SHRP2 SOLUTIONS
TOOLS FOR THE ROAD AHEAD

Railroad-DOT Mitigation Strategies (R16)

Innovative techniques that streamline processes, coordination, and partnering between transportation agencies and railroads

Challenge

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.

Solution

The collection of model agreements, sample contracts, training materials, and standardized best practices developed through SHRP2 enable public agencies and railroads to identify and circumvent sources of conflict, and develop memorandums of understanding (MOUs) to advance projects. These templates reflect railroad and public agency perspectives, processes, budgets, funding, and good practices.

The report Strategies for Improving the Project Agreement Process Between Highway Agencies and Railroads includes the following model documents to expedite negotiations.

- Partnering Memorandum of Understanding - a nonbinding agreement that can drive development of shared understandings, vocabulary, and definition of success, as well as expected performance.
- Master Project Agreement - a legally binding agreement with “boilerplate” provisions that both parties can incorporate by reference into all following agreements. It also lays out funding responsibilities in partnering, particularly how the public agency will compensate the railroad for required reviews and related activities, a common source of conflict.
- Preliminary Engineering Agreement - brief project details can be inserted into this standard preliminary engineering (PE) agreement to quickly authorize engineering reviews by the railroad, and expedite PE for the public agency.
- Resurfacing Agreements - two model agreements, one for federally-funded projects and one for state-funded projects, that reflect the common needs of public agencies and railroads when resurfacing highway sections at railroad crossings, including railroad-specific issues and solutions to deliver the necessary smooth transitions to the adjacent pavement sections.
- Highway Overpass Agreement - a standard agreement with provisions that reflect safety and operational requirements critical to this type of project.
- Warning Devices Agreement - a standard agreement specific to projects involving installation, maintenance, improvements, and replacement of warning devices such as gates and lights.
- Pipe and Wire Agreement - a type of agreement required for installation, construction, or maintenance of drainage pipes, pipelines, utility lines, and other linear structures that intersect a railway. The frequency of pipe and wire projects has led to standardized agreements and approaches to construction and maintenance.

Save Lives

The model agreements lay out standardized construction and operational needs, enhancing safety around construction zones.

Save Money

An easier project agreement process can speed project delivery and reduce the costs associated with conflict-related delays.

Save Time

These resources streamline the permitting process and support cooperative action between highway departments and railroad agencies, which speeds project delivery and expedites the review process, thereby reducing construction time and total project time.

RENEWAL

One of four SHRP2 focus areas, Renewal products help transportation organizations rapidly build and restore highway infrastructure that lasts longer while minimizing user disruption and delay.

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Visit: www.fhwa.dot.gov/GoSHRP2
Learn more about products, case studies, and implementation assistance.

Railroad-DOT Mitigation Strategies has also been selected to be one of FHWA's Every Day Counts-3 initiatives, so a wide variety of support is available to help agencies and railroads interested in using this product.

Benefits

Railroad volumes are expected to continue to grow, increasing the importance of effective project coordination between public highway departments and railroads. Railroad-DOT Mitigation Strategies cements understanding of each agency's needs and streamlines the coordination process, saving both time and money. Road users will also benefit from on-budget, rapid highway renewal.

The Implementation Assistance Program

Implementation assistance is available to help State departments of transportation (DOTs), metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), and other interested organizations deploy SHRP2 Solutions. A range of opportunities is available to raise awareness of SHRP2 Solutions and to encourage early adoption of these products. Application periods are offered approximately twice per year. Each product selected for implementation assistance has the potential to deliver more efficient, cost-effective programs to meet the complex challenges facing transportation today.

How can you learn more?

Visit: www.fhwa.dot.gov/GoSHRP2

- Additional product information
- Information about how this product is being used in the field
- Contact information for peers who are familiar with this product
- Links to research reports

Contacts

Joseph Taylor (FHWA)
joseph.taylor@dot.gov

Keith Platte (AASHTO)
kplatte@aashto.org

About SHRP2 Implementation

The second Strategic Highway Research Program (SHRP2) is a partnership of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), and the Transportation Research Board (TRB). TRB completed the research, and now FHWA and AASHTO are jointly implementing the resulting SHRP2 Solutions that will help the transportation community enhance productivity, boost efficiency, increase safety, and improve the reliability of the Nation's highway system.