

Best Practices on Major Projects Example from Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project

1. *Issue or Need Identified/Addressed.* Coordinated, corridor-wide contract management.

The Woodrow Wilson Bridge project involves 26 individual prime construction contracts, many of which depend (or did depend) in some way on the actions of an adjacent contractor before the former could move on to perform a subsequent work phase. In a mega-project with multiple prime contractors, the sponsor “owns” the interfaces. That is, should one contractor delay another, the project sponsor could find itself financial liable for the delay to the affected contractor. [This risk is an accepted tradeoff in packaging contracts to attract competitive bids.] For many reasons, it was important to the sponsors that this particular mega-project stay on schedule (and on-budget).

2. *Strategy or Best Practice developed/implemented to address the issue or need*

Sponsors used a special provision in all contracts requiring contractors to resolve the conflicts between jobs contractor-to-contractor. Additionally, the incentive/disincentive structure in selected key contracts included bonuses that could be earned only if the corridor-wide effort met specified milestones. The GEC conducts formal corridor coordination meetings each month to assure that all firms are cooperating toward the common goal and to share issue resolutions with all affected parties.

Sponsors also included detailed specifications in each construction contract requiring use of Primavera® scheduling software, along with required report content and update frequency. Experienced GEC schedulers review every schedule submitted and winnow out unsupported logic. The Primavera® standardization makes it possible for GEC schedulers to extract information needed to monitor the integrated corridor-wide schedule. Also, a special provision for submittals requires contractors to link their submittal schedules to the construction schedule.

3. *Results*

The emphasis on corridor-wide coordination has helped individual contractors to understand that they cannot succeed to the maximum extent unless the entire project succeeds. It has created a remarkable sense of community among the firms involved, which contributes directly to the on-time performance of this mega-project.

One example: the GEC saw from their Primavera® schedules that slow progress by Potomac Constructors, LLC, could keep G.A. & F.C. Wagman, Inc., from building Wall 23 on time, potentially delaying opening of the new Outer Loop bridge span. Alerted by the GEC under the special provision for contractor-to-contractor coordination, Potomac Constructors and Wagman entered a written agreement allowing Wagman to start Wall 23 early, preserving the schedule and holding MSHA harmless for late access to the Maryland Abutment area.

The standardized scheduling specification has also created a degree of consistency among the contract schedules. This consistency allows the GEC schedulers to zero in on issues and to capture key performance indicators for review by project sponsors in a useful way.

Requiring that submittal schedules be linked to the construction schedule metered the flow of submittals so that reviewers could focus on the most important items to support field activities. It prevented the Section Designers from being flooded with submittals and confronted with a contractual requirement to review them all within 30 days.

Contact: Jitesh Parikh, Project Manager, Maryland Division, 410-779-7136