

Complex/Large Project Subcommittee

6/26/2026

1:00pm

Attendance: Kevin Campbell, Jason Broyles, Scott Mergler, Melvin Henson, John Kelly, Mike Wartko, Frank Riegler, Dave Coniglio, Davy Myers, Bradley Shoemaker, Lori Wade, Jim Collins, Griffin Weasel, Wilson/Keaton/Ned, Greg First, Blake Ross, Deanna DeWitt, Kyle Cross, Collin Crigger, Kara Arnold, Lawrence Hampton, Kyle McLeod, Mike Lawson, James Mander, Don Huck, Dominick Belsar, David Koren, Garry Lee, Drew Williams, Michael Brinkman, Jimmy Stewart

Melvin Henson opened the meeting at 1:01pm

Wants to establish a definition for what is a large/complex ticket. Jason showed the group some of the definitions from other states and organizations to start a discussion on what we would consider the definition to be in Ohio.

Melvin Henson- Read the definitions shown on the screen to the group, then will have conversation after that. Have several different definitions. Feels it is difficult to determine exactly what a large/complex project is and is hard to define by footage. But feels like utility companies can define what it is. In Cleveland, 1 block could be a large/complex project, but 1 block in a rural area isn't. Would like to see the utility companies have the ability to trigger a large complex project. Jennifer had mentioned using that even in the design phase as well. Opened it up for discussion.

James Mander- This is a complicated topic, to throw a few thoughts out, trying to describe who can trigger this is challenging, the way the law is written, if the excavator doesn't deem it is large, it isn't large, and the utilities don't feel like that's fair, and if the utilities can trigger it, the excavators won't think it is fair. New concept and haven't read it elsewhere, but what if the ticket is designated as a large project while it is being created, it takes the responsibility from the excavator and the utility. We can discuss what the footage should be, but once it hits that footage, it gets put in as a large/complex project. Excavators could just put in multiple smaller tickets, which doesn't help. If the center can designate that if an excavator exceeds a certain footage in one day, it will trigger a large/complex notification.

Jason Broyles- Thank you and think you reiterated the importance to the industry for Ohio to come up with some sort of definition.

Dave Coniglio- Jim, your definition that you said, I agree with. The only thing I want to throw out from a contractor side/highway side. Trying to put a distance or length in feet will be difficult. A small project will have a different meaning. Work on a bridge could be complex, but not large, and could have many utilities involved. Things outside of size can make it complicated. Not sure how to put a designated length, but open to suggestions.

Melvin Henson- Think Jim has an interesting idea, and along the same lines from what I said earlier, some sort of mechanism for the excavator to still trigger a large/complex notification. Also, with the utility companies/locate companies, if they can trigger it, you have to put guardrails up so it can't be abused. You have to consult with us as a contract locator before designating that. Something might seem benign, may seem short, but utility companies know there are issues/complications in an area.

Dave Coniglio- Don't necessarily disagree, on the flip side, in our world, doing underdrain, we can do 1-2 miles in one shift. Yes, it is large, but it is not complex. Say we had a 2,000 ft max before it gets triggered, excavators could have an issue because the job won't take a long time.

Melvin Henson- I think there has to be the ability to do that. A mile or 2 is not a complex job. I'm inclined to discuss less footage than the opportunity to discuss what the excavator and utility can agree upon for a definition. In the design stage, if a contractor is paying for a design and it is brought up that it will be a large/complex project, it helps everyone, especially too in the bid phase, and will foster communication.

Dave Coniglio- When it is in the design phase, the designer is not the one building the project. They may feel it is one way, but the excavator may feel like it's different.

Melvin Henson- if the designer is alerted to the fact it is large, I would think they would share that with who is doing the work.

Dave Coniglio- Don't disagree, if it is designated in the plans, it doesn't automatically mean it is a large/ complex project.

Melvin Henson- Just want to foster communication among the utilities and the excavators.

Dave Coniglio- Agree and think we are on the right track.

Melvin Henson- Jason, do you want to throw up what was discussed previously and combine the thoughts with what we have here?

Jason Broyles- Showed a document of some other language that was formed in other subcommittees previously, don't want to recreate the wheel, and don't want to repeat history. So, want to get everyone up to speed on what has been discussed previously.

Melvin Henson- This is just potential language to start with but can remold it and shape it to include what we have discussed so far.

Jason Broyles- The first part is what was discussed back in 2015-2016 time frame, the next section should look familiar since it came from subcommittee meetings last year.

Melvin Henson read the second part of the document shared on the screen.

Melvin Henson- I think there is some good wording here that can be reshaped into what we were discussing. What are everyone's thoughts?

Dave Coniglio- I would like to maybe take the most recent definition and tweak it a little and send it out. I would like to share it with my safety committee and think I have some folks who would respond and it is a well-rounded group.

Melvin Henson- If it is ok with the group, we could look at this, reshape it, and come up with what we heard between Jim and Dave, and put it into a definition, then bring it to the group to give us a better place to start. Today we wanted to get some thoughts and get the ball rolling.

Dominck Belser- The most recent language we review, I shared it with the folks in my area, and they were all receptive of it. I did have a question, my perception is, most larger construction projects, a Home Depot store for example. Isn't there typically a lot of coordination meetings with something like that.

Melvin Henson- To your point, from a locator standpoint, I wouldn't look at that as a large project, it would be for the excavator but generally isn't from a locator/utility standpoint.

Dave Coniglio- You are correct, more often than not, it wouldn't be a large complex project in this realm. Coordination/progress meetings do generally happen, and I don't think any contractor would have an issue with the utilities participating in that meeting. Not every project has it, but any construction work with multiple subs, that process usually takes place.

Melvin Henson- Goes back to the communication/cooperation piece. Any contractor/utility should want to participate in that discussion. Overall, we all win when that happens.

Dave Conilio- Agreed.

James Mandera- I think something along these lines in the most recent example is heading in the right direction. Don't want to lose sight of not being able to evaluate it on a per ticket basis, has to be the entirety of the job, especially if we want the center to be doing the designation. Somehow need to weave that into the definition. Not entirely looking at the size of each individual ticket, but the size of the job. Then it doesn't matter if it is 10 tickets

or 100 tickets, the footage is the same and then can communicate how much footage can be done and get that marking schedule established. Deal with this a lot with the huge fiber jobs coming in. Feel like total project footage needs to be taken into account more so than individual ticket footages. Highway jobs that are 5 miles long, we don't know what is under a highway and would think that would fall into that large/complex project to at least get the discussion, and I do not anticipate that slowing down the project. If you can cover a couple miles a day, then knowing about it ahead of time is going to help so the utilities are aware and can be sure to stay ahead. If it is in an area with a lot of services, the locating will have to take place sooner because it will take longer.

Melvin Henson- Agree, each ticket can't stand on its own, and a locate ticket can be deceptive. That's why I want the utility companies involved, because not every job that seems simple is simple. This is why I wanted to get away a little bit from the footage. If calling in 60 fiber tickets, even in 750' sections, that would still be a large/complex project. Downtown Cincinnati, Columbus, Cleveland, a 500' ticket could be a large/complex project.

Dave Coniglio- I would agree, and what Jim says comes back to, the communication piece or it. It all comes back to that. If it is going to be deemed that way, we need to zero in on the communication part. How do we open those doors and make it so it has to happen between all parties involved. A progress meeting weekly, or just with the utilities, there is important information in that meeting, and the utilities are usually not a part of that meeting, and it gets overlooked. I think we are headed in that direction.

Melvin Henson- Agree, the part that comes in, the utilities have to keep their vendors accountable to the job they are doing, and the excavators have to hold themselves accountable, and make everything better for everyone. Not trying to create problems, but a better opportunity to prevent damages. Understanding we have all had issues, we have to reset and go in a direction to help everybody.

Dominick Belser- Emergency locates that get called in, a series of questions are asked to make sure it meets that criteria, can we do the same thing in the request process to see if it meets the large/complex project.

Jason Broyles- Yes, that is the conversation we are having so we know what questions we need to ask and what information to get. Once we get the definition, we would be able to do something along those lines. Most prominent one so far has been length of a request, as a group, it isn't all that can be looked at. Can call a request at my address, get no response from most of the utilities, but a neighbor 3 houses down could have more issues because

more utilities run in that area. Utilities, having the ability to determine large/complex projects as well, will change the process through the locating, and the excavation.

Scott Mergler- When I get a large/complex project notice, I will send it to my locate vendor, they will take care of it. What about municipalities who don't have the ability to attend or don't have the time, what do we do about that?

Melvin Henson- I think that is something that we need to coordinate with them as well. It will be a potential issue, but as we move forward, those municipalities are being addressed. I think that we will set it in place, then help them build to the standard. Don't want to lessen the standard because someone can't reach it.

Jason Broyles- Agree, but agree with Scott, we do need to keep that in mind as we come up with language for this. It will apply just as heavily to the small municipalities, and the small excavators who only have a couple of people working for them.

Melvin Henson- I agree. I think if no one has anything else, we will take what we heard today and come up with a definition based on this conversation. May not be perfect but will have something to look at and build from and get language that everyone is comfortable with. We will fashion it to get communication and cooperation. I think that will help make the excavator more efficient and keep the public and utilities safe as well. Anyone have anything else?

Meeting adjourned at 1:46pm