

**ACEC/Caltrans DES
Structures Liaison Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 8, 2020**

The meeting of the ACES/Caltrans DES Structure Liaison Committee was held by Virtual WebEx Meeting on May 8, 2020 from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM.

I. Call to Order

A. Self-Introductions

Self-introductions were skipped since the meeting was held virtually.

B. Changes to Agenda

Sudhakar Vatti reported that Robert Peterson from Local Assistance will not be in attendance. Sudhakar will brief the committee on Local Assistance news.

C. Review Previous Meeting Minutes (02/07/2020)

No changes or comments were made to the 02/07/2020 meeting minutes. The meeting minutes were finalized.

II. DES/ACEC Updates

A. General: Tom Ostrom

Tom Ostrom provided overview of how Caltrans is handling COVID-19. Caltrans flipped from an office work environment to a teleworking environment. Only essential employees are permitted in the field. Of approximately 21,000 employees across the state, 12,000 are working from home and 8,000 are still in the field (maintenance personnel). Of 1,400 DES employees, 400 are working in the field with social distancing protocols. Caltrans has invested heavily in technology, such as cell phones and laptops, which is affecting their ability to invest in other areas. The Caltrans Director is invested in making the workforce more nimble and is considering whether employees can continue to telework post-COVID-19. The Governor's budget will be released on May 14, with a projected \$53B deficit for the State. It is currently unclear how this will impact Caltrans long term. In the short term, the Caltrans budget is healthy. Many projects are already funded, and there has been no significant drop-off in project activity. That could change as revenue streams are difficult to predict. Regarding a federal stimulus, \$50B is proposed to State transportation projects to help fill funding shortcomings.

Tom reported that highway traffic is starting to pick up again, and there is currently a 30% decrease since this time last year. However, traffic levels are 30% higher than last month. Transit ridership is down 95%. It is unclear if people will begin using transit again if social distancing is impractical. The Governor's office sent a letter to agencies last week, warning agencies to reserve cash. Moving forward, Caltrans will be more scrutinous of projects and hiring. As of today, Caltrans is not being told to reduce COS contracts.

**ACEC/Caltrans DES
Structures Liaison Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 8, 2020**

Tom reported that construction is healthy. Of the 7,500 projects underway, only 26 contracts have been halted due to COVID-19. Caltrans is meeting with the construction industry weekly to compare notes and strategize as an industry. Contractor bids are coming in about 10% below engineer's estimate on average. Oil prices have dropped 70% and Caltrans is expecting good prices on asphalt in the near term. However, this could turn into a short-term asphalt shortage.

Jack Abcarius asked Tom when folks might return to the office. Tom responded that Caltrans HR and Research are looking at how they are going to bring employees back in a responsible manner. Tom anticipates Caltrans being cautious. Caltrans surveys show that they are 70-80% effective working from home. They want to improve on those numbers, but it appears to be working well.

Syed Kazmi asked whether Caltrans will continue to require hard copy submittals. Sudhakar said that Caltrans has been accepting electronic copies of submittals during COVID-19.

B. Technical: Memo to Designers, Technical Research: Joel Magana

Joel Magana reported on technical updates. Structure Technical Policies (STP)s have been drafted but not reviewed yet. All Memo to Designers are currently in effect until the transition to STP is made. No STPs are ready for distribution.

C. Project Development Oversight/Contracting Opportunities: Shira Rajendra/Sid Pedaballi

Shira Rajendra reported that a structure inspection contract is due for release in Southern California. Two geotechnical service contracts are pending, one each for north and south. Caltrans is separately advertising for geotechnical drilling services. Shira reported that there are six structure construction and inspection contracts due for release, each in a different geographic area. These contracts expire every three years and need to be reissued. The DPAC website is the most accurate source for contracting updates.

D. Local Assistance: Sudhakar Vatti

Sudhakar reported that the HBP program cannot keep up with demand. An HBP Advisory Committee was formed and had a meeting last month (March 2020) to determine how the HBP program can be sustained. Ideas that were generated include: project costs and schedules need to be reviewed by structures local assistance, no project enhancements will be permitted, improve project accountability with project cost reports (to replace the annual project surveys), limit high cost bridges to \$8M max, require BPMP programs to be approved by HBP managers.

Jack Abcarius asked for updates on the BIC program. Sudhakar said Caltrans could report on the BIC program for discussion at the next meeting.

**ACEC/Caltrans DES
Structures Liaison Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 8, 2020**

E. Statewide ACEC Committee: Gary Antonucci

Gary Antonucci reported that the March HQ PLC meeting was cancelled, and the next meeting is scheduled for May 28.

DPAC is still expecting final FHWA approval for the Safe Harbor Program. No information is available on overhead rates that will be used.

Construction is working on approval for consultants to serve as the RE on projects.

In response to COVID-19, DPAC made changes to the procurement process, including electronic SOQ submittal and "virtual" interviews.

III. Sub-committees

A. ABC (Accelerated Bridge Construction): Gary Antonucci/Dorie Mellon

Gary noted that there hasn't been any progress on this topic due to COVID-19. An in-person meeting in Southern California was planned for the fall but will likely be postponed. The sub-committee may consider hosting a webinar in the fall instead. It was suggested that consultants perform peer reviews of the ABC manual at key milestones. TY Lin International is working on the ABC Manual over a series of task orders. The first task order is to organize the layout and themes of the manual.

B. CMGC/Design-Build: Scott McCauley (for Mark Reno)/Sudhakar Vatti

Sudhakar reported that Caltrans is updating the Design-Build template. The Highway 50 Design-Build project was awarded a couple of weeks ago. Caltrans always reviews design-build templates to make sure they are up to date with current codes. Jack Abcarius asked if there is a guideline for how Caltrans administers Design Build contracts. Sudhakar suggested that the committee discuss this topic during the next committee meeting.

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

Bobby Zermeno reported that FHWA is working with WSP on incorporating BIM to highway and transportation projects. On March 23rd, a call with DOTs across the country was held to discuss BIM priorities. Caltrans attended and was influential in steering the studies. An FHWA draft of a BIM Study will be ready for distribution shortly. A previous WSP project was used as a demonstration project. WSP has been given approval to share a presentation on the project. The presentation will be made available to the committee after August of this year. Doug Dunrud added that AASHTO has their own BIM study that HDR is leading. The two studies are separate efforts. Doug noted that he has a BIM presentation he can share with the group if requested.

**ACEC/Caltrans DES
Structures Liaison Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 8, 2020**

D. Technical Subcommittee: Mark Reno/Sudhakar Vatti

Bridge Scour: Jack Abcarius reported that there was a meeting to discuss scour in October 2019 and meeting minutes had been distributed to the committee. A subsequent meeting is pending but has not been scheduled due to COVID-19. Cathy Avila suggested that consultants set up a WebEx Meeting to discuss follow-up questions. Joel Magana responded that he could work with other Caltrans staff to schedule a follow-up meeting. Jack suggested the same participant list as the previous scour meeting.

MASH compliance: It was reported that the California ST-75 barrier is available on the Caltrans website. Caltrans is working to get the Type 85 barrier ready to post by July. Shawn Cullers asked about standard crash cushions. Joel Magana responded that there is a website that contains all the MASH approved barriers and railings. Jack asked that Joel send out the website link for distribution. Joel sent out the following link right after the meeting: [Caltrans MASH webpage](#)

Friction testing was tabled until the next committee meeting.

Jack Abcarius presented several technical questions that had received answers from Caltrans technical staff.

- For plans showing use of steel pipe for drainage, the specifications say to use commercial quality steel pipe, and it is unclear if there are specific strength requirements. Jack suggested that the designer select the pipe strength based on the site-specific application. Caltrans does not have specific requirements for strength.
- Regarding anchorage zone reinforcement for PT Box girders, Caltrans has not had a chance to provide a response. This question will be readdressed at the next committee meeting.
- Per the SDC, at a Type S2 soil site, the abutment must be designed for lateral soil forces. Additionally, the abutment must be designed for lateral spreading and liquefaction when applicable. Jack Abcarius said that demands will be very high for these conditions and asked if a response from Dolores Valls could be forwarded to him. Sudhakar said that all answers should be filtered through Emil Vergara.
- Regarding wind loading, it was asked if a 110-mph wind speed be used as a maximum wind speed. Caltrans responded that there are situations where design wind speeds exceed 110 mph. In these scenarios, the project should be designed for site-specific wind speeds. This may require modifications to the California Amendments to AASHTO.

See attached Technical Questions with Answers.

**ACEC/Caltrans DES
Structures Liaison Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 8, 2020**

E. Education Training/Seminar/Webinar: Y. Nien Wang/ Emil Vergara

Nien Wang reported on the AASHTO BDS 8th Edition February presentation. Attendance was high and it was well received.

Discussion of a virtual ABC workshop will be shelved for the next committee meeting.

Due to COVID-19, both SDC 2.1 training and the Construction Winter Training will be postponed until further notice.

It was agreed that the Specification Training in Northern California should be in-person. It will be postponed until further notice.

Jack Abcarius asked when the next set of Caltrans specs are coming out and whether it would be 2020 or 2021. Emil Vergara responded that Jack Young would need to respond. Emil will ask Jack and report at the next committee meeting. Emil reported that Caltrans is moving towards electronic updates of the Standards. Jack Young followed up with an email saying that the new specifications are scheduled for 2021.

IV. Discussion Items

A. COVID-19 Impacts

Jack opened the floor to discussion. No comment.

B. Annual Report Electronic Posting Format (ADA Compatibility)

Jack Abcarius asked if we need to follow an ADA template or if consultants should conduct business as usual. Caltrans will develop a template for our use once Caltrans staff becomes more available. In the meantime, consultants should submit reports as normal.

V. 2020 Meeting Schedule

February 7, 2020 (1st Friday)
May 8, 2020 (2nd Friday)
August 7, 2020 (1st Friday)
October 23, 2020 (4th Friday)

**ACEC/Caltrans DES
Structures Liaison Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 8, 2020**

VI. Virtual Attendees

Emil Vergara Jr	Caltrans
Shira Rajendra	Caltrans
Tom Ostrom	Caltrans
Robert Peterson	Caltrans
Roberto Lacalle	Caltrans
Sid Pedaballi	Caltrans
Joel Magana	Caltrans
Jack Abcarius	NV5
Mark Reno	Quincy Engineering
Garrett Dekker	Moffatt & Nichol
Bobby Zermeno	Cornerstone
Yung-Nien Wang	HNTB
Todd Lambert	TRC
Mark Ashley	TYLI
Moe Amini	HNTB
Gary Antonucci	Moffatt & Nichol
Douglas Dunrud	WSP
Bob Fish	TYLI
J. Hickey	Mark Thomas
Syed Kazmi	AECOM
Robert Scott	TRC
Wellington Chu	HDR
M. Martin	WKE
J. Mosquera	Michael Baker
Cathy Avila	Avila and Associates
Holly Callahan	Avila and Associates
Richard Campbell	STV

**ACEC/Caltrans DES
Structures Liaison Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 8, 2020**

VII. Distribution:

A. Caltrans:

Tom Ostrom	Caltrans DES
Dolores Valls	Caltrans SPI
Rich Foley	Caltrans SC
Gudmund Setberg	Caltrans SD
Shira Rajendra	Caltrans PPM & OE
Sudhakar Vatti	Caltrans OSFP/SLA
Sid Pedaballi	Caltrans OPD & SCM
Emil Vergara	Caltrans OSFP
Roberto Lacalle	Caltrans GS
Robert Peterson	Caltrans HQ/LA
Michael B. Johnson	Caltrans SMI
John Lammers	Caltrans SC

B. ACEC Regular Committee Members:

Member 1: Districts 1,2,3,9,10:	Mark Reno	Quincy Engineering
Member 2: District 11:	Jack Abcarius	NV5
Member 3: District 4:	Garrett Dekker	Moffatt & Nichol
Member 4: Districts 7,8,12:	Y. Nien Wang	HNTB
Member 5: Districts 5,6:	Bobby Zermeno	Cornerstone Structural Engineering