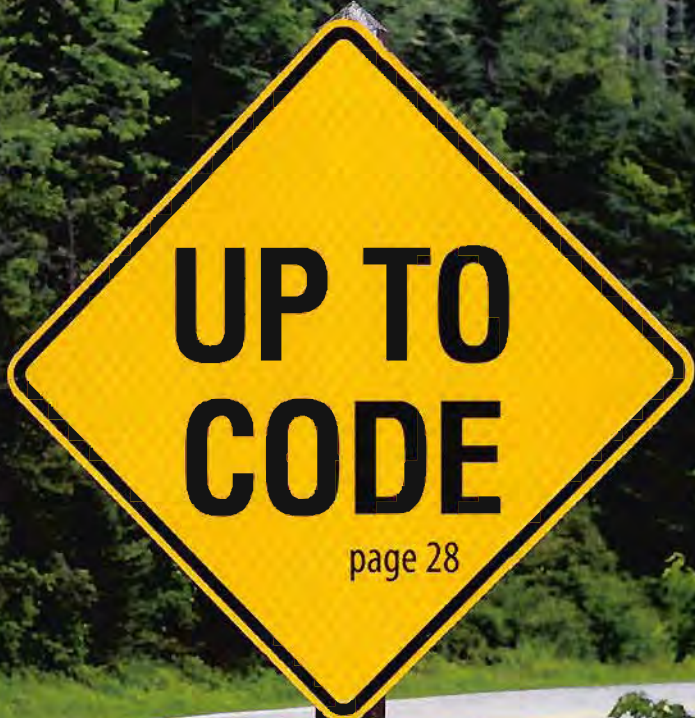


# Public Works

hanley wood



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# Unlimited access

*A contracting method cuts procurement time for project requirements that haven't been fully identified.*

**H**ome to 98,000 residents, the recently incorporated city of Sandy Springs, Ga., is still growing, which means departments are constantly expanding services and launching new projects.

Upon its 2005 incorporation, the city outsourced all services except police and fire to Operations Management International, a division of engineering firm CH2M Hill (See PUBLIC WORKS, February 2007, pp. 26–31). To expedite procurement and delivery, public works uses a contract that includes a design-build concept with the flexibility for an indefinite quantity, enabling it to procure as much of a service as needed within a fixed period of time as conditions and budget allow.

Popular with federal agencies, indefinite-delivery/indefinite-quantity contracts are ideal for when an agency cannot determine, above a specified minimum, the precise quantities of supplies or services needed during a contract period. The approach works best for projects that can be built in a relatively constrained pe-

riod of time and when commodity prices are expected to be stable.

“We’re instilling in our staff a confidence to work with designers and then build the project as it goes,” says City Manager John McDonough. “If they see a need for additional concrete for sidewalks, more fiber in the Traffic Management Center, or pavement on the ground, they have the authority to proceed.”

The contract specifies a minimum amount of work or supplies that public works is required to buy and a maximum to ensure the vendor can deliver all work awarded within a reasonable period of time. The city’s finance director allocates the minimum and maximum spending levels, setting a basic amount that the contracting department can access during the course of the contract. Department heads don’t have to come back to directors again and again to approve additional expenses, and the repetitious request for proposal and bidding process that prolongs construction is eliminated.

*(continued)*



Sandy Springs, Ga., used annual contracts incorporating the design-build/indefinite-quantity approach to resurface 63½ miles of streets over three years for \$13 million. Contractors submitted bids with unit prices for six key pay items typical for resurfacing projects. A clause allowing projects to be added under the same agreement, and with the same specifications, allowed public works to approve additional mileage without having to advertise, bid, and approve a new contract. Photos: City of Sandy Springs, Ga.



Another improvement in the city's Intersection Improvement Program is the installation and upgrade of pedestrian equipment to current standards. Here, a contractor installs a pedestrian countdown clock.

#### SPEEDING UP SIDEWALK CONSTRUCTION

One top priority is filling gaps along arterial and collector streets to provide connectivity within a half-mile radius of the city's 10 public schools.

Limited funding prevented construction from being completed in one fiscal year; 2008 funding was \$250,000 and \$1.5 million is being provided this year. By including an indefinite quantity line item as part of the bid package, public works can quickly install more sidewalks as funds become available.

The department awarded an initial quantity of 3,300 linear feet, choosing design-build as the delivery method to speed construction of the relatively uncomplicated sites. As the project's success attracted more funding, public works exercised the indefinite quantity delivery line item to construct more than 8,000 feet.

When the department awarded a second contract later last year with an initial quantity of 4,000 linear feet, employees again exercised the indefinite quantity line item to approve an additional 4,800 feet that's under construction.

"Ultimately, the department saved half a year in project delivery time," says McDonough. "Associated staff time and costs were also reduced as the budget for additional sidewalk increments became available, expediting the awarding of additional work. Design-build with indefinite quantity is just the type of solution we were looking for."

The approach gives contractors autonomy while holding them accountable for project performance. The vendor defines a recommended approach and layout based upon site constraints that public works approves or modifies. The design must meet the requirements of Georgia DOT construction standards. Payment is made as work is completed and accepted. Invoices are submitted monthly.

#### IMPROVING TRAFFIC FLOW

Better roads and travel times were a major reason Sandy Springs residents wanted to incorporate. After studying volumes, patterns, and control devices,

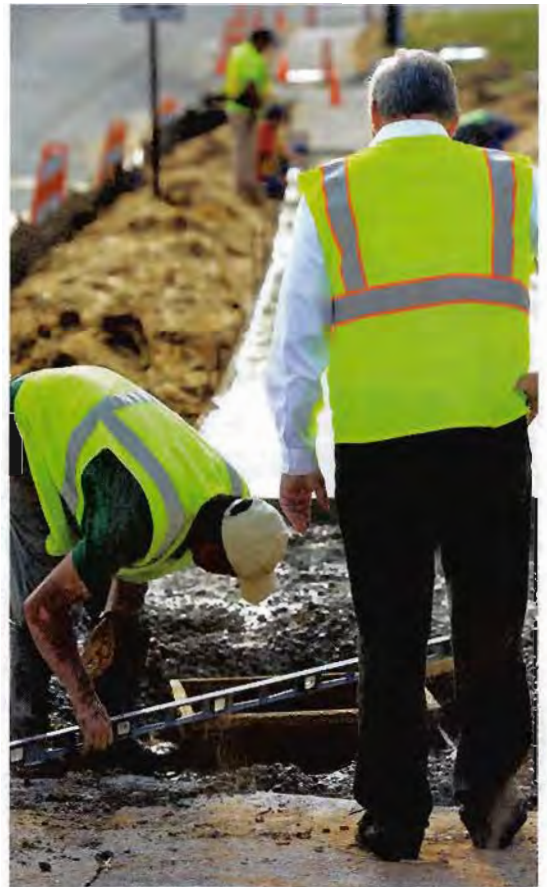
the Traffic Services Division decided to supplement the city's control network with more sophisticated technologies using design-build/indefinite-quantity contracts.

Intersections receive operational improvements through short-term projects such as restriping, upgrading pedestrian facilities and signal equipment, installing turn lanes, and adding left-turn phasing. Six improvements were implemented in four months, shaving three months off construction and providing enough savings to improve three more intersections during the program's first year. The program is funded at \$1 million/year.

The division also saved six to 12 months of construction time and 20% in costs on its new traffic management center. Seven miles of fiber optic cable, a Web page, and five closed-circuit television cameras were installed or created in six months. The contract is ongoing with plans for additional fiber optics cable installation, cabinet upgrades, camera installation, and software development.

For Sandy Springs, incorporating design-build and indefinite-quantity contracting improves efficiency, reduces costs, and saves time. **PW**

— *Moore is the media and communications manager with the city of Sandy Springs, Ga. She has worked with the city since January 2006.*



More than 12,000 linear feet of sidewalk were installed last year under multiyear design-build contracts that allow vendors to design and execute projects with public works' approval.