



North Central Texas Council of Governments

# SUMMARY

## Sustainable Public Rights-of-Way Subcommittee

Tuesday, March 30, 2021

1:30 PM, Microsoft Teams

[https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting\\_MjMwNiczMzMtNmJINC00YjY2LTlmNGYtZWQwMjE1ZDUxM2I3%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%222f5e7ebc-22b0-4fbe-934c-aabddb4e29b1%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22cab28b78-d671-4384-9c8e-6035f7c46b7d%22%7d](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_MjMwNiczMzMtNmJINC00YjY2LTlmNGYtZWQwMjE1ZDUxM2I3%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%222f5e7ebc-22b0-4fbe-934c-aabddb4e29b1%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22cab28b78-d671-4384-9c8e-6035f7c46b7d%22%7d)

Or call in (audio only)

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Phone Conference ID: 214 412 069#

Co-Chair: Robert Woodbury, City of Cedar Hill

Co-Chair: Misty Christian, Kimley-Horn

### 1. **Welcome and Introductions.**

Olivia Kale, NCTCOG, read the list of attendees and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

## DISCUSSION ITEMS

2. **Meeting Summary.** The January 19<sup>th</sup> meeting summary is available online for review. Approval will be sought at this meeting.

Robert Woodbury motioned to approve the summary, Jerry Cosgrove seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

3. **Utilities Planning.** The Subcommittee will begin discussing utility BMPs for the next chapter.

Olivia asked the Subcommittee members what information they were trying to collect and portray in the Utility Coordination chapter of the Best Management Practices (BMP) Guidebook. Previously they had discussed communication problems between cities and utility companies. Robert Woodbury suggested including a matrix of questions for utility representatives to fill out. This could be included in the chapter like the Tree Matrix was used in the Landscape Planning and Vegetation Maintenance Chapter.

The matrix should ask for the franchise utilities' common practices like depth requirements, spacing requirements, placement, and any other items that would help cities understand how utilities want to do business and maintain their facilities inside the ROW.

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Another member suggested including four (4) different categories: 1) itemized different utilities that occur in the public ROW, including wet utilities behind the curb vs. under pavement, 2) identified separation distances, bury depths, and typical placement in ROW of each, 3) sample cross sections/permutations of each utility type (illustrations), including some with overhead and others with buried, and 4) creative 'co-location' case-studies, if any exist with pro-active duct-bank solutions.

Other elements to consider in the matrix include small cells, facility location, relocation process, dual ownership, dig tests, and finding the right contact person.

Donna Manhart, City of Garland, brought up how this gets very complicated because things are constantly changing. For example, new technology like 5G and new smaller utility companies that run long-haul lines to commercial businesses. The subcommittee should also make an effort to educate cities on the state laws that limit what they can require from utility companies.

Another topic brought up was quarterly/monthly coordinating meetings between cities and utility companies. These meetings bring different parties together to discuss upcoming and on-going projects, including capital improvement projects (CIP). Some smaller cities partner to have regional meetings with utilities.

One problem that came up often was staff turnover. Cities would really appreciate the contact person for a project at a utility company to forward the new contact information before they leave. The City of Lewisville used to have great meetings with participation from both parties but now due to staff turnover it's limited on both sides. It would be helpful for cities to identify what they are doing to bridge this gap.

Other issues on the city side are acquiring land easements or right-of-way for utilities and having a consistent message on project progress to utility companies. Sometime the city project stops and utility companies continue making progress.

Olivia showed a graphic from a presentation given to the Public Works Council in April 2016 by Oncor. This presentation discussed Project Coordinating Councils that brought city and all types of utility project managers to the table for varying projects. The presentation also outlined the roles and responsibilities of each party in the Council. The cities need to provide a space and time to meet, and an agenda. The project managers need to actively communicate, make commitments on project timelines, and ensure the completion of projects. Utility coordinators need to focus on interactions between utilities, have knowledge of all utility construction standards, and help resolve communication issues. The Subcommittee was very interested in looking at this presentation further and providing similar recommendations in the BMP Guidebook.

## **OTHER BUSINESS AND ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION**

### **4. Roundtable Discussion.**

Robert Woodbury would like to have a SPROW track at the Public Works Roundup again this year. The date is still being finalized but it will be held in August or early September 2021. He would like to have the topics be on utility coordination.



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APWA or another similar organization recently had a panel discussion with franchise utility representatives from different levels like engineers, construction workers, etc. Robert would like to have a similar panel discussion at the Public Works Roundup.

Donna Manhart suggested having a panel discussion for cities to give their input on the utility coordination process. This could include what the city and franchise utilities struggle with and then how to accommodate those issues.

Chris Flanigan suggested having a presentation on 5G and possibly a joint presentation between a carrier and a city who successfully implemented it.

Jeremy Priest is moving to the City of Tyler and will no longer be part of the Subcommittee. His efforts on the BMP Guidebook are greatly appreciated and everyone wished him the best.

5. **Schedule for the Next Meeting.** The next Subcommittee meeting is TBD.

Robert suggested that the subcommittee meet April 20<sup>th</sup> to hear from franchise utility representatives. These representatives should give a presentation on their business plan and standard operating procedure. This would help the subcommittee make informed recommendations in the BMP Guidebook.

The subcommittee will meet again May 18<sup>th</sup> to continue the conversation on utility coordination and go over responses from the matrix.

6. **Adjournment.**

If you have any questions regarding the meeting or agenda items, please contact Olivia Kale by phone at (817) 695-9213, or by email at [okale@nctcog.org](mailto:okale@nctcog.org).

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**SPROW Attendance March 30, 2021**

Donna Manhart, City of Garland  
Gary Minter, City of McKinney  
Misty Christian, Kimley-Horn  
Christopher Rogers, City of McKinney  
Jon Beckham, City of Lewisville  
Peter Vahala, City of Dallas  
Jennifer Hall, TNP  
Chris Flanigan, City of Allen  
Jerry Cosgrove, City of Plano  
Jon Beckham, City of Lewisville  
Sydnee Steelman, NCTCOG  
Robert Woodbury, City of Cedar Hill  
Pritam Deshmukh, City of Denton  
Stevon Smith, City of Mansfield  
Olivia Kale, NCTCOG  
Mia Brown, NCTCOG  
Edith Marvin, NCTCOG