

**ACEC/Caltrans DES  
Structures Liaison Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
October 23, 2020**

The meeting of the ACES/Caltrans DES Structures Liaison Committee was held by Virtual WebEx Meeting on October 23, 2020 from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM.

**I. Call to Order**

**A. Self-Introductions**

Officers introduced themselves virtually.

**B. Changes to Agenda**

Jeremy Wright's Local Assistance report will be moved to the front of the agenda. Steve Seifert will attend the meeting in place of Keith Hoffman.

**C. Review Previous Meeting Minutes (08/07/2020)**

No changes or comments were made to the 08/07/2020 meeting minutes. The meeting minutes were finalized and approved.

**II. DES/ACEC Updates**

**A. General: Tom Ostrom/Shira Rajendra**

Shira Rajendra reported on two major structure updates in Southern California. One was the New Heim Bridge and the other one was the Gerald Desmond Cable Stay Bridge; both are in Port of Long Beach. The Gerald Desmond Bridge is the largest bridge project, in terms of construction dollar value, in recent years. Virtual bridge opening ceremonies were held for both bridges.

Shira reported that Caltrans is looking for more consultant interaction from the construction management and inspection (CM&I) side on the Committee. Rich Foley will share his vision for the group later in the Agenda. Shira asked consultants to spread the word among CM&I companies to improve collaboration in the Committee.

Shira reported on Division Chief changes over the past several months. Tim Greutert replaced Dan Spears as Division Chief of METS in the summer. Kevin Keady recently replaced Dolores Valls as Division Chief of Structures Policy and Innovation.

Shira noted that Federal funding to California has remained constant, but infrastructure bills may be passed after the 2020 Presidential Election which could increase funding.

**B. Technical: Structures Technical Policies, Technical Research: Kevin Keady**

Kevin Keady reported on turnover since the last Committee meeting. Dolores Valls retired at the end of July with 37 years of State service. Mark Mahan, Office of Earthquake Engineering Office

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Chief, also retired at the end of July with 35 years of State experience. Chris Traina is the acting Office Chief replacing Mark. Sue Hida retired at the end of September and Don Nguyen-Tan is acting as her interim replacement.

Kevin added that Caltrans is in the process of dividing up Bridge Memo to Designers and, from them, developing Structure Technical Policy (STP) and Bridge Design Memos (BDM). STPs are structure requirements while BDMs are structure guidance. STPs are coming out ahead of the BDMs, and separate groups are developing the manuals. A total of 78 STPs are being developed, and 20 have been completed and are posted online. 37 additional STPs have been drafted and are in the review process. 21 STPs have not been started. Kevin noted that Caltrans is looking for ways to expedite the review process. Kevin added that Caltrans has been delayed with staff turnover and ADA compliance. All graphs and tables presented in the STPs and BDMs are required to be ADA compliant which has been a challenge.

For research updates, Kevin shared a document with the Committee that lists all planned STPs and their posting status. Kevin also shared the research contracts website link and a document with ongoing research projects. The web link, along with the documents shared by Kevin, will be distributed with the meeting minutes, but the documents cannot be posted on the Caltrans website since they are not ADA compliant. Kevin noted that six new research projects will start this year with no specific start or end date. The contracts are typically 2-3 years in duration.

<https://dot.ca.gov/programs/research-innovation-system-information/research-results>

Jack Abcarius asked if STPs would apply to Local Assistance projects in addition to State highway projects. Kevin responded that they would. Cathy Avila asked if the consultant community would have an opportunity to review the STP for structure hydraulics before it is made final. Kevin said he would check with his staff to determine if consultant comments can be made. Cathy added that since 70% of bridges over water in California are owned by local agencies, local agencies may want to review the STP as well.

**C. Contracting Opportunities: Shira Rajendra/Sid Pedaballi**

Sid Pedaballi reported that there are two geotechnical contracts currently pending advertisement which include an A&E contract for turnkey work and a Service contract to supplement Caltrans in-house geotechnical services. Sid added that nine contracts will be advertised next year: three in structure construction, two in structure design, one surveying contract, one METS contract, and one building contract. These will total approximately \$90-\$100 Million in contracts. Sid urged the Committee to keep an eye on the Look-Ahead Report.

**D. Local Assistance: Robert Peterson/Jeremy Wright**

Jeremy reported that Caltrans is under financial constraint to deliver the Highway Bridge Program (HBP). Many local agencies have not been able to get the funding they need due to an overwhelming number of applications. Many agencies are using advanced construction, having

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submitted Request for Authorization in the prior year, and will request funding in the upcoming year. Project delivery agreements are underway with 39 Prop 1B projects. Each of these projects had to have a project delivery agreement in place if they did not go to construction by December 31, 2019. The deadline for having a project delivery agreement in place was extended to August 31, 2020 and by then, 34 of 39 projects had agreements in place. Four additional project delivery agreements are now in place and ready to be signed by the division chief. As of today, only one project is pending a project delivery agreement.

Jeremy reported that in 2019, some HBP policy updates were distributed as memos. Those policy updates have been fully incorporated into Chapter 6 of the Local Assistance Program Guidelines (LAPG) and will be included in the 2021 version of the LAPG. Further LAPG revisions have been proposed by the HBP Advisory Committee in 2020. The revisions will be put to a vote for incorporation into the LAPG and need to be approved by Chief Deputy Director, Jim Davis. Jeremy reported that Local Assistance is hoping to reach resolution on the policy revisions in November for implementation in early 2021.

Sudhakar noted that Local Assistance Engineers Bob Jones (District 11) and Mike Kim (District 4) recently retired. It was mentioned that Bob Jones will be replaced by Imad Abu Markhieh. Prem Rimal will be the new Office of Special Funded Projects Senior Liaison Engineer for Districts 11 and 12.

**E. Statewide ACEC Committee: Gary Antonucci**

Gary Antonucci noted that the Statewide Committee met in September. Regarding Local Assistance, Gary reported that Cathy Avila has been working on fixed fee contracts and a profit-fee calculator tool to assist local agencies develop independent fee estimates. Cathy added that the subcommittee provided comments last week and is waiting on a response from Local Assistance.

Gary reported that the Joint Training and Certification Program for materials testing and inspection is back up and running. There were issues due to COVID, but classes are now underway. Cal State Long Beach and San Jose State are hosting classes.

Regarding DPAC, Gary reported that they are working on streamlining the process for approving contracts. New guidelines are now in place with the goal of getting contracts negotiated and signed within 75 days.

Regarding the Safe Harbor Program, Gary reported that there is a new Safe Harbor Program in place. The new rates are 120% for office work and 90% for field work. These rates will only apply to new contracts; they do not change existing contracts. Jack Abcarius noted that, even with the Safe Harbor Rate in place, subconsultants have been asked for excessive backup data by Caltrans. Jack asked if these new policies would help streamline approvals. Gary noted that the subject of rate approvals had not been discussed in the Committee.

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**F. Expansion of Committee to Incorporate Construction Management and Inspection:  
Rich Foley**

Rich Foley reported that Caltrans was almost complete with the Winter Training Program before COVID hit in March. Rich reached out to Rob Stott to possibly resume Winter Training for 2020, but it is currently unknown whether the 2020 Winter Training will take place. Rich and Rob also discussed construction participation on the Committee. Rich noted that the Committee could greatly benefit from more construction input and collaboration between design and construction. Rich added that consultants have the benefit of working in other states and can possibly report on design innovations from across the Country. Jack Abcarius noted that the Committee is in the process of updating the Committee Charter to include construction Committee Members and it will be submitted to Caltrans for review. Jack added that the Committee is seeking consultant construction managers in Southern California for the Committee.

**III. Sub-committees**

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

Gary reported on the ABC Workshop programmed for December 10. The workshop will feature input by both Caltrans and the consultant community. Gary noted that attendees on the call should feel free to forward the flyer, distributed with these minutes, to other consultants. Dorie Mellon added that the Workshop was pushed back by a week due to an ABC webinar in Florida in early December that could have conflicted.

**B. CMGC/Design-Build (Lessons Learned): Mark Reno/Sudhakar Vatti**

No report for this meeting.

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

Bobby Zermeno reported that he and Doug Dunrud attended a webinar in August presented by private industry, FHWA, and the Transportation Research Board. The webinar featured pilot projects in other states and challenges with digital delivery. The webinar also focused on standardization of the digital delivery format. Doug and Bobby would like to present a few slides to the Committee (approximately 15 minutes) during the next Committee meeting. Bobby offered to share presentation materials with Emil Vergara or other Caltrans Committee Members ahead of the presentation. Doug added that the AASHTO T-19 Committee and the FHWA efforts on BIM would be covered by the presentation. Caltrans noted that they would like to prepare a few slides on in-house efforts as well.

**D. Technical Subcommittee: Mark Reno/Sudhakar Vatti**

Jack Abcarius noted that there would be a hydraulic update provided during the next Committee meeting.

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

1. 2020 Winter Training Updates. John Lammers reported that Caltrans will not host a virtual Winter Training session this year. Caltrans is going to cancel the 2020 Winter Training and instead focus on the 2021 Winter Training on Falsework. Caltrans is building the 2021 Winter Training around an old "falsework academy" format and are hoping to hold the training in-person.

2. SDC 2.0/STP Webinar. Nien Wang proposed to the Committee that we table this webinar until next year until we can have meaningful input.

3. ABC Bridge Presentation. Gary reported pre-designed fish passage bridges would be part of the ABC presentation on December 10. The pre-designed bridges were developed in response to many of the fish passage challenges in California and will help streamline the permitting process. They will not be issued as XS sheets, but they will be stamped by an engineer for Caltrans use. Consultants may have access to the plans but will need to stamp the plans themselves. Spans range from 20-ft to 120-ft with the intent of standardizing the superstructure design. Emil Vergara asked if they would have special provisions to go with the plans. Gudmund Setberg responded that Caltrans is still working on the special provisions. Gudmund also noted that all joints are UHPC based. Since all the bridges are simple spans, seismic is not a major concern. However, geotechnical issues--such as lateral spreading--should still be addressed during design. Jack Abcarius asked how the contractors would bid these bridges. Gudmund responded that Caltrans would likely itemize quantities and that bids would follow the normal process. Gudmund added that the designs will provide standardized reactions at each bridge end.

4. Northern California Specifications Training has been postponed and may be held next year.

**IV. Discussion Items**

**A. Friction Testing Updates from METS**

Steve Seifert reported that Caltrans has been conducting Friction testing under CT-342 with their portable skid tester. Steve has been in contact with local agencies to coordinate friction testing. Caltrans is using portable machines in addition to their prototypes to calibrate testing. For high friction service treatment, Caltrans is borrowing equipment from FHWA. Draft language was developed yesterday that allows for testing of new machines. If local agencies use the standard specifications, they need a cooperative agreement with Caltrans to use the Caltrans-owned friction tester. Agencies may amend the standard specification to use a standard AASHTO test for friction testing.

**B. COVID-19 Impacts**

No report.

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**C. Annual Report Electronic Posting Format (ADA Compatibility)**

Jack Abcarius reported that the Committee will begin to use an ADA compatible format for meeting minutes. Jack asked if the consultants should setup a site to post the meeting minutes. Caltrans responded that they cannot post anything on a Caltrans website that is non-compliant with ADA and cautioned the Committee to check that future meeting minutes are compliant. Jack asked if last year's Annual Committee Report could be made ADA compliant by Robert Weber. Sudhakar Vatti responded that he would coordinate with Robert to convert last year's Annual Report to an ADA-compliant format.

**D. Open Discussion**

Tom Ostrom noted that next year's Western Bridge, hosted by California and planned to be hosted in Los Angeles, will be a virtual event. There will be a call for abstracts after the first of the year.

Jack Abcarius transferred his duties as Consultant Co-Chair to Garrett Dekker. Shira Rajendra will continue as Co-Chair for Caltrans.

Jack reported that proposed Committee Charter edits would be sent to Caltrans by close of business on Monday, October 26.

Nien Wang asked that the Committee Members schedule a meeting before the end of the year to discuss Committee logistics for the next year. Jack said he would setup a meeting in November after receiving Caltrans comments on the revisions to the Charter.

**V. 2020 Meeting Schedule**

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

**VI. 2021 Meeting Schedule**

February 5, 2021 (1st Friday)  
May 14, 2021 (2nd Friday)  
August 6, 2021 (1st Friday)  
October 22, 2021 (4th Friday)

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**VII. Virtual Attendees**

Tom Ostrom  
Kevin Keady  
Rich Foley  
Gudmund Setberg  
Shira Rajendra  
Sudhakar Vatti  
Sid Pedaballi  
Emil Vergara  
Dorie Mellon  
Jeremy Wright  
Tim Osterkamp  
Steven Seifert  
John Lammers  
Jack Abcarius  
Mark Reno  
Nien Wang  
Garertt Dekker  
Bobby Zermeno  
Doug Dunrud  
Gary Antonucci  
Chris Burlaza  
Jason Hickey  
Jason Tom  
Jessica Mosquera  
Moe Amini  
Patricia Preston  
Robert Stott  
Syed Kazmi

**VIII. Distribution:**

**A. Caltrans:**

Tom Ostrom	Caltrans DES
Kevin Keady	Caltrans SPI
Rich Foley	Caltrans SC
Roberto Lacalle	Caltrans GS
Tim Greutert	Caltrans METS
Gudmund Setberg	Caltrans SD
Michael B. Johnson	Caltrans SMI
Shira Rajendra	Caltrans PPM & OE
Sudhakar Vatti	Caltrans OSFP/SLA

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Sid Pedaballi	Caltrans OPD & SCM
Emil Vergara	Caltrans OSFP
Robert Peterson	Caltrans HQ/LA
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