

# Improving DOT and Railroad Coordination (SHRP2 R16)



**The increasing number of projects and interactions between railroads and Departments of Transportation (DOTs) is a critical national highway transportation issue. The procedural advancements promoted through this EDC-3 effort can improve practices and nurture continued collaboration. Road users will see the positive results of faster, smarter highway renewal in facilities and budgets.**

Each year, transportation agencies construct hundreds of highway projects that cross over, under or parallel to railroad rights-of-way, requiring extensive coordination between the organizations responsible for these structures. Although most projects go smoothly, delays in development and construction do occur.

Railroads must carefully evaluate transportation agency projects in terms of safety, engineering and operational impacts both during construction and for decades afterward. For agencies, delays incurred while waiting for railroad reviews and agreements can increase project costs and extend renewal needs for users.

With railroad volumes projected to grow, the need for project coordination will continue to increase. Cementing mutual understanding and streamlining processes will save money and time for both railroads and public agencies.

This EDC-3 effort promotes the enhanced use of a virtual document library, document builder and online training available through the second Strategic Highway Research Program (SHRP2) R16 project, which allows public agencies and railroads to identify and circumvent sources of conflict and develop memoranda of understanding (MOUs) for project and program needs. The collection of model agreements, sample contracts, training materials and standardized best practices reflects both railroad and public agency perspectives, processes, budgets, funding and good practices.

Many state DOTs and local public agencies, the majority of the Class 1 railroads, several regional railroads, the Federal Railroad Administration and two national railroad organizations – the American Association of Railroads and the American Railroad Engineering and Maintenance Association – contributed to the development of the document library, case studies and training materials.



## BENEFITS

- **Improved Communication.** A suite of tools helps public transportation agencies and railroads to identify and circumvent sources of conflict.
- **Expedited Project Delivery.** MOUs developed for project and program needs can expedite delivery.
- **Reduced Project Costs.** Less delays incurred while waiting for reviews and agreements equals less increases in project costs.

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## CURRENT STATE OF THE PRACTICE

The Arkansas, Colorado, Pennsylvania and South Dakota DOTs are lead adopters under the SHRP2 Implementation Assistance Program. Activities underway by these states include reviewing internal and external procedures, workflows, and policies, and developing or revising master agreement templates and streamlining processes.

The following are additional examples of recent DOT and railroad coordination:



- ▶ The Idaho Transportation Department and the California and Texas DOTs have been awarded user incentive funding to revise master agreements, mitigate challenges that arise from a lack of standardized practices and analyze internal processes.
- ▶ A recently executed MOU and master agreement between the Colorado DOT and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad used a number of model components.
- ▶ North Carolina has used master right-of-entry agreements with CSX for routine activities to streamline access to rights-of-way.
- ▶ Texas is developing a reverse master agreement with Union Pacific to expedite agreements when the railroad needs access for railroad expansion projects.

## SUPPORT AND AVAILABLE TOOLS

- ▶ EDC-3 Improving DOT and Railroad Coordination Web page: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/innovation/everydaycounts/edc-3/railroad.cfm>
- ▶ The SHRP 2 program website provides additional information on Railroad–DOT Mitigation Strategies (R16), including links to a recorded webinar, fact sheet and research report: [http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/goshrp2/Solutions/All/R16/RailroadDOT\\_Mitigation\\_Strategies](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/goshrp2/Solutions/All/R16/RailroadDOT_Mitigation_Strategies)



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*Every Day Counts (EDC), a State-based initiative of FHWA's Center for Accelerating Innovation, works with State, local and private sector partners to encourage the adoption of proven technologies and innovations aimed at shortening and enhancing project delivery*

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