

**ACEC/Caltrans DES
Structures Liaison Committee
2021 ANNUAL REPORT**

I. Introduction

The ACEC / Caltrans Division of Engineering Services (DES) Structures Liaison Committee (the Committee) was formed in 1992 with the primary purpose of maintaining a professional working relationship between Caltrans DES and ACEC member firms that perform engineering services for transportation structure projects. The Committee Charter requires that an Annual Report on Committee activities be prepared each calendar year.

II. Committee Meeting Dates

During the 2021 calendar year, the Committee met on the following dates:

- February 05, 2021
- May 14, 2021
- August 20, 2021
- November 19, 2021

Due the COVID-19 Pandemic, meetings were held virtually via WebEx. Although the Committee discussed the option of resuming in-person meetings in Sacramento, it was decided to continue virtual meetings throughout 2021 and into 2022. Meeting minutes were prepared by the Committee Secretary and reviewed by DES for compliance with Caltrans ADA accessibility requirements.

Besides the regular meetings, the core committee also held pre-meeting conference calls to review and discuss the agenda and technical discussion topics, and to ensure appropriate staff attend the meetings.

III. Committee Members

DES staff had strong representation and attended on a regular basis. Shira Rajendra served as Committee Co-chair with Lance Schrey serving as coordinator between ACEC and Caltrans Committee members. Caltrans' usual attendees included Tom Ostrom, Ruth Fernandes, Sudhakar Vatti, Shira Rajendra, Lance Schrey, Rich Foley, Kevin Keady, Tim Greutert, Gudmund Setberg, Robert Peterson, and John Lammers. Several guest speakers attended to address specific technical agenda topics.

The seven regular members from ACEC were:

- Member 1: Districts 1-3, 9 & 10 Mark Reno, Quincy Engineering
- Member 2: District 11 Jack Abcarius, NV5
- Member 3: District 4 Garrett Dekker, Moffatt and Nichol
- Member 4: Districts 7, 8 and 12 Y. Nien Wang, HNTB
- Member 5: Districts 5 & 6 Bobby Zermeno, Cornerstone Structural Engineering
- Member 6 (CM&I): Districts 1-6 & 9-10 Hank Doll, TRC
- Member 7 (CM&I): Districts 7-8 & 11-12 Jon Rohrer, HDR

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For the 2021 meetings, the ACEC Committee Co-Chair was Garrett Dekker, and the Committee Secretary was Bobby Zermeno.

Starting in the 2021 Committee Year, two new regular member positions were added to represent the construction management and inspection (CM&I) side of the industry. Member 6 represents Northern California while Member 7 represents Southern California.

IV. Major Topics

A standing agenda with recurring topics was utilized and updated throughout the year. Modifications and additions to the standing agenda, including specific technical topics for each meeting, were made during the core Committee's pre-meeting conference calls. The standing agenda items included the following:

A. DES Updates

Caltrans reported throughout the year on the structures Capital Outlay Support (COS) workload, personnel changes, and other current news and events related to DES.

With the passing of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act in November 2021, Caltrans provided updates on anticipated funding changes for DES. However, the total amount and distribution of infrastructure funding was still unclear during the 2021 Committee Year.

B. Technical: Structure Technical Policy (STP), Memo to Designers, Technical Research

Caltrans reported that they are continuing to work through the Bridge Memos to Designers to separate bridge policy (which will be published as Structure Technical Policy) from guidance material (which will be published as Bridge Design Memos). Caltrans provided an overview of the STPs published to-date and the STPs that would be published in the upcoming year. Caltrans also presented the hierarchy of bridge design documents to clarify prevailing design standards. Although Bridge Memo to Designers are still in-use, they will be retired after full release of the STPs and Bridge Design Memos. It was also noted that Caltrans' SM&I Load Rating Manual is to be considered at the same hierarchy level as the AASHTO LRFD Bridge Design Specifications.

C. Project Development Oversight / Contracting Opportunities

Caltrans kept the committee updated on upcoming contracting opportunities based on DPAC's Look-Ahead Report.

D. Local Assistance

Robert Peterson represented Caltrans Local Assistance throughout the year and provided regular updates to the Committee.

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Caltrans reported they are conducting a value analysis study to look at the HBP and determine where they can improve collaboration. The same study is also looking at ways of improving the standard operating procedures of the Districts and Structure Local Assistance.

E. ACEC Statewide Committee Report

Garrett Dekker, an ACEC committee member who serves on the Statewide Committee provided updates on issues being discussed in the bi-monthly ACEC / Caltrans Headquarters Liaison Committee meetings.

F. Construction Management and Inspection Updates

Beginning in 2021, the Committee added a standing agenda item for Construction Management and Inspection updates. Rich Foley represented Caltrans CM&I throughout the year. In lieu of the typical Winter Training Session that Caltrans holds for consultants, Caltrans held a 4-hour virtual Winter Training that consultants could complete at their own pace.

G. Sub-Committee Updates

The Accelerated Bridge Construction (ABC) Sub-Committee formed a consultant panel to review the Caltrans ABC Manual before official release. A Caltrans FHWA Peer Exchange was intended to be held in November 2021 but was postponed until 2022 due to COVID.

The CMGC/Design-Build Sub-Committee intended to hold a Northern California workshop focused on “CMGC Lessons Learned” but was unable to gain traction in 2021 due to COVID and the necessity for a virtual format.

The Building Information Model (BIM) Sub-Committee, led by Bobby Zermeno and Doug Dunrud, gave a presentation on an FHWA-backed study of BIM use across 20 states.

The Technical Sub-Committee formed a consultant panel to review the new Structure Technical Policy (STP 2.6 – Hydraulic Design for Structures over Waterways) that replaced MTD 16-1.

Caltrans provided an update on MASH-compliant temporary rail updates which must be used on the State highway by December 31, 2026.

V. Significant Accomplishments.

In the second full year of a virtual format, the Committee acclimated to the online version of the quarterly meetings. In fact, it appears that overall participation has increased due to the ease of attending online. While the virtual format continued to delay in-person events requiring collaboration, such as the “CMGC Lessons Learned Workshop” and the “Caltrans/FHWA ABC Peer Exchange,” many workshops and events were held in a virtual format. The following describes some of the major accomplishments of the Committee in 2021.

To recognize the large and important role of construction management and inspection in the delivery of the State’s bridge projects, the Committee added two Regular Members to the

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Committee to garner more input from the CM&I side of the industry. Member 6 (currently filled by Hank Doll) covers Northern California districts while Member 7 (currently filled by Jon Rohrer) covers Southern California. The Committee also added a standing agenda item to discuss topics in CM&I.

The Committee facilitated a Geotechnical Reporting Standards Workshop on August 24, 2021 whose purpose was to make the consultant community aware of major updates to Geotechnical reporting standards in the State. The workshop was well attended.

Throughout 2021, the Committee formed three separate panels to garner industry input on three Caltrans documents. Participation was high among those selected for the panels, and in each review panel, the process proved to be a collaborative effort between Caltrans and the consultant community.

VI. Future Plans (for the Coming Year)

The Committee will plan to continue virtual meetings throughout 2022 and will continue to work collaboratively on technical issues, project development oversight, and education. The Committee will also consider reformatting the technical issues portion of the agenda in a way that encourages more participation and input from the consultant community. The following education/training events are anticipated in 2022:

- DES Education Committee Presentations
- Structures Construction Winter Training – Spring 2022
- Caltrans BIM Development Webinar – Spring 2022
- Design Build/CMGC Workshop – TBD
- ABC Workshop – December 2022

VII. Closing Statement

2021 marked a year when the entire industry acclimated to a virtual way of conducting business. In a virtual setting, ACEC/Caltrans DES Structures Liaison Committee continued to fulfill its core mission of providing a platform for interaction between Caltrans and the consultant community on subjects and issues related to bridge and structure design and construction. Attendance at the quarterly meetings continues to be strong and is perhaps bolstered by the virtual format. In its current format, the Committee serves as an effective interface between DES and the ACEC design and construction management and inspection community.

Several long-time Regular Members (from both the Caltrans and consultant side) have retired and resigned from the Committee, so new Members will need to make-up for the lost institutional knowledge. The committee provides an opportunity for direct communications and the introduction of trending designs and construction issues that are of mutual interest to both parties.

Prepared By:
Garrett Dekker, Committee Co-Chair