

ITS4US IPFP Training Session Transcript (04-13-21)

Speaker: Shari Schaftlein

Well, good afternoon everybody and congratulations on your awards.

My name is Shari Schaftlein.

I'm the director of the Federal Highway Office of Human Environment and I'm really happy to champion this aspect of the phase one project planning.

My office focuses on promoting multimodal network access for all users and abilities, with a focus on bike and pedestrian and emerging micromobility and mobility innovation in general.

I've been at this for about 30 years with local, state, federal and tribal organizations with positions in environment and transportation, so I feel like I've got some good background to contribute here and help all the partners and kind of coordinate the Federal Highway staff to support this effort.

So, the agenda today. We want to provide a brief overview, you know we're going to go pretty quickly through the program overview since everyone says they know about that, and then focus on the institutional partnership and financial plan development and give an overview of what we're looking for and go over specific sections in detail, and then we'll close with some resources and suggestions about how to stay connected.

So, I would really encourage folks on the program overview if you really need a detailed program overview, please see the ITS4US website.

Uh, for the pre solicitation webinars and the training for task 1B on user needs identification and requirements planning.

And if you can go to the Slide 6 now.

It is just really exciting that through this program we are going to be able to look at all of the aspects of making a complete trip and really breaking down those elements and your various projects help us accomplish that with thinking about trip planning, outdoor navigation, intersection crossing, boarding payments and transfer, indoor outdoor navigation transition, indoor navigation, and connecting and completing trips so.

So, you're helping us complete this vision and set a great example for the whole country.

Next slide.

As you know, the goals are to spur, a high impact, integrated complete trip, and we'll really have the flashlight on these to share this information nationwide.

Identify the needs and challenges by the variety of underserved populations.

And develop and deploy mobility solutions that really meet user's needs.

So, it's really kind of a bottom up supporting their needs approach.

And in measuring the impact of the integrated deployments, what's the Delta by making all these technology improvements and working with folks at the local level so that others will be able to have a point of reference?

And certainly, the closing goal is to identify replicable solutions and disseminate the lessons learned, the product of any grant program that we do across federal highways.

So the next slide.

So, you all know who won the awards and you're well into this.

It's just exciting that everyone is working on their own to come up with complete trip solutions while collaborating to solve common challenges faced by more than one team.

And with the five sites across from west to east, we've got University of Washington covering the west coast and California Association of Coordinated Transportation also covering the west coast.

In the central area, we've got Iowa. The heart of Iowa Regional Transit Agency, and then moving to Atlanta Regional Commission in Gwinnett County and then closing with Buffalo, NY. So, a great mix of projects.

So, let's move into the focus of today's webinar, the institutional partnership and excuse me, let's go back to the deployment phases first.

We are in Phase one concept here. There's three deployment phases and one post deployment phase.

And under concept development you all are right now developing your ideas to ensure future success and in later phases everyone will be testing and evaluating their projects.

And the deployments are expected to sustain operation for at least five years after the program is completed, so we're in this together for a while.

Next slide.

Let's get started on focusing on institutional partnership and the financial plan.

Let me provide a brief overview of the IPFP that we'll be calling this.

It covers all of the stakeholder and partnership agreements for the deployment, as well as a plan to continue operation beyond the phase three deployment for a minimum of five years.

This phase one plan documents your current status on partnerships and your current best plan for post deployment operations.

These documents will be revisited and revised in later phases of the project.

Establishing partnerships early in the project can help you build a well-rounded, multidisciplinary team with the expertise and resources needed to not just conceive a project, but to design it, test it with users and then deploy it to the broader community.

Partnerships can signal to the community and to other potential partners that there is a significant buy in and support for the project, and that will ultimately ensure the deployment is designed for their needs and operates to solve their challenges.

Establishing partnerships, especially with non-public entities, can take significant amounts of time to finalize.

Navigating budget and procurement cycles and negotiating terms such as data sharing agreements can delay partnerships, so it's important to start thinking about partnerships early in the process and working with your agency's relevant budget, procurement, and contracting staff to understand how your project will interact with their processes.

So, the major components on the next slide, of the IPFP is the partnership status summary.

This provides a summary and status of all institutional, business, and local partnerships.

The operations and management concept.

This provides a plan for operating and maintaining the deployment for five years after phase three deployment as required by the BAA.

And then finally the ADA transition plans. This describes the status of any and all ADA transition plans for each public sector partner in the deployment.

Let's go to the schedule.

Institutional partnership and financial plan are the longest technical task in phase one because there's a lot of iteration as you can imagine. Partnerships take time to build and will need to be well thought out to ensure success in phases two and three.

All the activities you are undertaking early in this project, such as developing your project management plan, concept of operations, performance measures help you start the plan.

While those you perform later will help you further refine the plan.

The institutional partnership and financial plan is also a companion document to the deployment plan and the deployment readiness summary in task 13 and 14.

Next slide.

So, this diagram shows how the IPFP relates to other key deliverables within the project.

For inputs to the institutional partnership and financial plan, we have the agreements and plans documented in the project management plan. The ConOps, the data management plan, stakeholder education plan, and outreach plan.

Note that the project teams will be working on the ConOps, data management plan, stakeholder education and outreach plan at the same time as the institutional partnership and financial plan and will be inputs to the document. For outputs we have these two deliverables that the IPFP will be using to document current and planned institutional structures and financial plans, including the integrated complete trip deployment plan and deployment briefing.

All the sites will be making revisions to the IPFP in later phases of the projects as the project and partnerships continue to evolve, decisions made and information obtained while developing the IPFP will lead to updates to other plans developed in phase one.

So, let's look at the specific deliverables.

We are requiring all sites use the DOT provided deliverable template.

Because of the number of sites, we're requiring all sites to use the same template. This will make it more efficient for us and the technical support contractors to review the material in a more timely manner.

So, the two deliverables are the draft institutional partnership and financial plan that's due 42 weeks after the kickoff meeting.

And then the final institutional plan that addresses all the USDOT comments, which is due 46 weeks after kickoff.

And please note that the final plan will need to be 508 compliant for publication.

Ok, next slide.

So, let's break up the sections we're going to talk about.

And we'll highlight those subsections that are important and provide some examples.

And perhaps if you follow along with the template and take notes, that will be helpful to you.

Ok. So, this is the high-level outline of the plan document, and we'll walk through these.

Let's start with section 2, the project team.

Let me go back to number 17, just to walk through this real quick with folks.

Yeah, we've got the introduction.

You'll have the project team, your partnership summary and status.

Your deployment partnership coordination activities.

Phase One partnership agreement details.

We're going to look at risk assessment.

The operation and management concept your ADA transition plan and then some appendices.

So that's the outline.

Now let's move to the project team.

So, uhm. This section should provide a summary of the partner organizations and governance structure for phase one deployment.

The team should provide a few paragraphs that describe the team's governance structure.

This section should include the description of the phase one contract recipient overall lead, and public agency responsible for phase two and three of the deployment.

Also provide a summary graphic of the partnering organizations, including the site lead, support letters, Inter and intra agency agreements, MOUs, subcontracts, and any vendor agreements.

For the next section on the partnership status summary, here is where you should know that partnerships will focus on groups that will actively participate in regular meetings and provide feedback throughout the project from the user needs gathering and concept development phases to the testing and deployment phases.

And generally, there's three types of partnerships, the institutional partnership between two or more entities such as government agencies, transit agencies, colleges, universities, and major employers.

Second is local partnerships with advocacy groups and community organizations.

These groups have members who have at least one common characteristics or shared interests such as living in the same neighborhood, having a certain disability or a desire to see increased public transportation services.

Business partnerships are between a private entity and a procuring agency.

The private entity can be a public, private, or nonprofit entity that will be able to provide services, expertise, or products that the procuring agency and overall project team lacks.

Ok. Now onto the deployment partnership coordination activities.

This should be a quick summary of the broad agreement of the deployment elements between the various partnering entities.

This section discusses the partner engagement, coordination, and documents reviews that have occurred to reach agreement on the main elements of the deployment elements listed here.

Ok.

That this is really important because over time people and circumstances are going to change and it'll be great to be able to refer back to this information.

OK, on to slide 20.

Excuse me, Slide 21, sorry.

So, section three of the document provides additional details on documentation, financial agreement, nature of support and when they are expected to be engaged for all partners identified in section 2.

The template is organized by the partnership types identified earlier.

Further slides will give more specific information and examples for the different partnership categories.

Being institutional partnerships, local, business, and other supporting.

OK, next slide.

On institutional partnerships, please provide a summary of those partnerships and the documentation, financial arrangements, nature of their support for the deployment, and when they're expected to engage as you'll do with each of them.

Some examples of institutional partners are provided along with an example summary table for an MPO agency.

OK, moving to the next slide, risk assessment.

Who could think anything would ever go wrong or a pandemic would happen?

This is the place for the sites to identify and describe detailed institutional partnership and financial related risk, with a note that these risks will be tracked at a high level in task one with all the other project risks.

And some examples and sources for potential risk are provided on the next slide.

One of the challenges for this task is the uncertainty associated with institutional relationships.

There can be large uncertain cost and schedule delays can arise due to institutional issues, such as reliance on the ability of certain vendors or partners to deliver.

And one way to mitigate this is this risk assessment.

Documenting and tracking risk early on reduces risk in later phases and provides a resource for other deployers facing similar challenges.

So, some of the things that we're certainly going to be challenged with in the interim, that may create risk blips for everyone, is the pace of the pandemic recovery.

And its impact on state and local budgets.

Federal surface transportation legislation reauthorization may influence some of the folks that are involved in the projects and financial stability of our local partners.

OK.

In Section 5, the key challenge here is achieving financial sustainability.

This section helps to build in assessments of project components at early stages to regularly validate sustainability from critical stakeholder and partners point of view.

This section describes a plan for continuing operations beyond phase three of the deployment for a minimum of five years.

Pre and post deployment governance structures and partnerships may change or adapt based on the needs of the project.

It's important to identify what areas will change to be able to continue funding the project for five years after the deployment period.

Ok.

The 1990 Americans with Disability Act stipulated that every public agency with 50 or more employees must have an ADA transition plan that outlines an agency's compliance with ADA regulations. In this section, sites will document the status of their transition plans.

In addition, they are required to identify if there are any related legal actions.

Now as you can well imagine, the national spotlight is on your projects.

So, it's important to demonstrate that your partner's progressive efforts on complete trips is tracking with your progressive efforts to comply with federal ADA requirements.

We will have some subject matter experts from FHWA and FTA available during the Q&A if you want to delve further into the topic. And we certainly realize that the project team members may not be the responsible parties for ADA compliance, but perhaps we can have a discussion about how both the project and ADA compliance is tracking for your area.

Now some resources that you can refer to as you think about putting your plan together.

We've got two slides of those that should help.

Part one, we encourage you to review the webinar two slide deck and recording that's posted on the program website.

Additional references include a white paper on institutional and business issues and financial sustainability from the CV Pilots and an NCHRP report.

And certainly, if anyone finds any other good references, we can update the list.

And we've got a second slide here for part 2 suggestions as well.

Ok, so to stay connected. Elina and myself will be available as plans are put together. If questions come up, we can certainly be a funnel to get an answer, and can collaborate amongst the Federal Highway, FTA, ITS JPO team to get you a good answer.

We can also work with subject matter experts around the Department if there are any questions.

And that's closes our formal portion, and we can move into any questions now.