Mn/DOT’s Project Management Peer Review
Creating a Project Management Culture
Overview

- Mn/DOT’s Objectives
- National DOT trends and perspectives
- Peer Review Process and Results
- Construction Industry Perspective
- Next Steps
- Q & A
Why a Peer Review?
Why Project Management?

• Improve project delivery performance – on time, on budget (an issue we share with peers)
• Benchmark Mn/DOT’s project management practices
• Initial step in a change management process
• Check for best industry practices
• Build from our success
Project Management Aligns with Mn/DOT’s Strategic Vision

• Project Management is viewed as a key element to successfully implementing the Strategic Directions of Safety, Mobility, Innovation, Leadership and Transparency

• A “Project Management Culture” is Mn/DOT’s Goal – to create, implement, support and sustain this culture
Project Management

Scope

Risk

Budget

Quality

Schedule
Recent National Work in Transportation Project Management


Mn/DOT Steering Committee and Project Team Leadership
Project Oversight and Champions

- **Steering Committee**
  - Commissioner
  - Deputy Commissioner
  - 3 Division Directors
  - 1 Asst. Div. Director
  - 2 District Engineers
  - FHWA

- **Project Team**
  - Advisory to Steering Committee
  - Developed the Peer Review agenda
  - Communicated with Stakeholders
  - Cross-Sectional representation of Mn/DOT and external partners
An Opportunity to Partner...

- **CTS**
  - Jim Grothaus, CTS Project Manager
  - Laurie McGinnis, Stephanie Malinoff, and Joe Barbeau

- **CH2M HILL, Inc.**
  - Doug Abere and Tim Thoreen
  - John Conrad, Tim Neuman and Mike Paddock
Peer Review Process

• Background Documents Provided
  - White paper (current practices, national studies)
  - Survey of Mn/DOT Staff (180+ responses)

• Peer Review Panel (visited week of Oct. 5-8, 2009)
  - Pasco Bakotich, Washington State DOT
  - Sidonia Detmer, Virginia DOT
  - Tucker Ferguson, Pennsylvania DOT
  - Larry Langer, Arizona DOT
  - Jim McMinimee, Utah DOT
  - George Jones, FHWA
  - Laurie McGinnis, U of MN, CTS
  - John Conrad, CH2M HILL
  - Tim Neuman, CH2M HILL
Panel Members Learned How Mn/DOT “Does Business”

Conducted Interviews
- 20 Group Interviews
- Interviewed 100+ Mn/DOT Staff

Interviews Focused on Four Categories
- Project Phases
- Functional/Program Areas
- Initiatives and Support
- Specific Projects
Best Practices Exist in Mn/DOT

• Widespread implementation of scoping process and support for CE/CM, including:
  – Routine project reviews
  – Scope amendment process

• There is a strong project delivery focus and culture
  – Informal networks for resource sharing
  – Empowered to use consultants

• Training programs are valued and encouraged
Best Practices Exist in Mn/DOT

(cont.)

• Innovation is promoted, for example:
  - Contracting (contractor incentives, Design-Build process)
  - Utility group process improvements; REALMS (R/W)
  - IT Program Office PM organization and use of PMBOK processes

• Hear Every Voice and CSS are valuable tools

• Annual reporting of schedule delays and reasons given helps
What are Good PM Skills?

• Good communication skills
• “Big Picture” point of view; ambiguity about project details will not hinder progress
• Understanding of Mn/DOT processes to ground decision-making
• Able to manage project change
Project Management Opportunities and Challenges

• The panel identified several opportunities for change

• Two major themes help organize the findings:
  – Development of a project management organization and culture
  – Enhancing project management tools, technology, training, and methods
Panel Observations (1 of 3)

- The term “project manager” has many definitions within Mn/DOT, resulting in:
  - Unclear transitions in the PM role
  - No performance measures to work from
  - Inconsistency in roles and responsibilities

- Build understanding of baseline schedules and cost estimates

Early involvement of construction staff
Panel Observations (2 of 3)

- Include tools for risk and conflict management in the development of projects
- Develop resource/knowledge management systems and networks
- Gaps exist in training for experienced project managers
- Explore project manager core competencies and career tracks
- Utilize team charters
Panel Observations (3 of 3)

- Project Management Plans should be used regularly (and should be appropriately scaled)
- PPMS (Mn/DOT’s project tracking software/system) does not provide the capabilities needed for advanced project management
- Other potential areas for improvement:
  - Track and keep project commitments
Construction Industry Perspective

- Most everything Mortenson does is project management.
- We share common priorities and focal points – a focus on delivery of projects.
- Careful balance between structured project management processes (technical aspects) and the importance of softer skills and forward-looking strategies.
Emphasis: Clarify the authority and responsibilities of Project Managers

- The PM is the leader of the project team
- “CEO of the Project”, with full responsibility for the success of the project:
  - Preconstruction and design-phase management
  - Safety, quality, productivity management
  - Scheduling and budget management
Emphasis: Clarify the authority and responsibilities of Project Managers

- PMs are responsible to deploy the “project management control systems” (Primavera)
- PCMS tool supports PMs; they do not define what PMs do (3rd most important tool)
- Second most important PM tool is verbal communication
- Most important PM tool is in
**Emphasis:** Utilize project-level risk management plans

- Effective “Issues” management is the primary determinant of Mortenson’s PM success
- Establishing plans for cost, schedule and quality management early in the project “clears the deck” to allow primary PM to focus on Issue Management
- Mortenson’s project management focus is Issue Management
Construction Industry perspective on Project Management success:

- Understand the Customer’s goals and priorities
- Start with a well-planned schedule and budget framework that support Customer goals and priorities
- Build a relationship that ensures clear communication of status of all project issues
- Actively management the issues on the project
Peer Review Recommendations

**Action Items**

- Clarify the authority and responsibilities of PMs
- More broadly establish the use of PM Plans
- Implement team charters
- Complete project-level risk management plans
- Update training for PMs
- Explore PM core competencies
- Explore project management and other career tracks with Human Resources

Develop and Implementation Plan for long-term sustained change
Peer Review Final Report

- Final Report issued in January
- Website for the Peer Review:
  http://www.dot.state.mn.us/cost-estimating/peer-review/index.html
Current Activities

• Facilitating the development of project management plans on four of the Ch. 152 Bridge projects
  - Included project-level risk management plans
• Exploring resource-loaded schedules and an earned value pilot project
• PM and portfolio management training for three key internal
Current Activities (cont.)

- Updating the current training curriculum for Mn/DOT’s “Essential Skills for Project Managers” course
- Developing a RFP for implementation
Thank You!

Questions?

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