

ILLINOIS EXPLORING BRIDGE BUNDLING

ODOT Contractor Experience Webinar Notes

Date: February 1st, 2021

Location: Zoom

Time: 12:00 PM

Attendees: See end of document

Discussion/Questions – Note that the answers to the questions are NOT verbatim but summaries of the thoughts and ideas discussed.

Question: Where you familiar with bridge bundling concept prior to working on the projects?

Answer Joe Raterman: Prior to you all reaching out to me I was not aware that bridge bundling was an initiative brought by Ohio. We've had multiple experience on the bundling on the design build portion and construction. We had a favorable view of it. One of the biggest thing about it, we're all volume based we need to hit a certain sales goal each year. From a bidding standpoint if you can bid one project that has three bridges on it as compared to one bid one bridge. Our bundles were 2-3 bridges in each, 1-2 million.

It allows us to be efficient from an office and management standpoint. Also in the field it helps be more efficient, we had one bundle with three bridges all on the same state route within four miles of each other. One crew could move from one bridge to another to another easily. I see nothing but positive, there are some negatives. You wouldn't want a bundle with bridges in all corners of the state.

Answer Mike Killilea: We had a favorable view of bridge bundling before we did the bridges, we did similar things for ODOT on other types of projects, other projects that were not part of the design build. Before you all reaching out to us as Joe mentioned, I was not familiar that Ohio was at the forefront of all this.

Answer Gary Whitis: I wasn't too familiar with it, it's a good concept. I'm not that fond of design-build myself but it worked out well. We did about 30 bridges in the program, it's a good concept. It keeps a couple crews working all year round which is really good.

Question: Looking at the RFP/ procurement process, how did the process with the bundled bridges compare to the standard process?

ILLINOIS EXPLORING BRIDGE BUNDLING



Answer Mike Killilea: The ones we got were design-build, the bundled process was the same as if it were the same if it was an ODOT standard design-build package. No other differences, the biggest difference was you're essentially bidding two bridges at one time. You basically

Answer Gary Whitis: There wasn't much of a difference. With the design build portion, ODOT thought it could get the process through faster, which I think it does since you don't have to do separate bids for each portion.

Answer Joe Raterman: Only thing I would add to what Gary and Mike said, one of the projects we won was scattered around three different counties. It created some logistical issues with quotes and trucking and aggregate etc. Different concrete/aggregate suppliers for each bridge, that was the one thing that made it a bit more difficult, but not any different than if we were bidding on those three bridges individually, just a bit different to have it all in one bid.

Question: Were there any other challenges compared to normal process?

Answer Gary Whitis: If you're going to do these bundles make sure you have utilities relocated ahead of time, have enough right-of-way. On our end, since it was design-build ODOT put all the responsibility on the contractor to move the utilities and that usually doesn't work out that well.

Answer Joe Raterman: The design-build projects, ODOT put it on the contractors to leverage the utilities, that was an issue at times.

Question: Primary concern that bridge bundling will create a large project that will disqualify smaller local contractors, counteracting economies of scale.

Answer Mike Killilea: If you can keep it smaller under a couple million, it will allow for competition.

Answer Joe Raterman: I agree, keep it smaller. If you make a bundle of 50 bridges you will eliminate smaller contractors like us. We typically do 10-20 bridges a year. The way ODOT did it went well, you had the smallest contractors bidding against the biggest contractors. You need to focus on logistical and not getting too big with how many bridges in a bundle.

Question: Typically, are the bridges similar in kind and size, what the projects were.

Answer Gary Whitis: Most of them were like three bridges, one of them had five bridges. Most of them were simple bridges, box beam, asphalt overlays, a lot of county engineers wanted composite deck bridges.

ILLINOIS EXPLORING BRIDGE BUNDLING



Answer Joe Raterman: The ones we had were a bit more complex, one project were three slab bridges simple spans. All three were identical, simple jobs on the same state route very similar. The other bundle, the bridges were on county roads. One was pre-stressed I-beam project, another high skewed single span steel structure, last one was a three-sided box with deep footers. So a little bit different bridges, they were kind of all over the board. I feel like keeping them similar is beneficial, we see the guys that like doing culvers don't like doing the three span slab bridges. So you can start eliminating people if you look at it that way.

Answer Mike Killilea: Ours were all slab bridges, two bridges under a million. Slab bridges driven piles. One of them was hard to get there, getting pilings there was difficult. They were pretty straight forward overall. Since they were easy to do they were efficient, when you design one you can design the other. Same consultant or project engineer, makes it efficient. When you're in construction and you have the same ODOT engineer, you're talking about the next bridge when you're on the first one which makes things go smoother.

Question: Can you speak to the elements of the bundles you bid on that made them more attractive to you outside from the already stated points, and how you would advise other states to mimic when rolling out a program.

Answer Joe Raterman: I think logistically, we try and stay within 50-miles of our office typically. We like our guys to be home at night, it's important to us. Location becomes just as important for us as size, if it's a 30 million dollar bundle we can't look at it anyway.

Answer Gary Whitis: We were looking at projects where our asphalt plants were so we could do everything ourselves.

Answer Mike Killilea: We try and stay in the geographic zones of our guys, we go maybe a 70-mile range. If you can get the sites all near each other, that creates some economies of scale. You're taking cranes, excavators etc., from one site to another instead of back to the office and then back to the next site. If there are any interesting aspects of the jobs/site, the guys could easily just head over to the next one and check it out. Proximity is important of the bridges.

Question: Was the contract management with ODOT any different than it is with single projects.

Answer Gary Whitis: No not really, you get your inspector and engineer from ODOT. A lot of it was lump sums, different than we normally do with unit prices. You

Answer Mike Killilea: It was the same, everything the same from engineer inspector etc.

ILLINOIS EXPLORING BRIDGE BUNDLING

Question: Was project development and construction oversight done by ODOT, or local agencies involved.

Answer Gary Whitis: combined ODOT and county engineers, for our jobs they hired another consulting firm to come up with a scope of services.

Answer Mike Killilea: ODOT administer our job completely like any other LPA job, I'm guessing in the design process the county engineer was involved. They were involved, but the line of contact was between us and ODOT.

Answer Joe Raterman: I know being a design-build the review went to the counties as well. But all the communication went through ODOT.

Question: Was Ohio's bundling pushed down from the state or the local agencies?

Answer Gary Whitis: I think it was a combination between ODOT and the counties.

Answer Jamy Lyne: The original jurisdiction is still responsible of maintenance of those bridges. But the bridge bundles were jointly done with the ODOT and county engineers association.

Question: Did you feel like the bridge bundling gave you more project to bid on.

Answer Joe Raterman: One case I gave, we did end up with another job that we probably wouldn't bid. There other bundles we bid on, we would have gone after them regardless if they were bundled or individual bridges. The one thing that I don't know is if ODOT would have posted all those bridges at the same time.

Answer Mike Killilea: I believe that ODOT's bridge bundling program was on top of their regular construction program. They may have been pumping out more work than otherwise wouldn't have been there.

Answer Gary Whitis: Yes in a way, we bid about everything there isn't a project too small for us. There's a job to bid, we'll bid it.

Question: Honest assessment, as to what percentage the bids changed due to bundling?

Answer Gary Whitis: These were all lump sum bid items, you still had to break down your crews. Makes it a bit harder to bid on honestly, you have different levels to build into that lump sum as apposed to line items which are a bit easier in my opinion.



ILLINOIS EXPLORING BRIDGE BUNDLING

Answer Joe Raterman: You still have to look at each job individually bundled or not. You look at the level impact, it's probably bigger deal to a smaller company. We are looking at what can this job do for us now, if it's a single slab bridge vs three slab bridges it makes a difference to us. We can put a supervisor out there for eight months instead of three months. You're not going to see 10 to 15 percent savings, its going to be minimal 2,3,4 percent.

Answer Mike Killilea: It probably would be 2-3 percent through efficiencies, the ability to take one supervisors to the next. Not a bunch of start and stopping.

Question: Were there any issues with unions in terms of the bundles projects?

Answer Gary Whitis: We are a union shop, so we have to all union subs and everything. If a non-union contactor wants to bid it, they can as long as they use prevailing wages.

Answer Joe Raterman: We're a non-union company, we weren't at a disadvantage. There are several of each in our state, no different than any other ODOT let project. I don't think union or non-union is an issue, let the best price win.

Answer Mike Killilea: We're an open shop, and we hire union subs all the time. ODOT and the public owners in Ohio does a good job to make sure everyone handles prevailing wages properly with payrolls.

ILLINOIS EXPLORING BRIDGE BUNDLING

Attendees

Adam Miliszewski
Collin Watters
Jason Petentler
Justin Krohn
Gary Whitis
Joe Raterman
Chris Snyder
Libby Braband
Mark Polston
Alicia Tate-Nadeau
Stephen Sostaric
Joseph Korpalski
Shane Peck
Mike Banashek
Bob Perkins
Benjamin Brockschmidt
Norm Etling
Todd Main
Amy Benecke McLaren
Roger Driskell
Chad Clauson
Emily Daucher
Mike Killilea
Holly Bieneman
Craig Cassem
Scott Wojteczko
Deborah Brown
Jeff Blue
Jeff Adkisson
Amar Rajpurkar
Jamy Lyne
Neil Adams
Mike Smart
Tricia Walsh
Chris Linneman
Chris Johnson
Andrew Petrisin
Curtiss Robinson

Pat Claussen
Mike Sturino
Jon Paul Diipla
Andrew Keaschall
Benjamin Redding
Jamal Grainawi
Christopher Hall
Ken Price
Carl Puzey
Noel Basquin
John Munoz
Jose Alvarez
Howard Gotschall
Noel Basquin
Clay Metcalf
Dan Brydl
Brandon Simmons
Michael Kowalczyk
Mark Kennedy