

MTO – ORBA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES

Date: August 7, 2025
Time: 2:00 pm – 5:00 pm
Location: Virtual

ATTENDEE

Andrew Weltz (ORBA) (Chair)
 Malcolm Croskery (ORBA)
 Walid Abou-Hamde (ORBA)
 Mario Villeneuve (ORBA)
 Steven Crombie (ORBA)
 Rick Tamburro (ORBA)
 Mark Mallet (ORBA)
 Fatima Farah (ORBA)
 Colin MacKay (ORBA)

ATTENDEE

Alain Beaulieu (MTO) (regrets)
 Eric Doidge (MTO)
 Michelle McGrath (MTO)
 Jason Ranger (MTO)
 Michelle Pasqua (MTO)
 Malvika Rudra (MTO)
 Bruce Cane (MTO)
 Susan Nichol (MTO)
 Frank Lucente (MTO)
 Sharene Dubroy (MTO)

1. INTRODUCTION / ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Walid Abou-Hamde opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.
- MTO shared there was a new division created at MTO - Major Highway Projects Division with Malvika Rudra as ADM
- Becca Lane has retired from MTO and Susan Nichol will be the interim Director for the Design and Engineering Branch while a competition is being run.
- ORBA has two new interns, Fatima Farah and Colin Mackay that also attended.

ACTION: MTO to provide new Org chart once available

OPEN ITEMS

Lead

2.

Review of previous minutes/action items

- Quarterly minutes for April 24, 2025, posted on TCP on July 9, 2025, with supporting documents.
- No concerns with the previous meeting notes.

ACTION: Notes from previous meeting were shared in advance and all agreed accurate.

**MTO /
ORBA**

OPEN ITEMS		Lead
3.	Major Projects Update • Recognizing progress on industry engagement and collaboration between MTO and industry (e.g. Bradford Bypass West CMGC) • Exploring the possibility of publishing a ranked bidders list on collaborative procurements (particularly when the development/design phase is a fixed-price agreement) ORBA's comment (This a query I received from a single member who recently participated on GCS. I had explained IO-led procurements have not taken such an approach previously, and neither have recent MTO procurements leveraging collaborative models) • Positive feedback was shared regarding collaboration on major projects, particularly the Bradford Bypass CMGC contract. Timeline updates were provided for various projects: Bradford Bypass Central and East sections targeting 2027 for mainline construction, and Highway 413 progressing with two early works contracts tendered summer 2025 and potential mainline construction by 2027-2028. • MTO provided an update on projects, including an Industry Event for Highway 413 and wrapping up preliminary design, the 401 Tunnel procurement, BBP procurements (Central & East) for Detail Design and Construction Manager, and partnering framework for projects of all sizes.	MTO

4.	Capital Program Update 25/26 Budget Slide - MTO's total capital budget continues to increase - it's now \$4.5B, an increase of ~ \$450M from last year's budget. - The largest increase is in the other category, which increased by \$260M, largely due to MTO's funding commitments with the City of Toronto for the Gardiner Expressway rehabilitation. - There have also been increases in Construction funding, about \$100M, and in Design and Property, about 100M. The annual budget funds both carryover work and the current year value of new procurement activity. - Carryover typically accounts for a large proportion of the spending in a given year. Quarterly Tendering Forecast for Construction Contracts 25/26 forecasted tender volume is 79-110, which similar to last year, however the forecasted value is higher, with a range of \$1.5B-\$2.0B. - In Q1 MTO tendered 33 construction contracts, which was within the expected range. - Q3 is also expected to be a higher volume quarter. MTO aims to tender as much as possible in the fall, to maximize the upcoming construction season. Summer OHP - The Summer 2025 OHP was published last Friday (August 1st). - This year MTO updated the cost ranges to better reflect the higher value projects; previously the highest category was "over \$80M"; this has been replaced with four categories, with the highest being "over \$1B". - MTO will continue to consider enhancements to the publication and expects to resume the fall/winter refresh this year. <i>ORBA Commented that exploring the possibility of early tendering in November/December 2025 to send a strong, positive signal to the market regarding the 2026 construction season.</i> - Discussion on the possibility of publishing ranked bidder lists for collaborative procurements. - Historical lack of ranked bidder list publication with emphasis on transparency. - MTO is considering ways to improve the publishing model for transparency and stakeholder feedback.	MTO
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5.	Reducing Risk https://cac-word-edit.officeapps.live.com/we/www.ontario.ca/page/procurement-restriction-policy Harmonization of Municipal Road Construction Standards - The Ontario government, through <i>Bill 17</i>, is working to harmonize municipal road construction standards to address inconsistencies in how municipalities apply standards, including use of the OPS-MUNIs . - MTO has received some early input from the OPS Advisory Board, which includes MEA, ORBA, and OSWCA. MTO is also aware of some individual municipal comments, and from AMO. MTO is currently developing a formal engagement strategy to seek broad input from stakeholders to help develop a framework for harmonized standards. ORBA and other stakeholders will be engaged. Consultations are anticipated to occur later this summer with a Fall 2025 report back to government. - Discussion of municipal road construction standards harmonization indicated upcoming consultations, with letters to be sent to stakeholders within days. The initiative aims to standardize specifications across municipalities, with current challenges including varying municipal approaches and the need for governance structure development. - The group discussed jurisdictional scans, noting Texas's model where the state sets specification standards for municipalities. Implementation would require a ramp-up period and careful consideration of how standards would be integrated into contracts. AC Price Index Review Process and Posting - The ministry is conducting a jurisdictional scan and has received responses from 9 provinces. They are currently corresponding with 19 municipalities to complete the scan and have received responses from almost half. - Provinces and municipalities have provided details on how they calculate their Asphalt Cement Price Index. - Municipalities are being requested to provide details on: - If they currently invoke Appendix 310-B, November 2017 of Ontario Provincial Standard Specification, 310 Municipal. - Whether they allow contractors the option to opt in or out of the PGAC payment adjustment at the start of the contract. - Their average duration from tender opening to the start of construction.	MTO
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	○ Any concerns regarding the MTO publishing a calculated rate for the winter months of December, January, and February. • The ministry plans to complete the analysis and make any decision prior to the end of September. • The AC price index review is underway, with MTO staff consulting nine provinces and numerous Ontario municipalities. Recommendations are expected by September for potential implementation before winter. 2025 - OPSS 127 Schedule of Rental Rates for Construction Equipment • The proposed 2025 OPSS 127 Schedule of Rental Rates for Construction Equipment was posted to the TCP on June 4th and remained open for comments until July 2nd. The OPSS 127 Rates were published on July 31. • Back pocket: ○ ORBA was provided with the draft rate on May 6th, along with a request for comments by May 15th. An offer to discuss any feedback was also extended. ○ Walid acknowledged the request and indicated a response would be provided by the 15th; however, no response was received. ○ On May 20th, Steve was advised that the TCP posting schedule would proceed as planned, targeting May 28th. It was reiterated that comments were still welcome and that availability to discuss remained open. • The OPSS 127 annual update was completed successfully with new rates posted. Tariff Working Group (ORBA Comment) Effects of US Tariffs on MTO procurements. Some members will share recent experiences. • MTO is working in close collaboration with other ministries to ensure a consistent government-wide approach. • Status of Working Group with ORBA – Exploring the Development of an Index • Follow-Up Request: ORBA has asked MTO to provide an update on the creation of the Construction Equipment Index Working Group. • The ministry would like to collaborate with ORBA on suggested rate change mechanism to address tariff impacts. • The ministry has selected internal team members for a	
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	Construction Equipment Tariff Impact Index working group and solicited ORBA for membership on July 7th. A meeting date will be set shortly once ORBA membership is finalized. • Tariff Management: A working group is developing an index system and documentation protocols for tariff impact compensation. MOI is leading a coordinated government response, with focus on both direct and indirect cost impacts. The ministry continues logging and evaluating tariff-related compensation requests. Cross-Slope Specification Update • Document Updates: The updated tolerance special provision 103F56, CDED B313, CAIS 313-06, and PH-CC-886 forms have been posted to TCP. Comments received have been incorporated into the updated documents as applicable. • Training: Training has been provided for designers and construction administration staff on how to specify cross slope in contract packages and enforce it on site. • Implementation: The documents are pending implementation in CPS. • Change Orders: Zero-dollar change orders will be issued to apply the specification retroactively. • Specifications & Conditions: The Cross-Load specification implementation included ORBA feedback and comprehensive staff training.	
6.	CMS Update • Monthly ORBA CMS working group meetings held January – April. Valuable discussions and several CMS updates made based on feedback. Meetings to resume again next year. • Less tickets/ issues so far in 2025 than previous years. • CMT Team working with vendor to scope next round of CMS enhancements.	MTO

8.	GC Update • MTO posted the MTO GCs on April 30, 2025 for comments. Consultation closing date was May 28th 2025. • MTO received letters from ORBA, Miller and Dufferin by email. Thank you to ORBA, Miller and Dufferin for time to put letters together. • MTO will set-up meeting with ORBA to discuss ORBA's comments. • Consultation is important to MTO and the intent of posting the changes to the GCs in the TCP was to be transparent with ORBA and all other stakeholders on what changes MTO is proposing. • Received comments from ORBA, Miller, and Dufferin. Consultations are set for late August or early September to finalize these updates.	
9.	Maintenance Updates • The monthly ORBA Highway Maintenance Committee (HMC) meeting was held on June 2nd. • Several new sub-working groups have been reactivated, including the Maintenance Applications Working Group and the Maintenance Materials Working Group. • Upcoming procurements include Ottawa, Peel Halton East, York and Toronto • Maintenance operations reported successful winter season completion and lessons learned are being implemented for the upcoming season.	MTO

10.	O/O permit turnaround time - Applications are still being received with missing information, and incomplete routes requiring increased communications and reducing the number of permits issued per day. Failure to provide timely responses reduces the office's ability to seek approvals and issue permits. - Training modules are still available for public use: https://mto.bluedrop.io/storefront/o-o-permits - Escalations are being granted based on requirements of submitting within current processing timelines, safety, and impact, however it does impact the queue management - Additional staff have been onboarded and trained to help alleviate the queue of applications - Public website identifies turnaround time for single trip permits; currently 3 business days - Oversized permit processing times improved from 15 to 3 business days through increased resources. Digital modernization efforts are underway.	
11.	Provincial Claims (A) MTO provided an update on Claims, Referee and Adjudication from Fiscal 2024/2025 - April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025 MTO provided an update from the Report (attached). Generally no significant changes to the trends, backlog is being addressed with improvements to the staffing in the Claims Office and support from others.	MTO
12.	Delivering a single-day joint symposium on construction best practices including conflict resolution, etc. (identify next steps) Maintenance is interested in participating in any partnership or relationship building/conflict resolution workshops/symposiums	
NEW ITEMS		
13.	- MTO recruitment update ORBA Comment (This is a follow up to an item raised during Lobby Day 2025, and the industry is keen on supporting the Ministry in any way) - The ministry's recruitment initiative received funding for 200 positions, with plans to expand the infrastructure opportunities program for engineering students through industry partnerships.	ORBA

14.	President's Tour 2025: update on dates, locations and format • The President's Tour was scheduled across five regions between September-October 2025. • Proposed dates from ORBA – October 1, Thunder Bay, October 14th, Ottawa, October 15th, Sudbury October 22, London and October 23 GTA. • A working group will prepare materials addressing industry concerns and best practices.	ORBA
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INFORMATION SHARED FOR THIS MEETING		
Document Title	Shared By	Format
Capital Program/Highway Projects Update	MTO	PDF
Claims, Referee and Adjudication from Fiscal 2024/2025 - April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025	MTO	PDF

NEXT MEETING
• 2026 meeting dates TBD