

MTO/ACEC-ON ENGINEERING SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING NOTES - DRAFT

Date: January 13, 2026
Time: 10:00am to 2:00pm
Location: Hybrid: In Person at EXP Office Brampton and Virtual on MS Teams

ACEC ATTENDEES	ORGANIZATION	MTO ATTENDEES	ORGANIZATION
Steve Pilgrim	Egis Group	Jenn Meleschuk	MTO CMO
Tanya Cross	Dillon	Rina Kulathinal	MTO Program Del
Andrew Hurd	ACEC-ON	Melissa Buelow	MTO Project Del.E
Sunil Kothari	Atkins Réalis	Erika Varga	MTO CMO
Tim Sorochinsky	AECOM	Joanna Long	MTO AMB
Magdy Samaan	EXP	Guest: Frank Lucente	MTO CPDB
Heather Templeton	HDR Inc.	Guest: Lucie Drabinova	MTO Vendor Mgmt
Naveen Kaushik	Parsons		
Andrew Wittig	WSP		
Kevin Smith	DM Wills		

9-2025-1 WELCOME / INTRODUCTION

- ACEC advised that Laura Lambie has moved on from ACEC. At the meeting Andrew Hurd was attending in Laura's absence and is the point of contact for ACEC-ON.

NEW ITEMS		ACTION BY
1-2026-2	AGENDA ITEMS FROM MTO / ACEC-ON EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE <i>The last meeting of the joint Executive Committee was held on Wednesday, September 10, 2025.</i> ACTION: NONE	
1-2026-3.a	AGENDA ITEMS FROM MTO MEMBERS LAST MEETING MINUTES AND ACTION ITEM REVIEW – MAY 14, 2025 <i>Description: Status of last meeting minutes and action items.</i> <i>Discussion:</i> <i>ACEC Complete – ACEC shared with MTO the 'top 5' project criteria that they would want in an advance notice posting (related to Accelerated Procurement). ACEC inquired on the status of the review of 'pick-x' invitational procurements. MTO advised it is included in multiple reviews ongoing, including Vendor Management Review and Highway Design Review.</i> <i>MTO Ongoing –CMS Working Group. MTO updated the team on the ACEC membership of the CMS working group. Prior to the meeting</i>	

NEW ITEMS		ACTION BY
	<i>MTO provided a list of current ACEC members of the CMS working group (total of 4). MTO is seeking ACEC members to volunteer to join the CMS working group.</i> ACTION: CONTACT JAMIE LAUZON TO JOIN THE CMS WORKING GROUP, AT JAMIE.LAUZON@ONTARIO.CA. ACEC TO CONTINUE TO UPDATE MTO ON ANY CMS ISSUES.	ACEC
9-2025-3.b	AGENDA ITEMS FROM MTO MEMBERS i. STATUS UPDATES FROM MTO: Rotational Retainer Update <i>Description: MTO presented an update to the rotational retainer pilot assignment being developed in West Region. For up to 4 service providers for a 5-year term.</i> <i>Discussion:</i> <i>The rotational retainer was posted on December 4, 2025 (3025-Z-0018) with a Phase I due date of January 29, 2025</i> <i>ACEC inquired when the ‘pilot’ approach can be implemented widely? MTO advised that timing is to be determined, there has been lots of interest internally on this approach.</i> <i>ACEC inquired what the success factors are for the rotational retainer pilot? MTO advised that they consider both value for money and ability to distribute work as key success factors.</i> <i>ACEC inquired if retainers could be procured for ceilings larger than \$750,000, as this is a low amount based on the effort to respond to the procurement. Would recommend \$2M. MTO advised that MTO has ability to procure higher retainer values, and that beyond the \$750,000, procurement approvals need to be obtained from higher authority (Deputy Minister or Treasury Board), so sometimes the smaller values are procured due to less approvals required.</i> <i>ACEC inquired if the second-highest service provider on a retainer can be given some work? It is within MTO’s discretion to award work within a retainer. Typically work is offered to highest ranked proponent unless they are too busy or are challenged with delivery / performance.</i> ACTION: MTO WILL CONTINUE TO BRING UPDATES TO ACEC ON THE STATUS OF THE ROTATIONAL RETAINER. TEAM AGREED TO MAKE THIS A STANDING ITEM ON UPCOMING MEETINGS.	MTO

NEW ITEMS		ACTION BY
	ii. STATUS UPDATES FROM MTO: Qualification Committee threshold for 'low appraisal' <i>Description: MTO is considering a change from 3.00 to 2.50 for what is a 'low appraisal'</i> <i>Discussion:</i> <i>Discussion at Qualification Committee (QC) are ongoing, to determine what appraisal rating threshold will require a review by the QC, due to poor performance.</i> <i>The new rating system is lowering the appraisal scores for the same level of performance.</i> <i>The review of appraisal threshold is also in-scope of the Vendor Management Review and the Corporate Performance Rating (CPR) pause.</i> <i>MTO is monitoring the trends on appraisal scores, monthly, and the CPR quarterly.</i> ACTION: MTO (VMR TEAM AND QC) WILL CONTINUE TO REVIEW THE APPRAISAL THRESHOLD AND ENGAGE ACEC.	MTO
1-2026-4.a	AGENDA ITEMS FROM ACEC-ON MEMBERS: UPDATE ON HOW SUBCOMMITTEE WORKS <i>Description: What is the agenda versus the workplan? Review the most current work plan.</i> <i>Discussion:</i> <i>Team members discussed the meeting agenda and workplan, and how to manage information effectively.</i> <i>Team agreed the workplan needs a refresh. Some items can be addressed in other ways.</i> <i>ACEC suggested to be co-owners of the workplan</i> ACTION: ACEC (STEVE AND SUNIL) TO REVIEW AND REVISE THE WORKPLAN AND SHARE WITH TEAM MEMBERS. ACEC TO PROPOSE A WAY TO SHARE THE DOCUMENT FOR LIVE EDITS.	ACEC

NEW ITEMS		ACTION BY
1-2026-4.b	AGENDA ITEMS FROM ACEC-ON MEMBERS: SUCCESSION MANAGEMENT UPDATE <i>Description: An update on Succession Management and related items (retention, recruitment, fall meetings and lessons learned)</i> <i>Discussion:</i> • ACEC would like this item to be a standing item on MTO/ACEC Engineering subcommittee meeting • Succession Management (SM) language was included in Central, East and West region assignments, including the WR rotational retainer • ACEC asked for details on the SM staffing, language and scoring. • Very important is alignment and consistency, then identify gaps • Was original SM language effective? How did it score? Revised language was used in West Region. • ACEC asked if MTO could use SM language / opportunities for engineering discipline leads, not just for the Project Manager role? • Team discussed staff retention, recruiting and possible support from other organizations working on SM, to find out what others are working on. E.g. T.A.C. has a workforce committee. This effort needs a champion. • Team discussed possibility of re-initiating the 'fall meeting' for Engineering, with ACEC, led by MTO Design and Engineering Branch. • Team discussed adding language in the RFP for project meetings to include a 'lessons learned' item, to support SM. ACTION: HEATHER TEMPLETON (ACEC) VOLUNTEERED TO LEAD. ANDREW HURD (ACEC) TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON POTENTIAL ACEC GRANT. MTO TO PROVIDE UPDATE ON S.M. LANGUAGE USED AND OUTCOMES.	ACEC AND MTO
1-2026-4.c	AGENDA ITEMS from ACEC-ON MEMBERS: (i) Buy Ontario Bill <i>Description: To discuss the recent implementation of the Buy Ontario Bill.</i> <i>Discussion:</i> • The Buy Ontario Act was introduced on November 20, 2025 to protect the province's workers and businesses by prioritizing Ontario goods and services in public procurement. • The act is not yet operationalized.	

NEW ITEMS		ACTION BY
	• <i>It's a policy that prioritizes first Ontario and then Canadian goods and services, while still maintaining value for money for Ontario taxpayers and protecting procurement and major infrastructure projects from undue delays</i> • <i>The major impact is on items within construction contracts (e.g. concrete, steel, aggregates, asphalt).</i> • <i>Impact on Engineering service providers will be minimal</i> • <i>MTO will check that the items are supplied from Ontario through a bidder submitted Domestic Supply Chain Plan that will form part of bid evaluation.</i> • <i>CMO will support operationalization and is in the early stages of planning implementation</i> ACTION: MTO WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE UPDATES TO AND ENGAGE WITH ACEC. (ii) <i>US Bid Restriction Policy – Update</i> <i>Description: To discuss the November 2025 change to the US bid restriction policy.</i> <i>Discussion:</i> • <i>Update to the US Bid Restriction was updated on November 20, 2025 to allow US firms to bid if 90 percent of their workforce is working in Canada.</i> • <i>All impacted firms have been contacted and advised.</i> • <i>The firm must complete two declarations (one to identify as a US firm, then one to commit to the assignment of Canadian staff). MTO will seek a Deputy Minister exemption for each bid.</i> • <i>Committed staff must stay on the contract or else the firm is in breach of contract.</i> ACTION: NONE	MTO
1-2026-4.d	AGENDA ITEMS FROM ACEC-ON MEMBERS: MTO DEBRIEF CONSISTENCY AND GUIDELINES, CAN THESE BE SHARED <i>Description: To discuss debriefings to unsuccessful firms</i> <i>Discussion:</i>	

NEW ITEMS		ACTION BY
	• <i>Internal conversations with Finance Branch are ongoing, to see if any early debrief can be provided after Phase I of a 2-phase procurement.</i> • <i>MTO has a debriefing guide for internal staff reference. This guide says to only debrief after the contract has been executed. This guide is confidential to MTO staff.</i> • <i>ACEC is requesting MTO consider sharing scores, prices, rankings, as the CPR is not currently an evaluation criterion, so there is no risk of 'back-calculating' scores to determine firms' CPR.</i> • <i>MTO advised that debriefs are to identify a firms' strengths and weakness, not to compare to other firms' submissions.</i> • <i>ACEC members discussed if a debrief after Phase I, to non-short-listed firms, gives these firms an unfair advantage. And, if so, should all firms (even those short listed) be provided a debrief after Phase I.</i> • <i>ACEC discussed the options to pursue with MTO the Phase I debriefs to unsuccessful (original proposal, discussions internal at MTO underway) or switch to pursuing Phase I debrief for all. ACEC members agreed to keep to original proposal, for now.</i> • <i>ACEC members agreed that receiving early feedback is the most important.</i> ACTION: MTO TO CONTINUE WITH INTERNAL CONVERSATIONS TO SEE IF ANY 'EARLY' DEBRIEF CAN BE PROVIDED AFTER PHASE I OF A 2-PHASE PROCUREMENT, TO UNSUCCESSFUL FIRMS.	MTO
1-2026-4.e	AGENDA ITEMS FROM ACEC-ON MEMBERS: CONFIRM WORKING GROUPS AND WHO IS LEADING AND PARTICIPATING <i>Description: A review of ongoing joint working groups.</i> <i>Discussion:</i> a. <i>Electronic Native Format Working Group – MTO Lead Erika Varga</i> b. <i>Succession Management Subcommittee – MTO Lead Amanda Naylor</i> c. <i>Accelerated Procurement (under VMR umbrella) – MTO Lead Namita Farias</i> ACTION: ERIKA (MTO) TO CONFIRM THE TEAM MEMBERS OF ELECTRONIC NATIVE FORMAT WORKING GROUP. ANDREW (ACEC) TO REVIEW STATUS OF ORBA SURVEY.	

NEW ITEMS		ACTION BY
		MTO AND ACEC
1-2026-4.f	AGENDA ITEMS FROM ACEC-ON MEMBERS: CORPORATE PERFORMANCE RATING (CPR) WORKSHOP – NEXT STEPS <i>Description: Update from Vendor Management Review following the August 2025 CPR workshop</i> <i>Discussion:</i> • The CPR review is under the Vendor Management Review (VMR). • The VMR discovery work progresses albeit with some delays • Two of the 4 VMR workstreams are active, and we appreciate ACEC's ongoing support • As of Jan 13, we have 60 responses to our external vendor survey from many companies, and half have offered to meet with VMR individually to share information. • Regarding CPR, the current review focuses on performance assessments conducted by MTO staff which is the first part of the CPR process. • The CPR pause will continue as the VMR work continues. ACTION: MTO VMR TO CONTINUE TO ENGAGE WITH ACEC THROUGH THE VMR PROJECT AND ACEC SUBCOMMITTEES	MTO
1-2026-4.g	AGENDA ITEMS FROM ACEC-ON MEMBERS: PROCUREMENT WORKSHOPS & ACCELERATED PROCUREMENT UPDATE <i>Description: Update from ACEC on these two procurement items</i> <i>Discussion:</i> • MTO's VMR team's work on accelerated procurement is currently at the internal process mapping and problem identification stage. • MTO will update ACEC and advise of planned engagement as internal progress continues. • ACEC has developed a survey for members to help provide input to MTO, on the following topics: Experience Matrix, Procurement in general and RAQS ESP feedback ACTION: MTO TO REVIEW THE NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENTS SHARED BY ACEC. MTO TO CONTINUE TO UPDATE ACEC ON ACCELERATED PROCUREMENT. ACEC TO DISTRIBUTE SURVEY,	MTO AND ACEC

NEW ITEMS		ACTION BY
	GATHER RESPONSES AND UPDATE MTO ON FEEDBACK RECEIVED.	
1-2026-4.h	AGENDA ITEMS FROM ACEC-ON MEMBERS: DECEMBER 10/25 MTO WORKSHOP AND REQUEST FOR CONSULTATION – HIGHWAY DESIGN PROCESS REVIEW <i>Description: Seek clarity on the scope of this initiative. How can ACEC-ON support this?</i> <i>Discussion:</i> • MTO updated ACEC on the December 10 workshop • MTO hosted a ‘preliminary’ workshop for construction acceleration. MTO invited 12 industry participants (contractors, design firms and 17 MTO staff. • MTO is looking to identify opportunities to accelerate project delivery, innovative approaches and practical strategies aimed a streamlining all project stages, with emphasis on accelerating the construction phase of MTO projects. • It was not project specific. Contract Project Delivery Branch is reviewing the workshop ‘quick wins’ and takeaways. • MTO will share findings and advised that future opportunities will be available. • ACEC wants to be a united voice of Engineering firms, to ensure all firms get equal opportunities. ACTION: MTO TO SHARE PROGRESS ON HIGHWAY DESIGN PROCESS REVIEW AS IT PROGRESSES	MTO
1-2026-4.i	AGENDA ITEMS FROM ACEC-ON MEMBERS: INNOVATION PLANS <i>Description: MTO was considering a guideline. When will MTO share a draft?</i> <i>Discussion: Status of the Innovation Plan guideline</i> • MTO advised that the Innovation Plan guide development is ongoing. • The MTO document committee is currently reviewing the existing innovation plan language, innovation definition, guidelines for innovation evaluation and working on new draft RFP language. • Will result in new ‘notes to MTO user’ guidance ACTION: MTO TO BRING UPDATES ON INNOVATION PLAN	MTO

NEW ITEMS		ACTION BY
1-2026-4.j	AGENDA ITEMS FROM ACEC-ON MEMBERS: RFPS – BALANCE BETWEEN PAGE LIMITS AND FONT SIZE. <i>Description: Font size increase, page limits have decreased. Service providers struggle to provide everything that is needed when there is limited space.</i> <i>Discussion:</i> • MTO advised that when accessibility is applied, this results in several pages lost (e.g. 12 pages for one firm). • ACEC has seen inconsistent requirements for resume highlights, some within page limit, some allowed outside page limit (2023-E-0034, 2025-E-0059). This results in a lot of ‘re-work’ by bidding firms. Suggest simplifying Phase I requirements. • ACEC identified flexible page limits are very important for RFP Phase I submissions. • ACEC suggested standardizing Phase I like the former ‘EOI long form’ where bidding firms followed set format. Increases consistency and streamlines information. • ACEC asked if MTO reviews the proposals digitally or in hard copy. • Re Phase I staffing information, VMR team is reviewing the duplication on qualification, key personnel in RAQS ESP and staffing information in the RFP Phase I proposal. ACTION: MTO (HPDC) TO REMIND STAFF TO INCREASE PAGE LIMITS WITH THE 12 SIZE FONT REQUIRED FOR ACCESSIBILITY.	MTO
1-2026-4.k	AGENDA ITEMS FROM ACEC-ON MEMBERS: REVIEW OPPORTUNITIES TO HAVE PROJECT DELIVERY IN DIFFERENT REGIONS COORDINATE RELEASE OF RFPS <i>Description: ACEC asked if RFP postings could be published with a coordinated schedule, to spread out the postings over time?</i> <i>Discussion:</i> • ACEC has noticed many RFP postings, in waves, within short time frames / all at once. • MTO could plan RFP releases similar to major capital construction, to identify a week of the year for individual RFP postings • MTO advised that some RFP posting timing depends on receiving procurement approvals (may be delayed, posting dates change) ACTION: MTO (HPDC) TO DISCUSS PLANNING COORDINATED RFP RELEASES	MTO

NEW ITEMS		ACTION BY
1-2026-4.i	AGENDA ITEMS FROM ACEC-ON MEMBERS: HIGHWAY 3DDESIGN SOFTWARE <i>Description: ACEC requested an update on the highway software acquisition. If a change is planned, can ACEC be part of the assessment?</i> <i>Discussion</i> • MTO is looking to move forward with a software upgrade and hope to avoid further delays. • MTO is willing to meet with ACEC however, we would not have ACEC participate directly as part of the RFB process. • MTO is also open to receiving ACEC's lessons learned and feedback on pain points with the current software, so these can be considered in our RFB. ACTION: MTO TO BRING UPDATES TO ACEC AS THE PROJECT PROGRESSES.	MTO
1-2026-4.m	AGENDA ITEMS FROM ACEC-ON MEMBERS: PIPELINE <i>Description: When is the next pipeline list coming?</i> <i>Discussion:</i> • The Engineering pipeline was shared with ACEC on November 6, 2025, from the Design and Engineering Branch director's office • The Construction pipeline development is ongoing at the Capital Program Delivery Branch director's office. Once its approved, it will be distributed to ACEC (estimated by mid-late February 2026) ACTION: MTO TO SHARE THE CONSTRUCTION PIPELINE WITH ACEC WHEN IT IS COMPLETE. Post-meeting update: The CA pipeline was provided to Andrew Hurd on Wednesday February 4, 2026.	MTO COMPLETE
1-2026-4.n	AGENDA ITEMS FROM ACEC-ON MEMBERS: ELECTRONIC NATIVE FORMAT WORKING GROUP UPDATE <i>Description: Update from ACEC on the Electronic Native Format working group</i> <i>Discussion:</i> • September 4, 2025 the draft survey to be distributed to ORBA was approved by MTO. Gregg Cooke, the ACEC lead, was advised to proceed with the survey, and allow 30 days for ORBA response.	

NEW ITEMS		ACTION BY
	Andrew Hurd, ACEC, advised the work to distribute the survey is ongoing. ACTION: ACEC TO DISTRIBUTE THE SURVEY TO ORBA.	ACEC
1-2026-4.o	AGENDA ITEMS FROM ACEC-ON MEMBERS: RAQS ESP UPDATE <i>Description: MTO provided an update on the RAQS ESP replacement project.</i> <i>Discussion:</i> - Supply Ontario is leading the procurement of a new Digital Procurement System. MTO is awaiting outcome of the DPS procurement. - ACEC had requested an opportunity to provide input into the new system and identify challenges with the current system (RAQS ESP). - ACEC is preparing to send a survey to ACEC members seeking their feedback on RAQS ESP. - MTO has extended the contract to utilize RAQS ESP until October 2027 ACTION: MTO CONTINUE TO BRING UPDATES TO ACEC ON THE DPS PROCUREMENT. ACEC TO SURVEY MEMBERS FOR RAQS ESP FEEDBACK.	MTO AND ACEC
1-2026-4.p	AGENDA ITEMS FROM ACEC-ON MEMBERS: PROGRESSIVE DESIGN BUILD (PDB) RFP UPDATE <i>Description: Update from MTO on the PDB RFP</i> <i>Discussion:</i> - MTO has extended an invitation to ACEC and ORBA to attend an information session on a 'highway collaborative delivery model' being held January 29, 2026. - This delivery model is known internally at MTO as Progressive Design Build. - ACEC asked if there are any timelines for PDB implementation. MTO will provide information at the upcoming session. ACTION: MTO TO HOST INFORMATION SESSION ON JANUARY 29, 2026 Post-meeting update: The information session was held January 29/26.	MTO COMPLETE
1-2026-4.q	AGENDA ITEMS FROM ACEC-ON MEMBERS: ACEC ENGINEERING EXPERIENCE MATRIX	

NEW ITEMS		ACTION BY
	<i>Description: ACEC-on is working to get feedback from members</i> <i>Discussion:</i> • Erika circulated the matrix to ACEC on August 25 • MTO is requesting ACEC feedback. • ACEC advised that the RFP Table 1 is becoming extensive, identifying mandatory staff specialty requirements. Plus other areas of the RFP contain staffing requirements. It is becoming difficult to identify what the Phase I (staffing and organization plan) requirements are. ACTION: ACEC TO REVIEW THE MATRIX AND PROVIDE COMMENT VIA ACEC SURVEY.	ACEC
1-2026-5	JOINT MTO/ACEC ITEMS <i>Description: Opportunity for the team to discuss items that are raised/were raised jointly.</i> <i>Discussion:</i> • There were no joint items for this meeting. ACTION: NONE	
1-2026-6a	NEW ITEM: QUALIFICATION COMMITTEE CONSIDERING CHANGE FOR 'LOW APPRAISAL' THRESHOLD (MTO) <i>Description: Potential change for 'low appraisal' score threshold</i> <i>Discussion:</i> • MTO advised that a scoring threshold revision is being considered, due to the new rating system, to determine when a review by the Qualification Committee is required. The new rating system is lowering the ratings for the same level of performance. • MTO's Vendor Management Review (VMR) Office is working on determining what rating threshold will require a review by the Qualification Committee, due to poor performance. • Current Status: VMR and QC Committee continue to review the situation (the number of appraisals with a score less than 3.00, consider lowering threshold) ACTION: MTO TO BRING UPDATES AS VMR REVIEW CONTINUES	MTO
1-2026-6b	NEW ITEM: UPDATE FROM HIGHWAY TRANSFER SECRETARIAT ON DVP/GARDINER AND HIGHWAY 174 UPLOAD	

**MTO/ACEC-ON ENGINEERING SUBCOMMITTEE
MEETING**

January 13, 2026

NEW ITEMS		ACTION BY
	<i>Description: ACEC-ON requested MTO provide an update from Highway Transfer Secretariat.</i> <i>Discussion:</i> <i>This item will be brought forward to the next committee meeting (May 13) as the HTS director was not available to join the meeting.</i> ACTION: MTO TO PROVIDE AN UPDATE FROM HTS AT THE MAY 13, 2026 ENGINEERING SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING	MTO
9-2025-7	SCHEDULE OF UPCOMING MEETINGS AND HOSTS <i>May 13, 2026 at 9:30am (Virtual)</i> <i>September 15, 2026 at 1:00pm (hybrid (in-person & virtual) at MTO (TBD CETI or St. Catharines)</i>	

INFORMATION SHARED FOR THIS MEETING

Document Title	Shared By	Format
Agenda MTO-ACEC Eng Subcom Meeting 2026 01 13	Erika Varga	MS Word
MTO ACEC Engineering Subcommittee Meeting Notes 2025 09 02	Erika Varga	MS Word

NEXT MEETING

- May 13, 2026 (9:30am virtual)