West Virginia Planning for Performance Management

A Simple Plan of Attack

Approaching performance management can often seem intimidating and overwhelming. So, when the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) first started their approach to performance management, they decided they needed to figure out a plan of attack. Their plan was "simple," and would:

- Review existing conditions.
- Set a manageable number of performance measures.
- Create a pilot dashboard with an implementation plan.
- Design pilot budget approaches to address their funding limitations.
- Review this process and revise as necessary.

Early on WVDOT recognized that shifting to a performance based program would be a resource intensive process; therefore they hired a consultant to assist with their plan. Together WVDOT and the consultant set priorities using performance measures from WVDOT's Stewardship Agreements with their Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and USDOT.

Performance Measures

WVDOT started their performance management measure process with just a few measures. The limited number of measures made the early stages of implementation manageable. It was understood by WVDOT that as they gained a better understanding of performance measures and dashboard reporting, they could expand their measures as desired. Having just a few measures allowed WVDOT to understand the process of tracking performance

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Created & began executing a plan to implement performance management.
- Created pilot budget approaches to address funding/budget limitations.
- Improved delivery of STIP projects from 19% to 80% over a 5 year period.
- In the process of creating a pilot Executive Dashboard for management & public use.
- In the process of creating a pilot Business Dashboard that is geospatial for internal use.

measures and interpreting the results. For instance, WVDOT understands that a performance measures is just one piece of a much larger picture. Consequently, it is important to understand exactly what their performance measures are telling them and ensure that they are aware of the limitations of the measure. Starting with a manageable number of measures also allowed the team to gain an understanding of the difference between process-based and outcome-based measures. Process-based measures specify the method to be used, and outcome-based measures specify the desired result.

Pilot Dashboards: Executive & Business

To report these new WVDOT performance measures, WVDOT wanted to use a dashboard. They determined that two dashboards would best serve their internal and external shareholders. Several states utilize dashboards as a quick way to show their performance. Rather than reinvent the dashboard concept WVDOT selected aspects from multiple state dashboards that align with their program needs.

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The first dashboard WVDOT created is an Executive Dashboard that will include: Pavement Preservation, Safety (Fatal and Injury Crashes), and Project and Program Delivery. This Executive Dashboard will be visible to everyone. WVDOT was fond of the format and the drill down usability of Virginia DOT's Dashboards for Safety and Project Delivery. Therefore they are utilizing some of these components for their pilot Executive Dashboard.

The second WVDOT dashboard is the Business Dashboard that displays information graphically, and is geographically referenced. The dashboard is designed to be interactive for users, and contains the nuts and bolts for reporting. It is only accessible to WVDOT staff, which allows for open collaboration. The dashboard is also formatted based on Minnesota DOT's dashboard.

WVDOT dashboards will have links to other data and information. One particular link that will be included is the WVDOT Fact Book, which summaries key element facts and financing that supports the organization. In addition, the dashboards will have a glossary for the public who may be unfamiliar with transportation terminology. WVDOT leadership expects the dashboards to be useful in showing reporting requirements for the Stewardship Agreements.

Pilot Budget Approaches

To address the never ending funding concerns, another aspect of WVDOT's "simple" plan is the implementation of a pilot project to revise how budgets are created. Rather than having a set budget and just doing the best they can, WVDOT plans to set their budgets and projects based on their measures to achieve their targets.

The pilot plan is to have three Districts inventory and rate their existing infrastructure. With that information, they will set target goals for a performance or service level. The District budgets will be set with specific projects selected to help achieve these outcome-based targets. WVDOT is also acquiring a new software system that should help them streamline the budgeting process based on

the existing infrastructure needs. They have been performing long term planning for years, but data reported with the new system will make their process easier for their staff and the public to understand.
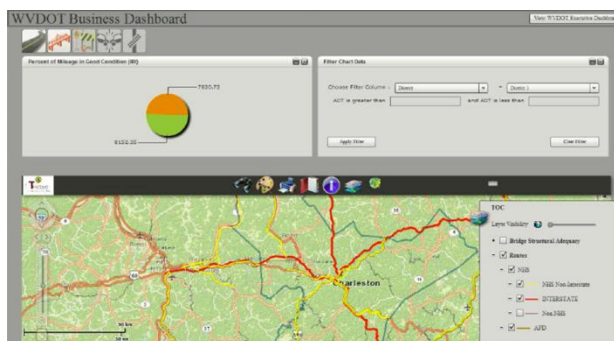

Figure 1. WVDOT Business Dashboard: Pavement Theme NHS Routes for District 1
IMAGE: WVDOT

Results

While WVDOT is not new to collecting and reporting data, they are new to outcome-based performance measures. WVDOT still has a lot to do, however they have made great strides with their "simple" plan of attack. They not only developed their plan, but have taken the first steps toward success by developing their pilot dashboards and new budget approaches. As a result of WVDOT's performance management tracking effort, they have improved their delivery of Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) projects from 19% to 80% within 5 years. Stay tuned for the future of performance management with WVDOT.

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