

DESIGN SCHEDULES

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

Q – Can I just put a ‘zero day duration’ in tasks that I want to delete?

A – The answer to that is yes. We would like everyone to **NOT DELETE any tasks**. If you find that you do not need a task, please simply put a ‘0’ in the duration and make a note “not applicable”. Please also refrain from changing task descriptions. The purpose for both of these standard rules will be helpful with the review of the schedule and maintaining consistency with logic (predecessors and successors). In order to avoid zero duration tasks to become milestones, you should double-click on the task, and under the “Advanced tab”, un-check the “Mark Task as Milestone” checkbox. Also, if a non-applicable task has an associated relationship with a lag then the lag duration should be removed (set to zero).

Alternatively, if you are using Microsoft Project Professional, you could use the “Inactive” feature to remove unneeded tasks from the logic.

Q – What is the duration of MassDOT Review Tasks?

A – The MassDOT review times depend on the advertising date and shall be according to MassDOT’s February 2021 Design Review Memo (see pdf file included in this section.)

In order to use the correct review durations you need to know when the “target” advertising date is. If the project is TIP funded, it’s been “programmed” into a “fiscally constrained year program” and we need to work aggressively to keep its ad date in the programmed year. If using the various default durations push the project out of that year, notify the PM and try to find ways to get it back into its programmed year.

Q – Can I edit the schedule logic (predecessors and successors)?

A – The MassDOT templates have been developed with task relationships that are in line with typical projects. Major changes to the logic are not allowed. In case changes are required to reflect how the design development will proceed, the MassDOT PM’s approval is required in advance. Remember to add a predecessor and a successor to new unique tasks added to the schedule that are project specific.

Q – Can I manually enter dates or can I only adjust task durations to replicate our Ad date?

A – It is not recommended to manually enter the planned dates because this will automatically create a start or finish constraint on the task. In cases where you develop schedules for projects that are already in their mid-design life (i.e. 75%), you should enter the Actual dates of all past tasks as close as possible. If concurrent work happened in the past, you will be able to enter the Actual Dates and show work as progressed regardless of the project logic. For future tasks, you can coordinate with the MassDOT PM for potential changes in the schedule logic.

Q – Can I use the % Work Complete field to show the progress schedule?

A – The answer is No since the schedule is not resource loaded. Instead, you can use the “% Complete” field which is the percentage of the task’s duration that has been completed. However, it is recommended to use the “Actual Start/Finish” and the “Actual Duration” fields and let the program calculate the “% Complete”.

Q – When directed by the PM to add new tasks, how should I number the WBS codes for those new tasks?

A – Adding new tasks requires prior approval from the Section Director. The WBS codes have been set up as follows:

Area of work. Division of work from the Scoping workbook. Unique Identifier
i.e. HWY.300.090

- If you want to add a unique task, add it under the most relevant WBS. The first two number sets will auto populate (i.e. HWY.300). For the third set (unique identifier), enter the next sequential number followed by the letter N (New). See an example below:

HWY.300.060	43	Prepare 25% Design Responses
HWY.300.070	44	Comment Resolution Meeting @25% (Full Team)
HWY.300.080N	45	<New Task>

It is important not to modify the existing WBS codes, and if tasks are added, make sure the WBS does not create a duplicate. All WBS codes need to be unique per task for reporting purposes.

When adding a revision to an existing activity or set of activities, a fourth level may be used to designate revisions to existing activities with “.1” representing Revision 1 to the existing activity or activities. See an example below:

ID	WBS	Name
183	ROW	Right of Way
184	ROW.501	Preliminary ROW Plans
185	ROW.501.010	Prepare 25% ROW Plans
186	ROW.501.020	Submit 25% ROW Plans
187	ROW.501.030	Review 25% ROW Plans
188	ROW.501.010.1	Prepare 25% ROW Plans Rev1
189	ROW.501.020.1	Submit 25% ROW Plans Rev1

ID	WBS	Name
190	ROW.501.030.1	Review 25% ROW Plans Rev1

Q – Can I enter Actual Dates for a task that its predecessor hasn’t started yet?

A – Yes. In MS Project you should be able to enter Actual Dates as happened and the software will reschedule the tasks based on the dates entered and not the initial planned logic.

Q – Can I enter Actual Dates in the future?

A – No. In the Actual dates columns, you should enter only dates that are less or equal to the Status date.

Q – When I am updating the schedule, can I leave some tasks with planned dates before the Status date without updating them?

A – No. You need to update all tasks with planned dates before the Status Date. If they are already complete, you need to enter the Actual Dates as close as possible (Actual Start and/or Actual Finish). If they were planned to start but they didn’t you need to reschedule them to start after the Status Date.

Q – When I am updating the schedule, how do I add a revision to a submittal (i.e. Prepare Bridge Sketch Plans Rev1)?

A – If you need to add a revision to a submittal, update tasks as follows:

- First, add a Revision (“Rev”) number to the associated task’s name, and a “.1” to the WBS

ID	WBS	Name
183	ROW	Right of Way
184	ROW.501	Preliminary ROW Plans
185	ROW.501.010	Prepare 25% ROW Plans
186	ROW.501.020	Submit 25% ROW Plans
187	ROW.501.030	Review 25% ROW Plans
188	ROW.501.010.1	Prepare 25% ROW Plans Rev1
189	ROW.501.020.1	Submit 25% ROW Plans Rev1
190	ROW.501.030.1	Review 25% ROW Plans Rev1

- Second, tie the logic Finish-to-Start (FS) from the previous Review task to the Rev Prepare task’
- Lastly, tie the new Rev Review task to the previous Review successors.

Q – Can I compare schedule updates in Microsoft Project?

A – Yes. Microsoft Project allows you to compare monthly schedule updates and generate a comparison report. When you click on ‘Compare Projects’ in the ‘Projects’ tab, a dialog box appears asking you to select another project and browse the file. Next, you will also be asked to select the Task table and the Resource Table that you want to compare. When you select the associated tables and

press 'OK', Microsoft Project compares the two project updates and generates a new view on the screen. The view compares the project columns and shows the combined view and a merged Gantt chart. If a task has been added or deleted, the combined view will also highlight this by putting a + or – next to the task. You can change views from the 'Compare Projects' tab. It is located in the 'Show-Items' section. This lets you quickly compare the projects in different views and easily identify the changes to the project.

Q – What should I do when the schedule approaches the Municipal ROW Task 205 “Hold Town Meeting (Verify Warrant Deadline)”?

A – The designer is asked to contact the MassDOT ROW department – Community Compliance Section to verify the warrant deadline and determine when the Town Meeting will take place.

Q – What should I do with the blank column field entitled “District”?

A – The designer is asked to populate the “District” column with the associated MassDOT District with jurisdiction of the project area.

Q – In what format should the schedule be submitted to the PM?

A – The designer is asked to submit the Updated PDS Schedule to the PM as a Microsoft project file (.mpp) and as a PDF file. The schedule must be produced using the “UD PDS Schedule” View (including the Gantt chart) illustrating work completed, in progress and remaining tasks sequenced by ID and reproduced on 11” x 17” pdf.

- The following Columns should be present: District, WBS, Name, Start, Finish, Duration, Responsibility, and Total Slack.
- The MassDOT project info number, project name and view name should appear in the center of the header, the MassDOT PM, and status date/report run date on the left footer and the Designer’s name, contract #/ assignment # at the right footer.
- Additionally the report should be sorted by ID, the outline level should be set to ‘All Subtasks’ (no summarization), no filter or grouping should be applied.
- When printing the report to a *.PDF, make certain that the print is only one page wide and that the time scale spans the entire project; ideally the printout should be scaled to at least 60% of the original size.

Q – How should I deal with delays in the schedule due to third parties?

A – When dealing with delays due to third parties which are not accounted for in the schedule, such as railroad, utilities, municipalities, etc., the delayed task shall have the duration increased to more accurately reflect the actual duration. The duration change will need to be coordinated with the MassDOT PM since this can result in changes to the advertisement date. The change to the task duration may need to be done several times as the delay continues.