required documents are provided (including review and approval of permits).