

**ACEC/Caltrans DES  
Structures Liaison Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
August 11, 2023**

The meeting of the ACES/Caltrans DES Structures Liaison Committee was held in person and virtually through TEAMS on Friday, May 12th from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM.

**I. Call to Order**

Mark announced that those attending in-person need to RSVP on time for their security badges to be prepared prior to the meeting. Mark also reminded everyone that the attachments would be distributed as part of the meeting minutes electronically. However, the posted meeting minutes on the Caltrans website, <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/engineering-services/special-funded-projects-and-local-assistance>, would not include the attachments as they are not ADA compatible.

**A. Self Introductions**

The meeting began with a round of self-introductions for all present in Sacramento as well as those attending remotely in Diamond Bar.

**B. Changes to the Agenda**

Mark Reno asked for any changes to the agenda and none were requested.

**C. Review Previous Meeting Minutes (May 12, 2023)**

The previous meeting minutes were distributed prior to the meeting. However, Caltrans Hydraulics still needed to review the minutes prior to them being finalized.

**II. DES/ACEC Updates**

**A. General: Tom Ostrom**

- Currently, Caltrans has over 1000 projects @ \$13B with this next year's budget to increase 8% even with the budget deficit publicized. DES has 500 projects @ \$3.25B. DES looking at a \$4.25B program for FY 23/24 and working its way up to \$6.5B in FY 25/26. There are over \$1B in emergency projects consuming dollars and efforts this year (3.5X previous year).
- Caltrans total positions are around 22K PY's with DES at 1800 PY's. With increased projects and BBMM's 150 "huts", DES is anticipated to get up to 2000 PY's, however attrition and new hires are just keeping up with demand.
- A&E contracts experiencing high burn rates requiring more frequent \$ amendments and/or new contracts. Amendments- harder to manage with increased FHWA scrutiny- we will see an uptick in new/larger contracts.

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- Bridge ratings are decreasing across the state, however recent large projects for Vincent Thomas and San Mateo Bridges are spending a bulk of the repairs dollars currently, thus skewing the improvement numbers.
- DES currently operating under “rapid evolution” conditions dictated by recent Green regulations to reduce carbon footprint, zero net energy (buildings = zero by 2035 and all = zero by 2040), and Biden possibly revoking Buy America Waivers (watching closely).

**B. Technical: Structures Technical Policies, Technical Research: Don Nguyen-Tan**

Don Nguyen-Tan stated that STP 17.5 has been updated. Also, BDM's 4.7, 5.3, 5.5, 11.7 and Caltrans Approved Materials Lists (AML) have been updated. BDM 5.4 will be updated next quarter.

**C. Contracting Opportunities: Doug Nguyen/Sid Pedaballi**

Sid reminded the group that the lookahead report is posted on the DPAC website. Included in the current report is an upcoming On-Call for professional and technical services for Building Design Program for \$24 million. There are upcoming solicitations in Southern California (Districts 7, 8 11 & 12) Bridge Design; an On-Call Bridge Load Rating Analysis of State and Local Agency bridges for \$6 million; two separate On-Call Geotechnical Services for \$13 million and \$12 million; two separate On-Call Structure Construction Engineering and Inspection for \$20 million and \$9 million in the planning phase. Sid also said to expect longer time-lines for procurements.

**D. Local Assistance: Robert Peterson**

Robert Peterson was not present at the meeting and there were no updates this quarter.

**E. Statewide ACEC Committee: Garrett Dekker**

Garrett Dekker reported the following:

- To date Caltrans is reporting a 22.9% DBE utilization against a 22% goal. SBE is nearly 34%.
- FHWA will be updating the Consultant Resident Engineer requirements soon.
- California Senate Bill 146 expands National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Operations, allows easier small project advancement and also allows for Progressive Design Build as a contracting alternative.
- ACEC working on minimum qualifications to allow more junior personnel participating in A&E contracts.

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**F. Construction Management and Inspection Updates: Rich Foley/Jon Rohrer**

Rich Foley stated that they have completed all the Bridge Construction Records & Procedures updates. He also mentioned there is a new Bridge Removal Manual and an upcoming update to the Trenching and Shoring Manual by the end of the year. There will also be a new update for the Local Agency Structure Representative Guide related to the Bridge Construction Records and Procedures Manual.

**III. Sub-committees**

**A. ABC (Accelerated Bridge Construction): Garrett Dekker/Habib Hotaki**

Garrett reported that they are planning an ABC workshop for early December and working on locating it at Caltrans Translab and also a remote connection. They are planning a 4-hour workshop with six 20-minute presentations followed by a discussion. The topics include: Ultra High Performance Concrete (UHPC); Precast Abutments; Type Selection and Design and construction case studies. There will also be discussion on Structure Construction lessons learned. They are looking for presenters, and asked interested parties to contact Garrett and Habib.

**B. CMGC/Design-Build (Lessons Learned): Mark Reno)/Jason Chou**

Mark reported that the workshop is set for October 20, 2023 from 9 am to 1 pm in Sacramento. This workshop will be in-person only and will be limited to 120 attendees and will be looking at both design and construction aspects of CMGC. There will be six presentations (2 by Caltrans teams and 4 by consultant teams) followed by a panel discussion. A flyer will be sent out shortly with registration information and further details of the event.

**C. BIM (Building Information Model): Doug Dunrud/Bobby Zermenno**

Bobby Zermenno stated that the BIM Subcommittee is working with Caltrans to prepare a virtual joint webinar to occur in fall of 2023. Caltrans will be covering their BIM related progress over the past year and half and Doug will be presenting a couple of recent case studies. Bobby also indicated that Caltrans is setting up a BIM Infrastructure Summit to be held in February/March 2024. This will be a joint meeting of ACEC, Caltrans, ABC and that they are looking for topics and presenters.

**D. Technical Subcommittee: Garrett Dekker (Jack Abcarius)/Jason Chou**

Garrett Dekker provided an update on technical questions submitted in the last quarter:

- **Question:** Per the latest standards, 150-ft is the minimum length for structure approach guardrail. The previous standard length was 75-ft. Is 150-ft of approach guardrail always required, even for local agencies?

**Answer:** The designer may calculate a project-specific length of need to justify a shorter length of guardrail. However, the old minimum standard of 75-ft is no longer an acceptable length in most cases.

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- **Question:** Are the Detailer Notes that were distributed for Index to Plan sheets to be implemented immediately, or should we wait for the implementation memo?

**Answer:** The implementation of the 2023 standards is July 24, 2023. Any project that advertises after July 24 should use the new standards, that includes the updated Detailer Notes.

- **Question:** According to Bridge Design Details 1.5 from January 2023, designers no longer need to list RSPs in the plans, and it is inferred that the list of Standard Plans should no longer be provided in the plans. May Caltrans clarify how Standard Plans and Revised Standard Plans should be referenced in plan sets for future submittals?

**Answer:** The standard plan sheets are no longer required to be listed in the project plans, and "RSP" is no longer needed on the Standard Plan bubbles shown in the plans.

- **Question:** When must local agencies adopt the 2023 Caltrans Standard Plans?
- **Answer:** Caltrans anticipates that all local agencies using Caltrans Construction Contract Standards for projects off the State Highway System must use the 2023 Standards for projects receiving E-76 construction authorization on and after October 31, 2023. The District Offices will be sent an official notice of this expected requirement soon. Whether design costs for updating the standards will be reimbursed by Caltrans will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

The following questions have been submitted and are awaiting official response:

- May Caltrans provide explicit guidance for providing bicycle rails on bridges?
- May Caltrans provide guidance on the requirement to upgrade barriers to MASH standards on bridge replacement projects? For example, when should a barrier be replaced and when can it be left as-is or replaced in kind?
- Recently advertised projects show shoulder widths that are dimensioned the same on and off the bridge. However, this is not possible for some barrier types where the face of the Midwest Guard Rail does not match the face of the barrier on the bridge. Is it acceptable to set back the concrete barrier at the end block transition, which would create a modified standard barrier? Alternatively, should the bridge width be increased to accommodate the difference?

#### **E. Education Training/Seminar/Webinar: Michael Van Duyn/Lance Schrey**

- CMGC/Design Build Workshop to occur October 20, 2023 from 9 am to 1 pm in Sacramento
- Joint ACEC/Caltrans BIM Update to occur in Fall of 2023
- ABC Workshop in December of 2023 will be in person in Sacramento and virtual.
- Education Committee – Caltrans has shared upcoming presentations and notified ACEC that they will be able to attend. Reservations will be required by individual, and

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then information for session will be provided to those who have reservations. Caltrans is also encouraging consultant topics, so there are forms to fill out and submit in order to make presentation through the Education Committee. This form will be distributed with meeting minutes.

- 2024 Caltrans Winter Training – Rich Foley confirmed that the 2024 winter topic will include ABC, Prestressed Concrete and Alternative Delivery segments. Mark reiterated that similar to the pre-covid format, ACEC Consultants should offer some topics for presentation during the ACEC class. If Caltrans wants this information shared with their internal training, this will be made available.

#### **IV. Discussion Items**

##### **1. Caltrans STP 2.6 Updated: Don Nguyen-Tan**

Don stated they are working through comments on the updates. Caltrans hopes to finalize next quarter and incorporate into BDM. They will be reaching out to ACEC focus group that helped with previous reviews for another review.

##### **2. 2023 Caltrans Standards Implementation: All**

This was submitted as a formal question and will be covered in the summary of technical questions. There has been some direction, but to date has been more focused on Caltrans Projects. Local Assistance will be coming out with a bulletin and more details for Local Agency Projects.

#### **Miscellaneous Questions: Open Forum**

Mark initiated a discussion and asked the group as to whether this committee should also be focusing on Foundations and Geotechnical issues. This would require soliciting more input and participation from Geotechnical firms to be active with this committee. There was consensus amongst the group that this would be a good addition. The first step is to begin pulling a list of potential firms together and sending out to make sure they are getting invitations and will actively participate.

Mark also requested that Caltrans consider modifying/updating the administrative deductions for anomalies in CIDH Piles. While the price of CIDH construction has continued to escalate, the administrative deductions have remained stagnant for nearly a decade. Caltrans agreed to look into this.

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**V. 2023 Meeting Schedule**

February 3, 2023 (1st Friday)  
May 12, 2023 (2nd Friday)

August 11, 2023 (2nd Friday)  
November 3, 2023 (1st Friday)

**VI. Distribution:**

**A. Caltrans:**

Tom Ostrom	Caltrans DES	Vassil Simeonov	Caltrans SMI
Ruth Fernandes	Caltrans SES	Shira Rajendra	Caltrans PPM & OE
Rich Foley	Caltrans SC	Jason Chou	Caltrans OSFP/SLA
Nina M Choy	Caltrans GS	Sid Pedaballi	Caltrans OPD & SCM
Tim Greutert	Caltrans METS	Robert Peterson	Caltrans HQ/LA
Sudhakar Vatti	Caltrans SD	John Lammers	Caltrans SC

**B. ACEC Regular Committee Members:**

Member 1: Districts 1,2,3,9,10:	Mark Reno	Consort
Member 2: District 11:	Jack Abcarius	NV5
Member 3: District 4:	Garrett Dekker	Moffatt & Nichol
Member 4: Districts 7,8,12:	Michael Van Duyn	HNTB
Member 5: Districts 5,6:	Bobby Zermenio	Cornerstone Structural Engineering
Member 6 (CM&I): Districts 1-6 and 9-10	Hank Doll, Mark Thomas	
Member 7 (CM&I): Districts 7-8 and 11-12	Jon Rohrer, HDR	

**Attachments\*:**

- Summary of Technical Questions submitted to date this year
- CMGC Workshop Flyer
- Education Committee Presentation Form

\*Attachments not included in posted meeting minutes, because they are not ADA compatible