

Controller Division

NDOT 2021 Strategic Communications Plan



Mission: Provide the Department's leaders and employees as well as the public with reliable, meaningful financial information so that they can make smart decisions and draw sound conclusions.

2020 HIGHLIGHTS

The Controller Division endeavored in 2020 to complete several key goals. In support of our Division mission, Controller Division took a lead role in working within the OpenGov platform to interface our data into their financial reporting tools. The OpenGov financial reporting provides for user-controlled reporting visualizations not previously available with NDOT's budget and actual expenditure data. Also, we engaged in a concerted effort to highlight succession planning, development of standard operating procedures and cross-training as critical elements of our professional development strategy.

One notable accomplishment was Controller Division's involvement in partnering with the U.S. Department of Transportation's Build America Bureau to prepare the necessary information for inclusion in the Lincoln South Beltway bid letting documents to allow prospective bidders to utilize the Build America Bureaus Transportation Infrastructure Financing Innovation Act (TIFIA) loan program. This was important in order to provide prospective bidders with a competitive, low interest rate option as they developed their plan of finance as part of the innovative financing mechanism employed by NDOT on the project.

Other accomplishments include:

- Creating mechanisms within the Project Finance System to record project expenses related to the March 2019 flooding and subsequently seek FHWA Emergency Relief program reimbursement.
- Development and implementation of a final cost audit workflow in OnBase. This new workflow allows NDOT divisions that execute consultant services agreements to electronically request a final cost audit on an agreement and for the Controller Division Audit Section to manage the final cost audit assignment, risk assessment checklist, waiver and final report routing.

2021 GOALS

Create opportunities to make it easier to do business with the Department and Controller Division.

Tactics:

- Work with Local Assistance and BTSD to create a reporting tool for providing local governments with access to the projected expenditures related to their funding share on state and local projects.
- Create a list of services and forms provided by Controller Division and provide the contact email address (group mailbox) for each to be added to DOT Spot for internal customers and to the web for external customers.
- Create educational/informational materials regarding the employee expense reimbursement form and related policies.

Represent the NDOT and Controller Division in the most favorable manner possible and be positive and proactive in our interactions/communications with internal co-workers and external partners.

Tactics:

- Hold at least two meetings with the Administrative Assistants group to provide them training on accounting and budgeting processes.
- Participate in at least two DE/DOMM meetings during the year to provide information/education on accounting and budget related topics.
- Represent the Controller Division and NDOT with the Legislature and staff and also with the Governor's Office and staff to successfully deliver a new biennial budget for NDOT.

Evaluate current financial systems and standard operating procedures and assess for areas needing improvement.

Tactics:

- Coordinate with BTSD and Local Assistance for creation of Cash Flow graphs for the funds managed by the Local Assistance Division (i.e. Rec Road Fund, Grade Separation and Grade Crossing funds, State Aid Bridge).
- Work with BTSD to create a revenue "cube" for historical revenue analysis and reporting.
- Work with BTSD to create a project finance and billing/reimbursement "cube" for analysis and reporting.
- Automate the reporting process for federal subrecipient monitoring.
- Develop Flood/Disaster standard operating procedure and communication/informational materials for employees for cost coding to improve eligibility for federal reimbursement.

Support the workforce development needs and priorities of Controller Division section leaders and their teams and drive engagement in professional development training.

Tactics:

- Complete at least three professional development sessions/courses.
- Encourage and support cross-training in all Controller Division sections to eliminate typically siloed duties and responsibilities.
- Use Lean Six-Sigma (LSS) tools and methodologies to identify operational pain points and opportunities for process improvement.

2021 PRIORITIES

This section identifies priorities that need additional emphasis in order to complete the division's goals. The following is the approach the Controller Division is taking to increase positive and proactive interactions and communications, create efficiencies in business opportunity processes, support workforce development and evaluate current financial systems.

A strategy to help ensure the continuation of progress on the Financial Systems Modernization project is to encourage the participation of subject matter experts and other end-users to enhance the likelihood that opportunities for eliminating or improving operational pain points or for automating currently manual or duplicative processes and data entry are identified.

A strategy to increase positive interactions with our internal and external customers is to proactively communicate and collaborate with NDOT leadership, agency management, the Legislature and its staff, and the Governor's Office and their Budget staff, to successfully deliver a new biennial budget for NDOT.

A strategy to support workforce development is to work with Controller Division staff to help them identify personal/inter-personal and technical professional development courses from the Controller Division Strategic Workforce Development Plan as coordinated by Human Resources Division that will address the development needs of individual staff.

KEY PROJECTS

Key projects the Controller Division will be focusing on:

- Financial Systems Modernization project
- 2021-2023 Biennial Budget Adoption and FY2022 Budget Review
- 2021 Employee Engagement Plan follow-up
- OpenGov Financial Reporting Dashboards
- Revenue and Project Finance Analysis Cubes
- Flood/Disaster cost coding SOP and informational materials
- Subrecipient Single Audit Compliance Monitoring

OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERNAL COLLABORATION

This section includes internal opportunities for divisions and districts to collaborate and work together to accomplish their goals.

Strategic Planning – Creating operational performance reporting dashboards and updating and developing manuals and process documents.

Communications – Assisting with legislative matters such as funding for NDOT priorities, presentations and other communications to support conversations with stakeholders explaining our funding. assistance with informative PowerPoints, documents and emails on Controller processes impacting NDOT employees.

HR – Coordinating proper training for staff and with Employee Engagement follow-up.

BTSD – Partnering with financial systems modernization and analysis cube development.

Various – Collaborating with Project Development-Agreements Section, Local Assistance-Rail Section and Roadway Design-Utilities Section to enhance process improvement and automate the exchange of information involving the audit of professional services agreements.