

Scheduling is Map Making for Construction Projects

As I am writing this, I have a song from Fiddler on the Roof playing in my head, only with the following words, "Map Maker, Map Maker, make me a map." It's goofy, but it's a great way to begin associating scheduling with map-making and the schedule with a map.



Map-making is cartography, and there is more to it than locations, geography, and topography. Mapping includes specific details relevant to geography, depending on who will be using the map.

I have taken the following citation from the City of Garland, Texas website:

"The City's Geographic Information System (GIS) provides mapping information for residents, businesses, and other users. The online GIS service includes a wide array of information, including City Council districts, city facility locations, street and alley conditions, aerial photographs, city service districts, zoning information, and more." (4-19-2018)

It is an excellent example of the scope of mapping for specific users—the city of Garland residents and visitors. No doubt much planning was involved in pulling together this mapping service for the website, and much thought was given to what to include in the maps that would be most helpful to users, beneficial to Garland's economy, and yet practical in their creation and design.

The reason for associating mapping with scheduling is that viewing a process, challenge, or idea from different perspectives enhances understanding of its purpose and achievement. The excerpt above answers questions. What questions? Questions searched about addresses, proximity, retail shops, city parks, recreation and other city facilities, hospitals, road conditions, and more.

Therefore, if we view scheduling as a map of the key activities of the construction project through time, what questions does it need to answer to be the most helpful to the end-user, and who are the end-users? What features, both useful and practical, encourage regular reference to the schedule by those involved in executing the project? What level of detail is necessary to guide the user through the project without making the schedule too cluttered to follow?

The process, or science, of developing a schedule is one that most project managers and schedulers should already know. And chances are, the schedules created will technically be a schedule that will at least meet contractual needs. However, to master the *art* of scheduling, creating a user-friendly, regularly updated map that is referenced to make project execution smoother requires seeing the schedule from different perspectives to identify the questions it needs to answer at various stages of the project.

Reference:

City of Garland Web Page <https://www.garlandtx.gov/gov/lq/pcd/facts/mapping.asp>