

August 2025 ACEC NC Transportation Committee Meeting



General Meeting Overview

- First committee meeting of the fiscal year, hosted by GFT.
- Emphasis on collaboration, open feedback, and strengthening subcommittees.
- No guest speaker this time, but future meetings aim to include a strong lineup.

TAB Meeting Updates



Hurricane Helene Financial Impact

- Total cost: \$5 billion; NCDOT responsible for \$900 million.
- Reallocation of \$275M from maintenance funds and \$27M from Hurricane Dorian.
- Estimated \$600M impact to the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).
- Funds will be spread over time to reduce concentrated impact.
- Potential project descopeing and converting temporary fixes into permanent solutions.



NCDOT Updates

- 46 New Projects
 - Strategic plan being developed
 - Mostly LSC projects but a few project specific



Legislative & Policy Updates

- Modified cash balance requirement: now 45 calendar days of cash on hand instead of 7.5%.
- Bridge outsourcing allowed for timber bridges when contractors are unavailable.
- P3 slots increased from 3 to 6.
- Toll project cap removed.
- Electronic speed enforcement approved for school zones (not yet for work zones).

- Support for 1-cent tax referendum in counties to fund transit/highways.

Digital Delivery & ORD Updates

- Emphasis on thoughtful rollout of digital delivery standards.
- New ORD version testing underway; workspace redevelopment pending.
- Pilot for automated PSNE checklist launched to streamline project submissions.
- Training videos and memos being developed for ORD guidance.
- Developing construction ready models. Will be piloted on already Let projects. CCU is working with Division staff to issue supplements.

Turnpike

- Turnpike will advertise their General Services LSC in October 2026.

General

- Timesheets are not required for invoice submission on Lump Sum projects. Progress reports are required and must be included to provide justification for the invoice.

Subcommittee Highlights

Alternate Delivery

- August meeting postponed; new submittal guidelines released (July 2025) and are posted on the Alternative Delivery Unit website.
- Future topics and discussion on project incentives and progressive design-build.
- Updates on Anticipated Project list (distributed 8/12 by ACEC)
- A question was posed about ICE services. Future discussion will likely follow the next Progressive Design Build procurement.

Project Delivery

- Focus on ORD and digital delivery.
 - Workbench page on your project page has a final PS&E checklist that can be utilized. (used on Pilot projects currently)

- Roadway Design has new training materials and memos released through NCLUG.
 - Superelevation on detours
 - Driveway guidelines
- Roadway Design working on training videos for Earthwork Balance, Drainage Summaries, and Interchange Modeling to provide consistency in ORD plan development across the industry.
- Currently testing new version of ORD. If it works properly, it will be implemented but if not, expectation is to remain in 2023 version.
- Workspace updates pending ORD version decision.
- New datum coming out in March / April 2026.

Construction and Materials

- Held in Raleigh, NC and virtually.
- New leadership: Tim Harper as Chair, Shane Hayes as Vice Chair.
- Welcomed new members Dale Swicegood and Reuben Chandler.
- Emphasis on collaboration, transparency, and responsiveness.

Training Updates

- Roadway Inspector Training: Completed modules on ITS, signs, and traffic control. Fall sessions will cover excavation and erosion control. A new Work Zone Traffic Control Inspection training is in development for 2026.
- Structure Training: Scheduled Jan–Mar 2026, focused on retaining walls for newer staff (under 5 years experience).
 - 2 day rotations per location
 - Registration managed by Resident Engineer offices.
- Construction Inspector Training: Full 2026 schedule to be shared in October.
- Materials & Testing (M&T): Q4 classes planned. Support available for CEI technicians struggling with QMS roadway class. Online modernization underway.

NCDOT Updates

- Staff Promotions: Patrick Norman named Chief Engineer; other key promotions across divisions.
- WNC Helene Recovery: Progress on bridge/culvert repairs; coordination with National Forest Service.
- Flooding Impacts: Assessments and recovery efforts along Cape Fear and Haw Rivers.
- Financial Health: Stable \$2.3B cash balance; pursuing relief funds for projected \$1B float.
- Technician Rate Study: Market analysis underway to finalize pay ranges.
- Vehicle Mileage Rate: Slight decrease; next review in December.
- CEI Contract Guidelines: Being updated for clarity and usability.
- Project-Specific Ads: Reminder to use NC-based staff in formal Letters of Interest.

Industry Discussion

- PSMU Website: Suggestion to add revision dates for better planning.
- Upcoming CEI Advertisements:
- P-5717: Grade separation in Durham (Let Nov 2025)
- P-5737: CSX S Line in Raleigh (Let Jan 2026)
- U-2817: Evans Street project in Winterville (Let 2027)

Additional Topics

- CEI workforce data shared for strategic planning.
- Upcoming Events:
- AGC/NCDOT Joint Training Workshop (Feb–Mar 2026)
- Concrete Paving Conference (Jan 26–27, 2026)
- NC Transportation Summit (Sept 3–4, 2025)

Next Meeting

- Scheduled for October 15, 2025 at 1:00 PM

Structures

- Participants: Representatives from ACEC and NCDOT Structures Management Unit (SMU).
 - Purpose: Discuss ongoing collaboration, updates, and issues related to structural engineering and design standards in North Carolina.
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1. General

- Staffing Changes: Several new hires and internal promotions were announced.
- Project Delivery: Emphasis on improving timelines and coordination between design and construction teams.
- Bridge Design Manual: Updates are underway, with a focus on aligning with current AASHTO standards.

2. Design Standards and Policies

- Standard Drawings: Revisions to standard drawings are in progress, including updates to guardrail and barrier designs.
- Load Rating Guidance: Clarifications provided on procedures and expectations for consultants performing load ratings.
- Seismic Design: Continued evaluation of seismic requirements for bridge design in NC.

3. Consultant Coordination

- Preliminary Design Submittals: SMU stressed the importance of early coordination and complete submittals to avoid delays.
- Review Timelines: SMU is working to streamline review processes and provide more consistent feedback.

4. Technology and Tools

- BrDR Software: Updates and training opportunities discussed for bridge rating software.

- ProjectWise: Encouragement for consultants to use ProjectWise for document management and submittals.

5. Training and Outreach

- Workshops: Plans for upcoming training sessions on bridge design and load rating.
- Communication: SMU emphasized open lines of communication and encouraged consultants to reach out with questions or concerns.

Action Items

- SMU to finalize updates to the Bridge Design Manual.
- ACEC to provide feedback on proposed standard drawing revisions.
- Continued collaboration on improving project delivery and review efficiency.

Multi-modal

Rail Division

- Corridor ID Step 2 procurements delayed.
- Progress on CRISI and FSP 23/24 grants, but FRA legal requirements have expanded.
- Interest in streamlining federal processes due to limited workforce.

Ferry Division

- Coastal, marine & facilities LSCs reopening in fall.
- State budget expansion means more firms needed.
- Exploring CMGC model for replacing Silverlake ferry.
- Updates on South Dock study, 9 Foot Shoal dredging, and Terminal Groin project.

Aviation

- Innovation LSC open through August 12; includes UAS support, engineering, grant writing.
- Discussion on Autonomous Aerial Mobility (AAM) as future transit mode.
- Planning for mobility hubs with multimodal connections encouraged.

Integrated Mobility Division (IMD)

- New LSC in place; 25 firms selected.
- SPSF LSC awards expected end of August.
- 15 multimodal plan projects to be advertised.
- Bike/Walk NC plan update coming this year.
- Consulting invoice processing improved significantly.
- Multiple BRT projects ramping up across NC (Raleigh, Chapel Hill, Durham, Greensboro).
- IMD working on a whitepaper about ¼ cent sales tax for transit funding.

Local Administration Program (LAP)

- Focus on improving project scopes and feasibility.
- Push for express-design to improve cost estimates and schedules.
- Interest in best practices from other southeastern states, especially around funding matches and programmatic management.

Other Updates

- New subcommittee chair: Steve Karnis
- New members: Katharine Mather, Bob Deaton, Erin Musiol
- Upcoming Transportation Committee meetings scheduled through May 2026.

Action Items

- Christine Goins to coordinate on streamlining federal requests.
- ACEC/NC to research LAP best practices in southeastern states.

Joint Conference & Junior Board

- Conference scheduled for Sept 23–24 with 600+ consultants registered.
- FHWA unable to present due to federal restrictions.
- Junior Board initiatives include peer connections, socials, and lunch & learns.
- Emphasis on engaging young professionals and firm liaisons.

Legislative Update

- Support for Charlotte tax referendum and DHV agency bill.
- State budget unlikely to pass; mini budgets expected.
- National PAC goal met early; new state PAC (CENC PAC) launched.
- Legislative trip to DC planned for Sept 10–11 with 11 legislators confirmed.