

**Missouri Department of Transportation (HQ) / ACEC Missouri
Liaison Committee Zoom Meeting**



**Wednesday, May 31, 2023
830 MoDOT Drive - Blue Room (In-Person)
9:00–11:00 AM**

**ACEC
Missouri**

- MEETING MINUTES -

ATTENDING:

MoDOT Attendees:

Jeff Cremer
Bryan Hartnagel
Ed Hassinger
Jerica Holtsclaw
Travis Koestner
Eric Schroeter
Kenny Voss
Jay Wunderlich

ACEC Missouri Attendees:

Buddy Desai, Hg Consult
Dave Diestelkamp, ABNA Engineering
Kevin Fuller, CMT
Bob Gilbert, Bartlett & West, Inc., Cmte. Chair
Aaron Kober, Modjeski & Masters
Vicki LaRose, Civil Design, Inc.
Kevin Wallace, HNTB Corporation
Joel Weinhold, Geotechnology, LLC
Morgan Mundell, ACEC/MO President

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1) MoDOT Staff Changes:

Recent changes in the SW District include Stacy Reese being promoted to District Engineer and Greg Chapman being promoted to Assistant District Engineer (Project Delivery)

2) Legislative Updates:

Overall, this was a good session of the legislature on transportation issues. Nine of eighteen safety initiatives were introduced into legislation, and one made its way into law – the secondary offense for texting while driving. This will operate much like the seat belt law in Missouri – if pulled over for a primary offense, tickets can be issued for texting while driving. Senator Bean was a champion of this legislation making its way through.

The Waterways and Ports Trust Fund was passed also, which was an initiative to allow ports to spend their grant funds over 2 years instead of 1. This will allow more realistic delivery of port improvements for grant recipients (and perhaps encourage more to apply knowing the expectations are easier to meet).

HB 4 included over \$3B in transportation related funding including the \$2.8 billion for I-70 expansion to 3 lanes across the State, \$50 million for railroad crossing upgrades, \$100 million for rural roads, about \$48 million for I-44, and other investments as well. It's too early to report on anything about the plans to deliver I-70 as the bill is not signed by the Governor yet (subsequently has been), and more will follow from MoDOT when that happens. It is anticipated that industry meetings will be held in July.

It was important to note what did NOT pass this year. There were numerous bills that were aimed at repealing or somehow diminishing the increased investment from SB 262, and HJR 37 threatened to remove the Transportation Commission's authority for spending on transportation, just to name a few.

3) Construction Lettings/Inflation Update:

Construction pricing continues to be a concern. In the DRAFT STIP to be released after the June Commission meeting, re-estimating the current STIP projects with recent inflation caused about \$900

million in increased costs, plus about \$300 million over the current fiscal year presents about a \$1.2 billion impact on the STIP. This is why very few new projects are being added to the new STIP.

Something MoDOT is seeing are items that are more labor intensive (bridge rehabs for instance) are the most inflated costs. Naturally, workforce challenges exist everywhere right now, but certainly in the construction trades. Newer workers are also not able to produce at the faster rates of experienced employees, so those bid prices are quite high. Some ideas to consider are how to look at MOT to save labor on projects, and it might require more public involvement to help with buy-in about MOT decisions to close more roads for construction.

MoDOT is also experiencing lower number of bidders or no bidders on some projects, including LPA jobs. Also, some lead times are affecting not only the construction items but also the utility relocations ahead of the project construction (65-week lead times was quoted for electric transformers).

4) MoDOT On-Call Update:

All but 10 contracts have been executed, so this is nearly completed for the 3-year horizon. However, there will be another call for consultants to apply who did not meet the pre-qualification pass/fail items. This re-application process is set to take place this winter. July 1, 2023 is the effective date of these contracts.

5) MoDOT Consultant Services Contract Reviews:

ACEC recently submitted some suggested revisions to the standard MoDOT consultant contract. The Design Division has a new attorney now and is getting up to speed and will review these requested changes, as well as implement other changes to the contracts. The MoDOT changes are likely to relate to adding more traffic control to consultant contracts if our workers are in the driving lane to perform any services. The LPA standard contract was also mentioned as something that needs another look – hopefully to help it line up with the new MoDOT standard contract changes.

6) Updated MoDOT Consultant Services 6-Month Outlook Coming Soon:

Coming soon. No other update.

7) MoDOT FY Invoicing Deadline:

This was covered in a separate MoDOT communication that ACEC distributed to member firms.

8) Microsoft Project Scheduling Pilot Update:

This involves the use of Microsoft Project and Power BI to help display project schedules in a more standardized way across MoDOT's program. Jeff Bohler and Steve Atkinson are leading this pilot and so far, there are 5 standard templates for different types of projects. Pilot is ongoing for next two months and likely to be rolled out Fall of 2023. Implemented for FY25 lettings. Microsoft Project licensing will be through MoDOT so consultants will need to identify ONE PERSON per firm to be able to log in to use this.

9) Missouri One-Call/811 Rules:

Recent concerns have been raised by ACEC member firms about utility locates not being performed. This could be a workforce issue with locate companies, but we are getting responses after making requests that if it's not for construction then they will not locate. MoDOT has a board member on the statewide One-call team (Becky Allmeroth) and Ed Hassinger said he would ask her to inquire about this.

10) Construction Engineering Services Liaison Committee:

This item was raised by a member firm about how construction engineering services are still new to MoDOT and there does not appear to be consistency between districts on how and what services will be applied during the project work. It was suggested that perhaps a liaison committee could be developed with ACEC member firms who provide these services and the MoDOT construction personnel who are typically not involved in liaison meetings. More to come on this subject and action was to take this topic up with the ACEC Transportation Committee about interest and need for this.

11) Other Discussion Items:

The Centralized Contract Negotiation Pilot is still ongoing with research about consultant contract hours and doing some analysis of how many hours and tasks certain types of projects take. ACEC members commented about how unique each project is and that when research is being done that the team make sure to look at all supplements on the jobs too, since that adds scopes and hours to the original contract.

MoDOT turnover in the last month seemed to improve because it was the first month that the new hires exceeded the departures. There are still over 500 vacancies.

The DBE Availability Study is just getting underway now. Results expected Fall 2023.

Federal funds for LPA jobs are at risk and MoDOT is asking ACEC firms to get projects allocated for construction as soon as possible (by August before the federal fiscal year). There are about \$150 million worth of federal funds that would not be able to be pulled down if these projects don't get allocated. ACEC members also mentioned that raising the LPA on-call contract limit to at least match the MoDOT on-call limit would help in future years, as consultant interest in LPA projects is waning with so much cost to procure the work for smaller contract amounts.

12) Next Meeting:

The next meeting is scheduled for August 17, 2023, from 1:00-3:00 PM and will be held via Zoom. The group liked the idea of holding every other meeting via Zoom/In-Person.