A DIVISION OF CAPITAL PLANNING ADMINISTRATION

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has tasked ODOT with overseeing all federal aid transportation projects. Local Public Agency (LPA) apply to different fund managers such as Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO’s), County Engineer Association of Ohio (CEAO), ODOT Central Office and other sources. Once a project receives federal funds, it becomes an LPA project.

LPA then determine if a traditional let or non traditional let is best for them. A traditional let means that the local agency is responsible for administering the design and right of way for the project. Administering essentially means holding the contract with a consultant who is designing the project. ODOT is then responsible for administering the advertising, letting and construction of the project. During the design and right of way process, ODOT project managers (PM) manage and review each stage of the project. ODOT PM ensure that all Federal and State guidelines are met. ODOT PM file the job with central office once the plans are complete, environmental is clear and the right of way is certified. Once the project is let, ODOT takes complete control of the construction administration. ODOT enters into a contract, with a contractor, to build the project. ODOT either chooses to use their own forces or hire a consultant to manage the construction. Since ODOT is administering the construction, the contract for the consultant would be directly with ODOT not the local.

Non-Traditional let means that the local agency is responsible for administering the project from design all the way through construction. This includes letting and awarding the contract with the contractor. This also includes either using their own forces or hiring a consultant to manage the construction. All of the contracts are between the local agency and contractor. ODOT is not a party to any of the contracts.

Every project starts out as traditional let project. In order to qualify to go non-traditional, local agencies must pass 12 LPA learning modules and complete an LPA participation form that spells out several different policies and procedures. Once qualified, projects are considered on a case by case basis. Currently, there are approximately 150 non-traditional and 30 traditional. ODOT still oversees these projects because the FHWA has tasked ODOT with overseeing all federal aid transportation projects and ensures that all Federal and State guidelines are met during construction.

Pictured Left to Right: Jon Hunt, P.E., Chris Surma, & Jeff Cutler, P.E.
LPA Help Kids get to School Safely

Chris Surma is the District 4 Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Coordinator. Safe Routes to Schools was introduced in the 2005 SAFETEA-LU Transportation bill. The program aims to make active transportation for students in grades kindergarten through eighth routine and safe, by offering 100% federal funding to local public agencies for infrastructure improvement projects and also for non-infrastructure education and encouragement programs.

Projects are broken up into two categories, non-infrastructure or educational programs for students, and infrastructure projects that include new sidewalks and pedestrian safety improvements.

Annually, the SRTS program offers approximately $4 million in SRTS funding, with the majority, approximately $3.5 million- allocated to infrastructure improvements. It is a very competitive program, as requests usually exceed $18 million. Many communities and schools in District 4 have successfully implemented both infrastructure and non-infrastructure activities. In fact, all but one county in District 4 has implemented a non-infrastructure program, or constructed an infrastructure project. All counties have communities that have at least developed a school travel plan.

“It's great to be able to help improve a small segment of a larger positive community initiative,” Surma said.

In 2017, District 4 awarded $105,000 for non-infrastructure projects in the Cities of Youngstown, Barberton and Akron. In 2016, $790,000 was awarded for both infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects.

SRTS Helps Taft Elementary School

Taft Elementary in the City of Youngstown, Mahoning County in September 2017 completed a $200,000 project to upgrade signals, signs, pavement markings, curb ramps and sidewalks. Another project scheduled to sell in April 2020 will add pedestrian countdown signals, sidewalks around intersections on priority routes and bicycle racks near schools.

Since the creation of the Safe Routes to School Program in 2005, $70 million has been awarded to schools throughout the state.