Construction
Mandatory Pre-Bid Meeting Guide

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Construction Mandatory Pre-Bid Guide

Prepared for
California Department of Transportation
District Small Business Liaisons
Local Agencies

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Executive Summary

The California Department of Transportation (Department) is committed to increasing Small Business (SB), Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE), and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) participation in its contracts.

One of the ways the Department accomplishes this is by hosting Mandatory Pre-Bid (MPB) meetings. The Department provides project information, prime contractors and subcontractors are invited to meet one another, exchange information about a specific project, and both groups have the opportunity to meet Department staff.

The purpose of this Guide is to assist the District Small Business Liaisons (DSBL) and project management principals in the planning, preparation, management and execution of an MPB meeting (sometimes referred to as an MPB conference) with guidance, helpful information, and tips.

This Guide provides important information for the DSBL and district Construction Project Team members to successfully host a MPB meeting. Each district is different; each with its unique demographic, business environment and community dynamic. This Guide offers choices in the logistics and planning relating to hosting the MPB meeting. However, the basic process is standard for all MPB teams to follow. Templates and examples are provided as attachments to this Guide and helpful tips and notes are brought to your attention in the left margin by the following caricature:

This Guide is organized into the following sections:

- Pre-Event Planning and Preparation – this section details advance activities, logistics and helpful ideas leading up to the event.
- Day of the Event – this section describes the day’s activities.
- Post-Event Activities – this section describes close-out tasks and event reports.

Let’s get started!
# Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................................................................................................. 1

OBJECTIVES OF THE MANDATORY PRE-BID MEETING .......................................................................................................................... 2

I. PRE-EVENT PLANNING AND PREPARATION .......................................................................................................................... 2
   A. Identify a Project for a Mandatory Pre-Bid Meeting ....................................................................................................................... 2
   B. Factors to Consider ............................................................................................................................................................................. 4
   C. Project Site Visit/Planned Walk-through ........................................................................................................................................ 5
   D. Communication Plan/Strategy ............................................................................................................................................................. 5
   E. Selecting the MPB Meeting Date and Time ...................................................................................................................................... 6
   F. Facility Logistics ..................................................................................................................................................................................... 6
   G. Prepare and Send Out Event Flyer ...................................................................................................................................................... 7
   H. Advertise in Local, Small Business, and Trade Publications ............................................................................................................. 9
   J. Photographer .......................................................................................................................................................................................... 9
   L. Signs, Banners and Badges ............................................................................................................................................................... 9
   M. Data Tracking and Collection Forms ........................................................................................................................................... 10
   N. Agenda ............................................................................................................................................................................................. 10
   O. Talking Points and Script ................................................................................................................................................................. 11
   P. Attendee Packets ............................................................................................................................................................................. 11
   Q. Refreshments ..................................................................................................................................................................................... 12

II. DAY OF THE EVENT .................................................................................................................................................................................. 12
   A. Equipment Check ............................................................................................................................................................................... 12
   B. Registration ....................................................................................................................................................................................... 13
   C. Program Begins ................................................................................................................................................................................. 13
   D. Networking Begins ............................................................................................................................................................................ 15

III. POST-EVENT ACTIVITIES ................................................................................................................................................................. 15
   A. Evaluation/Feedback ........................................................................................................................................................................... 15
   B. After Action Report ........................................................................................................................................................................ 16

DEFINITION OF TERMS

PROCESS FLOW CHART

ATTACHMENTS

A Memorandum: Expanding Use of Mandatory Pre-bid Meetings in Construction Contracts

B DSBL's Ready-to-Go Checklist and Meeting Equipment Checklist

C Sample Business Communication Plan

D Facility Walk-through Checklist

E MPB Meeting e-Registration Page

F District 3 MPB Flyer

G District 4 MPB Flyers

H Agendas

I Bidder Inquiry Form

J Registration Sign-in Sheets

K After Action Report

L Talking Points

M Helpful Websites for Meeting Tools

N Prime Contractors Pre-Bid Survey

O Information to Gather for the Attendee Evaluation Survey and Data Collection Forms

P Tips for Contractors
INTRODUCTION

The elevated freeway carrying eastbound vehicles from the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge onto I-580, I-980, and State Route 24 rises above the southbound I-80 connector to I-880. This is known as the "MacArthur Maze." In the early morning hours of April 29, 2007, a tanker truck carrying 8,600 gallons of unleaded gasoline crashed and burst into flames and within minutes, the elevated I-580 connector ramp buckled.

The damage to I-580 significantly impacted the Bay Area, where more than 35,000 vehicles travel daily on the I-880 connector and 45,000 vehicles on the I-580 connector. Department staff needed to move quickly and at the request of then Director Will Kempton was galvanized into action by fast-tracking the contract solicitation process. To capitalize on this calamity and boost SB participation in the repair project, Director Kempton immediately ordered a Mandatory Pre-Bid (MPB) meeting.

In May 2007, a pilot MPB program was launched from November 2007, through June 2008. Five districts represented the pilot from the more rural areas to the most densely populated areas in an effort to test the effectiveness of the MPB meeting with the objective of eventually having all districts host similar meetings.

The five districts designated for this pilot program were Districts 2 (Redding), 4 (Oakland), 6 (Fresno), 7 (Los Angeles), and 11 (San Diego). Each district division of construction was instructed to review future construction projects where an MPB meeting would be appropriate and then nominate 3-to-6 district projects for this pilot program. At the end of the pilot program, the process was evaluated by the program participants and the Division of Construction. The pilot proved successful and a determination was made to implement the MPB in the remaining districts. See Attachment A for Expanding Use of Mandatory Pre-bid Meetings in Construction Contracts, regarding the results of the MPB pilot program.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) encourages MPB meetings as a DBE race-neutral measure (49 Code of Federal Regulations 26.51) for federal-funded projects. In addition, MPB meetings are also a tool to bring SBs and DVBEs together with prime contractors for the benefit of achieving contract goals with the participation of certified firms in state-funded contracts.

When attendance at a pre-bid meeting is made a condition of bid responsiveness, the project advertisement and all bidding documents must reflect this requirement. The contracting community must be given adequate notice to comply with such a requirement and the DSBL needs adequate time to notify SBs, DVBEs and DBEs of an MPB event.

To help you better understand applicable FHWA State Procedures pertaining to bidding procedures go to the following link:
http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/programadmin/contracts/core03.cfm#s3A12
OBJECTIVES OF THE MANDATORY PRE-BID MEETING

The purpose of a MPB meeting is congruent with the intention of Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's July 21, 2006, Executive Order S-11-06. The executive order, found at http://gov.ca.gov/index.php/executive-order/2528, directs the Department to promote the participation of SBs, “which are ready, willing, and able to participate in contracts,” and to match SBs (potential subcontractors) with prime contractors. In addition, MPB meetings:

- Increase the number of certified SB, DBE, and DVBE participation in Department contracts, to meet 25 percent SB, 3 percent DVBE, and 13.5 percent DBE goals.
- Provide a networking forum for prime contractors and potential subcontractors to meet.
- Present a project overview, and project bidding requirements.

I. Pre-Event Planning and Preparation

A. Identify a Project for a Mandatory Pre-Bid Meeting

Three items are considered in identifying a project for a MPB meeting:

- project size;
- potential numbers of items for subcontracting; and
- whether or not there is ample lead time to plan an MPB event.

The Chief of Construction (or designee) and the Program Project Manager (PPM) will identify the project.

Ninety days before the contract advertisement, the District Deputy Director (DDD) of Construction or Chief of Construction submits a request to the District Director asking for support and approval to host an MPB meeting for a nominated project. The request includes a summary explanation of the project and requests support of appropriate staff.

B. Role of the Team

When an MPB is approved the team is assembled. The PPM notifies the Office Engineer (OE) and Office of Awards and Services, to prepare the solicitation schedule, calendar the MPB and prepare a presentation for the MPB meeting audience.

At a minimum, the team will consist of the DDD of Construction or Chief of Construction and the District Deputy Director of Program Project Manager (PPM) who work with the DSBL to choose a project. While the Division of Construction develops the plans and project scope of work, the role of OE is to advertise and award the project.
Construction Mandatory Pre-Bid Meeting Guide

The Deputy District Director (DDD) of Construction or Chief of Construction prepares a work plan. Included are:

- The nominated project,
- Location of the MPB event,
- Proposed event date,
- The number of Department staff needed to support the MPB meeting team, and
- The contract solicitation within the project time frame.

The DSBL is responsible for:

- Finding a location to host the MPB;
- Staffing the registration table;
- Developing the sign-in and -out sheets;
- Determining staffing needs well in advance of the event to insure adequate coverage for breaks and relief, as appropriate
- Works to establish mutually beneficial relationships between Department staff and public/private sector entities interested in doing business with Department;
- Coordinates and schedules the MPB planning meetings (large regional meetings are usually fewer in number than a smaller District team’s meeting that has more flexibility to meet on an informal basis). As the DSBL becomes more involved in the planning meetings, the DSBL will become more familiar with items identified for subcontracting opportunities, referred to as bid items;
- Notifies the Office of Business and Economic Opportunity’s Business Enterprise Unit (BEU) of event planning and provides updates.
- Query lists of certified SBs, DVBEs and DBEs for the likely number of certified firms by bid items. The DSBL searches the Department of General Services (DGS) web database at www.pd.dgs.ca.gov/smbus for certified SBs and DVBEs, as well as the California Unified Certification Program (CUCP) database for certified DBE/Underutilized DBE (UDBE) firms at http://www.californiaucp.com/;
- Invites potential subcontractors to the MPB meeting;
- Checks District Director availability to deliver the welcome remarks at the event;
- Requests Small Business Development Center (SBDC) representatives to invite their clients;
- Invites the OBEO Deputy Director (or designee) to participate as an event speaker;
- Sends e-flyers and getting information out to the small business community;
• Invites members of the business community to staff tables (example, banks that may provide loans/surety coverage for potential subs);

• Handles pre-registration, event day registration, sign-in sheets, and some of the post event reports.

Post-event data collection is paramount as a measurement of success and for a lessons learned discussion. The team lead will identify who will collect and compile the data in advance of the event, to facilitate an orderly transition to the post-event activities.

See Attachment B for the DSBL Ready-to-Go Checklist that serves to track a number of the major tasks needing attention.

It is important that the DSBL establish a rapport with the Chief of the Division of Construction early so that this individual can assist the DSBL in delivering the project. Clearly convey to the team that the DSBL role is to assist the team by creating a flyer announcing the MPB; creating e-lists made from outreach events to which the flyer can be sent; utilizing a comprehensive business communication plan to broadcast to the community; and handling the facility venue and event registration.

The Public Information Officer (PIO) can be a valuable resource keeping stakeholders informed and the DDD (or designee) reports progress to the District Director. The DDD reports progress to the District Director.

Consider the local Small Business Development Center (SBDC) representative. This individual can assist in advertising the event and supporting it by being a part of the program and hosting an information table. (See Section E, State and local government partners).

C. Factors to Consider

• Where exactly is the project?

• Obtain a brief description. Example: I-5 lane widening between Red Bluff and Redding.

• What size is the project?

• Any suggestions for the location of the MPB meeting?

• How soon before the project is advertised and what is the anticipated project bid opening date?

• At what point after a solicitation is let, and prior to bid opening, should the event take place?

• Any suggestions for a date and time for the event? (morning, afternoon, evening)

• Is the project State or federal funded?
• What items for bid are potentially available for subcontracting by an SB/DVBE, if the project is State-funded or by subcontracting by a DBE, if it is a federal-funded project?

• What is the contract goal?

• Is a site visit desirable?

D. Project Site Visit/Planned Walk-through
The MPB meeting may require a construction site tour. Visit the site in advance to determine the distance and time between the site visit and the potential meeting location. The distance between the two locations will affect the length of the MPB meeting. Consult with the District Director or designee to ensure proper handling of the site visit safety factors and undue liability. For example, site visits may require that Department staff and vehicles are used to shuttle contractors to and from the construction site.

E. Communication Plan/Strategy
Once the major MPB event details are determined, the DSBL implements his/her Business Communication Plan, see Attachment C. This document identifies those who need to be notified of the MPB meeting, such as:

• District personnel, e.g., Deputy District Director of Administration, Facility and Safety Officer, etc.

• The Business Enterprise Unit (BEU) at (916) 324-0784, regarding the planned MPB meeting and BEU staff will update its on-line events calendar, internal planning calendars, invite the Deputy Director of designee, and notify the Small Business Council. BEU is also the liaison to Department of General Services (DGS) Communication and Outreach staff and will work to secure the MPB meeting date on the DGS events calendar.

• District executive secretaries, who prepare the district's “Week Ahead” notice for Headquarters and Business, Transportation and Housing Agency should be given notice at least two weeks prior to the event taking place.

• Local and State legislators. The following is the Web site link for the California Small Business Association, which lists upcoming events hosted by State legislators: http://www.csba.com/calendar/index.asp. These individuals may be responsive to requests for support in promoting an MPB meeting.

• State and local government partners. Recruit partners to distribute MPB event information to SBs, DVBEs and DBEs on the Web page. It may be possible to create a link directly to the on-line registration.

• E-blast event information to the appropriate SBs, DVBEs and DBEs in construction-related/project-related fields (project specific, when applicable).
An SB mailing list will include the following:

- Business card information.
- SB, DVBE and DBE organizations, local branches of federal and state agencies, SBDCs, and trade publications.
- Public information Web site addresses. The Web sites will assist with advertising the MPB meeting.

When using a mailing list, request that representatives of the organizations and associations forward a notice of the MPB meeting to their members and ask that they post the notice on their respective Web sites.

F. Selecting the MPB Meeting Date and Time

Check district, community, and contractor organization calendars, including the DGS calendar, for any major events that may compete with the MPB meeting date. The goal is to avoid hosting an MPB meeting that will conflict with other major events, which may reduce the number of firms or SB/DVBE/DBEs drawn to the MPB.

Most MPB meetings last about two hours: introductions and formal presentations take up the first hour and networking follows in the second hour. The best time to host the MPB is in the morning from 10 a.m. to noon or from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. The length of the presentation portion is usually dictated by the size and complexity of the project.

It is important to know whether there will be a project site visit. How much time should be allotted for the site visit? Factor this into the overall time planned for the event. Most site visits take place prior to the actual MPB meeting and this will determine the start for the meeting. If possible, the location of the MPB meeting should be in a location convenient to the onsite visit.

The following are general guidelines for the overall formal program, unless a site visit is planned and then adjust the event time:

- Registration is from 9:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.
- Convene the event promptly at 10:00 a.m.
- Keep presentations and comments brief and to not more than one hour.
- Begin the networking session at 11:00 a.m.
- Conclude by noon.

G. Facility Logistics

Reserve a facility while considering the following elements:

- A room large enough to comfortably hold a minimum of 100 people. This number includes the MPB team members and invited guests. Room capacity is
especially critical for regional and large district meetings and adequate space for networking must be addressed.

- If the district office site lacks a facility large enough to accommodate the number of attendees, seek other options that may be low- or no-cost, such as a local community college that may be interested in partnering on the event. Local governments give free use of a meeting hall, if only because these meetings can offer a financial boost to the local economy. Adequate, convenient, no-cost parking is a key consideration. If there is an established relationship with the chamber of commerce in a location under consideration, ask for help from the chamber representatives. If not, this is a good time to start one. In some districts, chambers sponsor events by providing free meeting halls and refreshments for the event attendees.

In District 3, the DSBL coordinated two district MPBs. The DSBL's consideration for the first MPB at a community center was at no cost to the district because the MPB meeting was hosted by a state department and it was open to the public. For the second MPB, the DSBL considered the project location and held the MPB meeting in the small town recognizing the potential economic impact of hosting such an event during a down economy. The local chamber of commerce supported the effort by announcing the event at the chamber's board and city council meetings preceding the event.

- Conduct a walk-through of the facility and use Attachment D, “Facility Walkthrough Checklist” as a guide.

- Secure tables to place project plans and specifications. Tables will also be needed for prime contractors, Caltrans staff, brochures/handouts, registration and refreshments. Have enough chairs available, but keep in mind that adequate space must be left for networking that is best done standing. Aisle space should be generous and not crowd attendees.

- Research the Americans with Disabilities Act to ensure the event facility is in compliance by referring to the Department Conference Policy, Guidelines and Planning Service at http://onramp.dot.ca.gov/hq/accounting/conferences/policy.

- SBDC representatives should staff a table to provide information about the services and resources offered to small businesses owners. Include the SBDC representative on the agenda to briefly address their resources and assistance.

H. Prepare and Send Out Event Flyer
Successful events include announcements and reminders sent out over a period of several weeks. Begin the pre-event announcement process no less than three weeks prior to the event to go out to the DSBL’s mailing list. If the “Save the Date” flyer is ready earlier, send it out to get the event penciled in on small business calendars. Depending upon the district or regional budget, use hard-copy e-flyers for faxing, posting, mailing and electronically sending e-flyers.
Construction Mandatory Pre-Bid Meeting Guide

The first flyer should be a “Save the Date” flyer with a district web link to e-register. Include the following:

- “Save the Date” as the page title;
- the MPB meeting date, time and facility location;
- a brief project description, such as “Placer County, Emigrant Gap I-80 Resurfacing and Bridge Replacement”;
- engineer’s estimate;
- contract goal requirement (e.g., percent UDBE); and,
- the website link to the Office Engineer Planholder at http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/esc/oe/planholders/. This link provides audience an opportunity to review the project general specifications in advance of the MPB meeting and contains the link to obtain detailed project specifications for bidding purposes.

The second flyer encourages pre-registration. Include the following:

- the MPB meeting date, time and facility location;
- a brief project description, such as “Placer County, Emigrant Gap I-80 Resurfacing and Bridge Replacement”;
- engineer’s estimate;
- contract goal requirement (e.g., percent UDBE);
- who should attend;
- potential work items for subcontracting;
- specific language describing the mandatory nature of the meeting;
- description of who is qualified to represent a firm, i.e., company officer, PM or project estimator;
- a district registration page Web link set up specifically for this project (see Attachment E); and,
- the DSBL contact name, phone number and e-mail address.

For examples of flyers used by Districts 3 (Marysville) and 4 (Oakland), see Attachments F and G.

Send a third and final flyer no later than a week before the MPB meeting but prior to the pre-registration reservation deadline date. This flyer is a repeat of the second flyer and contains all of the necessary information. Since a majority of the notification is
done by e-mail, consider including a MapQuest link to the facility location to assist attendees who may not be familiar with the MBP location.

I. Advertise in Local, Small Business, and Trade Publications
Contact SB, community, ethnic and minority publications to inquire about advertising the event as public service announcement. Emphasize that the MPB meeting is a no-cost event and negotiate reciprocal advertising at the event. Confirm publication deadlines to ensure the MPB meeting information is published prior to the event. Include this information in the DSBL Communication Plan update.

J. Photographer
Record the event in digital pictures. Anyone on the MPB meeting team can assume this responsibility. Contact district photography staff and request assistance on the day of the event. Provide this individual with the event agenda and ideas of what to photograph, e.g., a picture of the District Director addressing the audience. The pictures can be posted on the district Web site.

Pictures can be used in publications like the Caltrans News, to record Department activities and showcase a district or region hosting a successful MPB meeting. Work with the district PIO to have the event information and pictures published timely. With enough lead time, Department staff can arrange to have space available for the next publication.

K. Sign-in Sheet
The ordinary sign-in sheet becomes the official record of evidence when it is tied into a Mandatory Pre-Bid meeting. It is the instrument by which the bidding prime contractors are in compliance with the contract solicitation that mandates their attendance at this event. Copies are made to fax or scan to the appropriate staff after the event. See “Day of the Event, Registration” for more information and Attachment J for illustration. When using sign-in sheets for subcontractors, consider adding columns to capture SB, DVBE and DBE information.

Create the sign-in sheet using Excel to allow for sorting as needed, to create more detailed reports.

L. Signs, Banners and Badges
Determine if graphic services are available to create signs, banners and documents that are professional in appearance. Seek assistance with this task from district maintenance and graphic services staff that may have sign holders available for use. The district warehouse may have other items that can be used for the event, such as chairs and tables. Allow sufficient lead time for signs to be printed. Keep banners non-specific so these can be re-used and do the same with signs, whenever possible.

Color-coded name badges are critical for this event. Prime contractors will wear a badge color different than that worn by subcontractors to make visual identity easier. Staff badges will be a different color so attendees can locate staff easily for assistance, if needed. During the program, the facilitator will tell the audience about the coding,
for example, “If you need Department staff assistance, you can get help from anyone wearing a blue badge.”

Have easy-to-read name tents for each of the prime contractors, on their respective tables. Large firm-name signs can be posted on the table fronts or above and behind the table.

Be sure to pay attention to placing directional signs outside of the meeting venue and on approach to the location to guide attendees.

M. Data Tracking and Collection Forms
Event information received from the MPB PM and the sign-in and -out sheets will be used by the DSBL to track data in a spreadsheet. Individual districts may choose to track information differently; however, there are certain data necessary for reporting to BEU staff.

Prepare the evaluation/survey form. The answers being sought should satisfy the who, what, when, where, why and how of the event to help determine how to improve future MPB meetings. See Attachment N for guidance.

The following examples of data should be gathered at the point of registration for BEU staff:

- Certified? Circle all that apply: SB DVBE DBE
- Mostly Prime work Mostly Sub work (circle one)
- New to Department contracts? Yes or No (circle one)

Although this is not a data task, think about adding a Thank you! to the e-survey or place a “thanking you in advance...” comment at the bottom of the hardcopy evaluation/survey. This eliminates additional time and effort with regard to writing thank you notes later.

Collect and report this information with a summary of the MPB meeting. (See After Action Report under Post-Event Activities.)

N. Agenda
Work with the PM to create an agenda. See Attachment H, for a sample Agenda. Allow flexibility in the agenda in the event a speaker arrives late or exceeds the allotted time.

It is vital that all MPB meeting team members know whether they are authorized to address project-specific items. Utilize the Bidder Inquiry form (see Attachment J). Hard-copy Bidder Inquiries with project-specific questions can be handled at the event by providing attendees with large-sized index cards that will be collected by designated staff.
When project specific questions and answers are not allowed, providing a color-coded Bidder Inquiry form at the registration table or in the event packet is recommended. The PM can address this at the beginning of the program so that attendees are aware they must submit their questions at the end of the program and look for the answers posted to the OE web page under “Bidders Inquiries” at http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/esc/oe/project_status/bid_inq.html.

Welcome remarks and special acknowledgements should be limited to ten minutes or less in the program schedule. Keep in mind that the audience is there to meet the prime contractors, to hear about the project and to network.

Items to consider as part of the event agenda:

- When the agenda is created, keep in mind that any time limits specifically allocated to a particular person or presentation may be difficult to control.
- Information regarding resources and technical assistance available to prime contractors and subcontractors.
- Technical assistance and one-on-one counseling offered through the CCCP.
- Invite a prime contractor involved in the Mentor-Protégé program to share with the audience what it means to be a mentor and how this can benefit potential subcontractors.

O. Talking Points and Script
The purpose of developing Talking Points is to address the assembly easily and accurately.

See Attachment L, for a sample Talking Points format for the facilitator and District Director or designee.

The program script supports the facilitator on the day’s activities and time schedule. The script does not need to be read verbatim, but could be if necessary (e.g., the original facilitator is not available). When developing the script, cover all agenda items from introductions with appropriate titles to the transition statements and adjournment. Include a brief description of the agenda items and the sequence.

P. Attendee Packets
Providing pocket folders makes organization, location and carrying the packets easier.

Suggestions for the pocket folder contents are:

- The DSBL’s business card, a packet list of contents, welcome letter, agenda, a list of confirmed prime contractors expected to attend, project bidder inquiry cards (if these are not available at the table), evaluation surveys, printed list of opt-in subcontractors, current addenda summary (if any), current bidder inquiry summary, (if any), participating exhibitor and/or sponsors information
Construction Mandatory Pre-Bid Meeting Guide

sheets, a DSBL/SBDC contact chart, and an SBDC brochure, if available. Include an evaluation survey form in the packet.

- Include copies of any PowerPoint presentation. Keep it “green” with two or three slides per hand-out page and print on both sides.
- Optional items: project-related fact sheets, up-coming projects list and list of project-related web links for specific information.
- Include Tips for Contractors sheet, Attachment P.
- For the speakers/presenters, include their Talking Points and scripts.

Q. Refreshments
The Department may not purchase refreshments for public meetings or events, reference California Constitution Article XVI, §6; however, the law does not prohibit a private entity from furnishing refreshments. This concern can be as simple as providing bottled water, coffee, or tea for attendees or a morning or afternoon buffet table. The DSBL’s business connections can be the best resource for no-cost refreshments.

Industry and affiliated organizations such as chambers of commerce, banks, insurance and bonding agencies often agree to provide refreshments in exchange for sponsorship recognition and/or acknowledgement. In this case, the DSBL, identifies the caterer and the organization pays the invoice. When looking for a food provider, use only a certified SB, DVBE or DBE.

Here is an example of out-of-the box thinking that was used:

In 2008, District 3 held an information-only project meeting. The DSBL approached Costco representatives about catering the event in exchange for having an exhibit space. They agreed and their participation was a win-win for all as the food and drink were plentiful and Costco staff signed up new members.

If refreshments are offered, there must be adequate staff to handle the serving and maintenance of food and drink supplies. If non-professional food service staff is handling this particular task, conduct a briefing on safe food handling in advance of the event. Have hand-sanitizer and latex-free gloves available.

II. Day of the Event
A. Equipment Check
Allow enough time before the program begins to check the equipment.

- Is the microphone working?
- Are the electrical outlets “live”?
- Are the laptop computer and projector working, and
Construction Mandatory Pre-Bid Meeting Guide

• Is the projector screen set properly?

Refer to Attachment B as a reference list of what equipment to check before the event begins.

B. Registration

Set up the tables, chairs, and name tents the day prior to the event, if feasible.

The following are activities for the day of the event:

• Registration table(s) that are adequately staffed to reduce long lines.

• Color-code name badges to differentiate prime contractors, subcontractors, staff and guests. Additional coding can indicate the type of certification (DBE, SB or DVBE) a contractor currently has in place (with a check mark, star or other symbol).

• Provide a packet as each contractor signs in, (see section on “Attendee Packets”).

• As the DSBL tends to the event registration table, attendees will be asked to sign in to record attendance. Attendees that exit earlier than a set meeting time that has been pre-designated must also sign out.

• Prime contractors should each have an assigned table with two chairs and a large-sized business name tent card for easy identification. These tables are generally set up around the room’s perimeter. Potential subcontractors queue-up to each table to network with the prime contractor’s representative(s), once the formal portion of the program is concluded.

• Collect a business card from each attendee. Advise that these will be photocopied and a list with all collected cards will be provided at the conclusion of the event – this only works if there is access to a copier. Otherwise, a contact list can be e-mailed to all attendees after the event to continue to facilitate networking. Providing this information has proven valuable to many contractors interested in receiving the list for making contacts after the event. Providing the copied list to the attendees at the end of the meeting will encourage many to stay for the entire program.

• The DSBL must deliver the original sign-in and -out sheet(s) to the PM immediately following the meeting, as part of the record. Send scanned or faxed copies of the signature sheets to the Chief, Office of Contract Awards and Services and to Kris Kuhl, Chief, Office of Contract Awards and Services, at Kris_Kuhl@dot.ca.gov

To further motivate attendees to stay for the entire program, and if time allows, have a random drawing of business cards for a door prize at the conclusion of the formal networking session – must be present to win! Door prizes must be donated or a Caltrans promotional item can be used.
Construction Mandatory Pre-Bid Meeting Guide

C. Program Begins
The goal should be to start and end at the stated times, allowing for some flexibility. Ensure that all speakers are aware of when the facilitator is ready to start the program and have them seated near the podium. The facilitator is responsible for not leaving the podium empty. Ask each speaker to remain at the podium until the facilitator can step up and introduce the next speaker.

The following is a list of agenda items, in the order of presentation, that serves as the facilitator’s Talking Points:

- The facilitator identifies himself/herself and states the name of the event, its purpose and thanks the audience for attending. The facilitator should take this moment to also attend to housekeeping details and direct the attendees’ attention to the location of exits in the case of an emergency. Or, if the event is being held at a non-Department facility, ask the host to give the “housekeeping” instructions to the audience.

- Direct the attendees’ attention to the packet and briefly identify the enclosed items. Staff can stand by with extra copies of the items, if anything is missing from a packet.

- If applicable, announce that business cards collected at registration are being copied and that a list of copied cards will be available at the conclusion of the meeting. If an evaluation survey was not included in the Attendee Packet, announce that one will be given to all attendees before the end of the program and indicate where the surveys can be deposited before leaving the event and/or who is designated to collect the surveys.

- Tell the audience about the color coding of the badges, for example, “If you need assistance, you can get help from anyone wearing a blue badge.” Then, point to one of the staff that all can see who is wearing such a badge.

- Introduce the project by name and number.

- Make a statement about what the contract goal is and emphasize the purpose of the networking session to help prime contractors find certified subcontractors with whom to fulfill the goal. Mention the color-coded badges again to help with identification.

- Introduce the District Director or designee to give welcoming remarks.

- Introduce the project manager who will give a general project overview.

- Introduce other designated speaker(s).

- Open the floor for a Q&A.

- Explain how the networking will be conducted. (For example, potential subs line up in front of the designated bidding primes tables to introduce themselves and provide pertinent information).

- Proceed to networking.
D. Networking Begins
The primary objective of the MPB meeting is to increase certified SB, DVBE and DBE participation in Department contracting opportunities. Distribute the copied sheets of business cards after the networking and if a door prize is to be awarded, do so at the end of the networking hour. All Department staff should mingle with the attendees.

The following is a networking activity used by District 11 (San Diego) staff during an MPB meeting:

- Inform attendees that name badges with a green-colored dot designate a prime contractor and a yellow-colored dot indicates a subcontractor.
- Just before networking begins, have the attendees feel under their table for a business card. Whoever retrieves the business card receives a small vinyl business bag of Department trinkets.
- Distribute copies of “8 Networking Tips and Simple Ways to Build Profitable Relationships” and ask attendees to take a few moments to review it. See Attachment M for the link to this article.
- Prime contractors sit at panel tables and subcontractors have two 20-minute segments each to introduce themselves to as many prime contractors as they can using tips learned in the “8 Networking Tips…”
- While prime contractors are networking with subcontractors, have other subcontractors scotch tape their business cards under the type of work they do on flip charts (indicating work to be subcontracted on project) along the walls. After the meeting concludes, allow an additional 15 minutes for participants to walk around the room. Take notice of potential networking relationships.
- Have the DSBL e-mail the business names/ type of work to prime contractors for consideration in their bids.
- Ask prime contractors to remain at the conclusion of the event (if possible) to further network with subcontractors.

Another helpful tool that the District 11 (San Diego) liaison team utilized was the Internet. Prior research produced several sites that listed documents already created e.g., “Simple Ways to Build Profitable Relationships…” and “8 Networking Tips…” that staff handed out to attendees from the website ezinearticles.com. See Attachment M “Helpful Web Sites for Meeting Tools” for a list of sites offering support tools for meetings.

III. Post-Event Activities

A. Evaluation/Feedback
Provide an evaluation survey/comment card for each attendee, including staff. Designate a location/person where or to whom the hard-copy surveys can be submitted, in confidence. Since the registration table will be near the entrance/exit,
Construction Mandatory Pre-Bid Meeting Guide

this is an ideal location to capture the responses. See Attachment N “Prime Contractors – SR905 Contract # 11-288804 – Pre-Bid Survey” for a sample of a hard-copy survey used at a District 11 (San Diego) MPB meeting.

Comment cards can be part of the event packet to receive immediate feedback before attendees leave the premises. However, in-depth feedback rarely gets communicated in this format, especially if the room is set-up theatre style because it may be difficult to write without a table.

B. After Action Report
The purpose of the After Action Report (AAR) is to capture participant impressions, evaluations and suggestions for future events.

Customize the report template to address specific information from the MPB meeting. See Attachment K for an AAR template.

Some of this data may have been collected by the PM. Work with the PM to gather this information. Refer to Attachment O to see the fields of required information.

Conduct a debriefing with the MPB Team after the survey results have been tabulated, not more than ten business days after the MPB. Submit an electronic AAR to the designated BEU staff person and copy PM, at the conclusion of the MPB meeting but not more than ten working days after the evaluation surveys have been collected and summarized. Invite all who participated to discuss the successes that occurred during the event and areas of improvement. Bring the AARs to the debriefing meeting for developing a Lessons Learned summary as the guide for improving the success of the next event. Don’t forget to send out “Thank you!” cards to the co-sponsors and others who partnered with the Department on this event.

Good luck and much success!
Definition of Terms
Construction Mandatory Pre-Bid Meeting Guide

Definition of Terms

After Action Report (AAR): an evaluation and analysis of the performance with a 'lessons learned' component and recommendation for adjustments and/or improvement.

California Unified Certification Program (CUCP): provides "one-stop shopping" certification services to small, minority and women businesses seeking to participate as a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) in contracts funded by the United States Department of Transportation.

Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE): a California certified firm that meets the requirements for DVBE certification whose application is processed by the state Department of General Services. This certification is used to fulfill goal participation in the appropriate state-funded contracts or procurement. The Web site is: http://www.eprocure.dgs.ca.gov/default.htm

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE): the U.S. Department of Transportation DBE program is implemented by recipients of USDOT Federal Financial Assistance. Recipients are primarily state highway, transit and airport agencies that receive funds subject to Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations part 26 (49 CFR 26). A similar program for airport concessions (ACDBE) program mandated by 49 U.S.C. 47107(e), originally enacted in 1987 and amended in 1992, is implemented under (49 CFR 23). The DBE certification is used to fulfill goal participation in the appropriate federal-funded contracts.

District Small Business Liaison (DSBL): individuals or Caltrans staff who facilitate the implementation of the governor's Executive Order S-11-06 that focuses upon increasing the participation of small businesses, including Disadvantaged Business Enterprises, in the Department's procurement and contracts, assists these firms in gaining access to capital and technical training on how to submit responsive bids and contract compliance.

DSBL Business Communication Plan (BCP): identifies potential stakeholders with an interest in Caltrans' projects who can spread the word of the upcoming event to their memberships.

Mandatory Pre-bid Meeting: requires the firm's principal(s) or decision-making designee's attendance, or the bid submittal will be considered non-responsive.

Project Manager (PM): the project's designated principal who works with the Project Delivery Team to identify the activities involved in a project, the duration of time related to these activities and the resources necessary to mete out these activities.

Pre-bid Meeting: a meeting between Caltrans staff and prospective contractors before the project submittal deadline to allow contractors to become familiar with the project and to learn of any further requirements.
Construction Mandatory Pre-Bid Meeting Guide

Definition of Terms

**Small Business Development Center (SBDC):** provides no-cost, or low-cost, training and counseling to enhance a contractor’s capability to submit responsive bids, market business skills to other contractors, understand accounting and requirements, etc. The Web site is: californiasbdc.org

**Small Business (SB):** a California certified small business that meets requirements for Small Business by the State Department of General Services. This certification is used to fulfill goal participation in the appropriate state-funded contracts or procurement. The Web site is: http://www.eprocure.dgs.ca.gov/default.htm.
Process Flow Chart