

CHOOSE
HOW YOU
MOVE



CAPITAL INVESTMENT GRANTS **SIDEWALKS, SIGNALS, AND SAFETY **WORKSHOP****

June 2026

National subject matter experts from the **AmericaFWD Project Delivery Accelerator Lab** (americafwd.org) conducted a peer review workshop focused on best practices for the delivery of sidewalk, signal, and safety projects. Using their experience of other comparable U.S. cities and best practices, AmericaFWD shared recommendations for Nashville's Choose How You Move program.

BACKGROUND



CHOOSE HOW YOU *MOVE*

Choose How You Move is Nashville's voter-approved transportation improvement program, supported by **66% of voters in 2024** and funded by a dedicated half-cent sales surcharge. As the largest capital program in Nashville's history, the **\$3.1 billion initiative** delivers critical upgrades across all of Davidson County: smart signals at nearly **600 intersections**, **54 miles of high-capacity transit with 24/7 service**, **86 miles of new sidewalks**, and **safety improvements across 78 miles of the Vision Zero High-Injury Network**. Whether you walk, roll, ride, bike, or drive, Choose How You Move is building a Nashville that's safer and easier to get around.

PROJECT DELIVERY ACCELERATOR LAB (PDAL) **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Cross-Cutting Recommendations

- 1** Standing up a new program is hard work. Celebrate progress to date.
- 2** Take advantage of a mandate for change.
- 3** Incorporate technology into the program.
- 4** Create a delivery strategy in multi-year increments.
- 5** Clarify branding, reporting, and storytelling.
- 6** Scale up project management, professional and technical staffing within consultant agencies as project volumes increase. Currently, Metro Nashville entities rely heavily on consultants for program management and project planning and design.

Procurement

Current procurement process takes nine to ten months to get projects under contract. Look for ways to streamline procurement to expedite project delivery.

- Develop a programmatic schedule
- Bundle similar projects (by geographic region/scope)
- Adopt a consistent project delivery process
- Engage industry professionals early:
 - Consider contractor development program/small business capacity building
- For alternative delivery projects (e.g. Construction Manager/General Contractor or Progressive Design-Build) it is important to have one-on-one discussions with interested and capable contractors early in project development
- Share consistent information and communicate on a regular cadence to generate and maintain interest
- Evaluate the balance between work assigned to consultants versus the capacity of in-house staff to provide effective project oversight
- Project staffing costs should be charged against capital project budgets

PDAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Sidewalks and Complete Streets

Sidewalk installations might seem simple and straightforward. They are straightforward, but not simple. Sidewalk and Complete Street projects will affect utilities, storm drainage, transit stops, and property access.

- Early coordination with utilities and other right-of-way users will help contain costs and stabilize the schedule
- Adjacent property owners might not understand the right-of-way requirements and the impact to their property
- Early community outreach is essential to project success
- Community engagement should be embedded within the project management team
- Update design standards and establish a periodic schedule for review
- Construction tracking systems should be strengthened considering the increased volume of new projects coming soon

Signals

Where possible, bundle signals into existing All-Access Corridor and Complete Street project packages and use a “one touch” approach to signal design and construction.

- Purchase signal components early, but not too early:
 - Long industry lead times will impact project schedules
 - Rapidly evolving technology may make components obsolete if they are purchased and stored too soon
 - Secure storage for materials prior to installation is important
- Reach out to manufacturers now
- Build capacity within Metro Nashville with signal testing and timing background

Utilities

It is important to develop a utility coordination system including data governance and charter/partnering agreements, where all parties can anticipate projects.

- General
 - Ensure the system does not depend on specific individuals
 - Develop typical conflict resolution solutions

Utilities *(continued)*

- Metro Water
 - Opportunity to incorporate checklist that includes investigating and communicating sidewalk conditions at the concept development stage
- NES
 - Service area-wide LiDAR data can be used to develop an asset management system including an inventory of pole locations

Right-of-Way

Early identification of right-of-way needs and consistency in approach will help ensure success.

- Take a corridor approach, as opposed to a project-specific approach
- Strive for “no surprises” for all stakeholders
 - Educate stakeholders why right-of-way or construction easements are needed
- For challenging right-of-way acquisitions, consider leveraging the Appreciative Inquiry process for public engagement, focused on the people most directly impacted
- Keep advocates informed and share information at a regular cadence

External Agency Partners

- Identify key external agency partners, develop a partner influence matrix and categorize them by impact:
 - Government agencies
 - Transit agencies
 - Utility partners
 - Public safety agencies
 - Regulatory and environmental agencies
 - Community and economic development partners
- This structure will allow you to:
 - Develop agency relationship plans
 - Establish formal coordination forums
 - Create a partner engagement process
 - Measure partner performance
 - Build long-term strategic partnerships
 - Leverage successful relationships



PDAL RECOMMENDATIONS

External Agency Partners *(continued)*

- Best practices for 30-60-90-day action plans include:
 - **Days 1–30**
 - » Develop a comprehensive stakeholder inventory
 - » Identify the top 20 agencies affecting project delivery
 - » Map executive and operational contacts
 - **Days 31–60**
 - » Identify the top recurring external bottlenecks
 - » Create a partner influence matrix
 - » Establish recurring coordination meetings
 - **Days 61–90**
 - » Develop agency-specific relationship plans
 - » Launch executive steering committee meetings
 - » Create a partner performance dashboard
- Expected outcomes include reduced permitting delays, faster utility relocations, improved grant competitiveness, better project schedule reliability, stronger community support, and fewer project delivery conflicts

Community and Business Engagement

Nashville's stakeholder and business community are strong partners and were key in the success of the Choose How You Move referendum. It is important to build upon the strength of that foundation during implementation.

Currently, NDOT utilizes a playbook with tiers to ensure appropriate levels of engagement. Current staffing levels are not adequate for a rapidly growing capital program. As the program grows, it is important to embed the outreach and planning teams directly into projects.

- Sidewalk projects
 - It is important to start resident engagement before right-of-way letters
 - Consider sending branded notices to residents and businesses in the corridor, and place branded thoroughfare signage
 - Storytelling is a key component of success and of maintaining the momentum. You need to celebrate the wins and share what is coming next
- Short educational videos can address the basics and provide information the public wants

WHAT COMES NEXT?

Lead with the future in mind, look beyond the end of Choose How You Move now, and continue to build a strong coalition.

PDAL TEAM

The team of national experts included:

Travis Bogan, PE, PMP

Director of Special Projects and Initiatives, City of Denver Department of Transportation and Infrastructure

Veronica Davis, PE

Vice President, AtkinsRéalis and former Director of Transportation and Drainage Operations, City of Houston Public Works Department

Wesley Parkmond, CEM, CIAQP, MBA

Deputy Commissioner of Capital Delivery, Atlanta Department of Transportation

Danny Pleasant, AICP

Principal, Pleasant Transportation & Design and former Director, City of Charlotte Department of Transportation

Roger Millar, PE, FAICP, Dist. M. ASCE

Director, Project Delivery Accelerator Lab; former Washington State Secretary of Transportation, and former Arterial Improvements Division Manager, City of Portland